
ARTICLE 1 – NAME AND PURPOSE

SECTION 1.01-NAME

This congregation of believers shall be known as the Gospel Light Baptist Church

SECTION 1.02 PURPOSE

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, print shops, daycare centers, and camps; the evangelize of the unsaved by the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; the educating of believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, both in Sunday and weekday schools of Christian education; and the maintaining of missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country.

ARTICLE 2 – STATEMENT OF FAITH

SECTION 2.01-STATEMENT OF FAITH

The following comprise the Scriptural beliefs of this church and its members.

- A. The Holy Scriptures.** We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed and, therefore, are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning, and all issues of interpretation and meaning shall be determined by the pastor. The King James Version of the Bible shall be the official and only translation used by the church. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)
- B. Dispensationalism.** We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations--the law, the church, and the kingdom--are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture. (Gen. 1:28; 1 Cor. 9:17; 2 Cor. 3:9-18; Gal. 3:13-25; Eph. 1:10; 3:2-10; Col. 1:24-25, 27; Rev. 20:2-6)
- C. The Godhead.** We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons-- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit--each co-eternal in being co-identical in nature, coequal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; John 14: 10, 26; 2 Cor. 13: 14)
- D. The Person and Work of Christ.**
1. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; 2 Cor. 5: 19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8)
 2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (Acts 2: 18-36; Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Peter 1:3-5)
 3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:10; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; 1 John 2: 1-2)

E. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. (John 16:8- 11; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14)
2. We believe that He is the divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit. (Eph. 1: 17-18; 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27) We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the assembly so that they can do the work of the ministry. (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12)
3. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. Speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit Ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing. (1 Cor. 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22)

F. The Depravity of Man. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God; but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is depraved and, of self, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19)

G. Salvation. We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. Man must choose, of his free will, to place his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in order to be saved. (John 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8- 10; 1 Pet.1:18-19; 1 John 1:9; Rev. 22:17)

H. The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers.

1. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1, 38-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 1 Pet. 1:4-5)
2. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal.5:13; Titus 2:11-15)

I. The Church

1. We believe that the local church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is solely made up of born-again persons who have been baptized by immersion. (1 Cor. 12:12- 14; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27)
2. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; 1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:1-11)
3. We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control. (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Rom. 16:1, 4; 1 Cor. 3:9, 16; 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4)
4. We recognize water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church in this age. (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:18; 1 Cor. 11:23-26)

J. Separation. We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord. God commands His people to separate from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations, and to renounce all immodest and immoderate appearances, piercings, and bodily markings. (Lev. 19:28; Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11)

K. The Second Advent of Christ. We believe in that blessed hope, the personal, imminent return of

Christ, Who will rapture His church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints, to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom which was promised to the nation of Israel. (Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; 1 Thess. 1:10, 4: 13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6)

L. The Eternal State

1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28,29; 1 1:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12- 13)
2. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6)
3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment and torment. (Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15)

M. The Personality of Satan. We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the Fall of Man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12- 17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10)

N. Creation. We believe that God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin. (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11)

O. Civil Government. We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the church, and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13: 17; 1 Pet. 2: 13- 14)

P. Human Sexuality

1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)
2. We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)

Q. Family Relationships

1. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8- 15; 3:4-5, 12)
2. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are an heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral

values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction. (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4, Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; 1 Pet. 3:1-7)

R. Divorce and Remarriage. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Remarriage after divorce is regarded as an act of infidelity to the first marriage covenant. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon. (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:2,12; Titus 15)

S. Human Life.

1. *Abortion.* We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion, euthanasia, and cloning constitute the unjustified, unexcused controlling of human life and death. Abortion and euthanasia are murder. We reject any teaching that abortions are acceptable in pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, genetic, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well being of the mother.
2. *Embryos.* We believe that at the moment of conception the fertilized egg becomes a living soul, foreknown and ordained by God and accountable to Him. We reject all forms of treatment, experimentation or procedures which require the destruction of fertilized eggs or embryos. This includes, but is not limited to, embryonic stem cell research, the destruction of “extra” embryo’s after in vitro fertilization and attempts at human cloning. (Jeremiah 1:5; Job 3:16; Psalms 51:5; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)
3. *Euthanasia.* We believe that the direct taking of an innocent human life is a moral evil regardless of the intention. Life is a gift of God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus we believe that an act omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God. Discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal of over-zealous treatment. (Ex. 20:13,23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28)
4. *Capital Punishment and War.* We believe that God has ordained government to execute justice and judgment. Capital punishment and war are both necessary functions to restrain evil. As a consequence, those civil servants and military personnel, who in the course of their duty, lawfully take a human life, are recognized to be servants of God, ministers of good wielding the sword as a God ordained revenger of evil. (Romans 13:3-4; Proverbs 20:26)

T. Love. We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward both those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or the use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9- 10; 17-21; 13:8- 10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3: 17- 18)

U. Lawsuits Between Believers. We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against fellow church members to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:3 1-32)

V. Missions. We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke

24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20)

W. Giving. We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to financially support his local church. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of his tithe or offering once the gift has been made. (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17)

SECTION 2.02 AUTHORITY OF THE STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all members.

SECTION 2.03 COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of our Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ. We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred, acquaintances, and all others; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful to our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from such worldly amusements as watching ungodly movies and television, gambling, rock music, and sensual dancing; to be free from all oath bound secret societies and partnerships with unbelievers; to abstain from controlling substances such as alcohol, tobacco and narcotic drugs; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy of speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior, and to secure reconciliation without delay. We moreover engage, that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE 3 - MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 3.01 QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Upon a majority vote of the members present at any church service or meeting, membership shall be extended to all who have had and whose lives evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior; who renounce sin, who endeavor to live a consecrated life wholly unto the Lord; who fully subscribe to the Statement of Faith contained herein; who enter into the church covenant contained herein, who agree to submit to the authority of the church and its leaders as set forth herein, and upon compliance with any one of the following conditions:

- A. By baptism by immersion as a true believer in Christ Jesus as personal Savior;
- B. By letter of transfer from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice, or other written statement of good standing from the prior church if the applicant has been baptized by immersion subsequent to a profession of faith,
- C. By testimony of faith, having been baptized by immersion; or
- D. By restoration, if having been removed from membership, upon majority vote of the congregation after confession is made publicly before the church membership of the sin or sins involved, and satisfactorily evidencing repentance to the pastor (or the deacons if the office of pastor is vacant).

SECTION 3.02 DUTIES OF A MEMBER

On becoming a member of this church, in addition to the covenant contained in Section 2.03, each member further covenants to love, honor, and esteem the pastor; to pray for him, to recognize his authority in spiritual affairs of the church; to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the church; to support the church in prayer, tithes, offerings and with other financial support as the Lord enables; and in accordance with Biblical commands, to support through a lifestyle walk affirming the beliefs and practices of the church.

SECTION 3.03 PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

- A. Only members at least eighteen years of age who are physically present at a duly called meeting of the church shall be entitled to vote. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting. The eligible membership of the church has certain limited areas to exercise a vote. Members may not vote to initiate any church action, rather the vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the church as determined by the pastor with the counsel of deacons.
- B. This congregation functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the pastor as the under shepherd with the counsel of the deacons. Determinations of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The pastor shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of this church. The deacons shall give counsel and assistance to the pastor as requested by him.
- C. Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The pastor (or in his absence, the deacons) has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, to enter or remain on church property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, at the discretion of the pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the deacons), be treated as a trespasser.
- D. A member may inspect or copy the prepared financial statements of the church and the minutes of the proceedings of church meetings, provided he shall have made a written request to the church and the church has received the written request at least five business days before the requested inspection date.
 - 1. A member may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record relating to individual contributions to the church.
 - 2. The church may impose a reasonable charge, covering the costs of labor and material, for copies of any documents provided to the member before releasing the copies to the member.

SECTION 3.04 DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER

- A. The pastor, with the counsel of the of deacons, shall have sole authority in determining heretical deviations from the Statement of Faith and violations of the church covenant worthy of church discipline. Only the deacons may determine if the pastor has deviated from the statement of faith or violated the church covenant and pursue discipline. The pastor and deacons shall be entitled to the same steps as other church members and be subject to the same discipline.
- B. Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself: When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration.
- C. If reconciliation is not reached, one or two other members, with notification to the pastor, are to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter as witnesses and advisors in the process. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.
- D. If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (B) and (C) have been taken, the pastor must be brought into the process as the essential prelude to bringing the matter before the congregation. At his discretion, he may call the unrepentant individual to meet with himself and the deacons in a further attempt to bring that one to restoration.
- E. If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (B), (C), and (D) have been taken, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be presented to the church as unrepentant, and the church members are to, after self-examination, make an effort personally to go to the offending member and seek that member's restoration.
- F. After all required steps in subsections (B)-(E) are completed, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the membership of the church upon a majority vote of the membership present at a meeting called for the purpose of considering disciplinary action
- G. No matter may be brought before the church body unless the steps outlined in subsections (B), (C) and (D) have been taken.
- H. If an unrepentant offending party is removed from the church membership, all contact with him or her from that point forward (except by family members) must be for the sake of restoration.

The procedures provided in this section are based on Matt. 18: 15-20; Rom. 16: 17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:1-11; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 10- 15; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; and Titus 3:10-11.

SECTION 3.05 TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Members not under the disciplinary process of Section 3.04 may request that letters of transfer be sent to another church.

SECTION 3.06 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- A. If a member has not attended a regular worship service for a period of three months, for reasons other than debilitating illness, then the pastor or deacons must seek to restore that person to fellowship. If the person refuses to hear the pastor or deacons, then the steps of section 3.04 must be taken
- B. No member of this church may hold membership in another church. The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the member unites in membership with another church.

- C. A member may resign at any time, but no letter of transfer or written statement of good standing will be issued upon such resignation, except at the discretion of the pastor.

ARTICLE 4 – CHURCH OFFICERS

SECTION 4.01 CHURCH OFFICERS

In accordance with the teaching of the Word of God, Gospel Light Baptist Church will have only two offices (Philippians 1:1): Pastor (known in the Bible as Bishops, Elders and Overseers - Acts 20:17,28; 1 Peter 5:1-4) and Deacons (1 Timothy 3:12). The administrative offices of church clerk and church treasurer are also established as an aid to proper administration of the church. One person may hold two or more offices, except that of pastor. The pastor, from time to time, as he deems appropriate, may appoint other administrative officers.

SECTION 4.02 DESIGNATION OF CORPORATE OFFICERS

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, the pastor shall serve as president of the corporation; the church clerk shall serve as secretary of the corporation; the church treasurer shall serve as treasurer of the corporation; and the head deacon shall serve as vice president of the corporation.

SECTION 4.03 ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE

- A. No officer shall be installed or retained who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith. All church officers, upon appointment, shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith (as set forth in Article 2).
- B. All church officers must be approved initially and thereafter bi-annually by the pastor in order for them to commence or continue in their offices.
- C. Only church members are eligible for election or appointment to any church office or position, with the exception of the pastor, assuming that his membership will be transferred to Gospel Light Baptist Church upon acceptance of the call to pastor at Gospel Light Baptist Church.

SECTION 4.04 ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS

- A. In the event of a vacancy of pastor, the deacons will be responsible to see that the pastoral duties are maintained as well as possible and to engage pulpit supply speakers. They will immediately ask the church to appoint a five man pulpit committee, including deacons and men of the church at large, by nomination and subsequent vote.
1. The pulpit committee's duties shall be to:
 - i. Consider resumes and possible candidates
 - ii. Question possible candidates as to doctrine, life, the pastorate, etc. to ensure that each man meets the qualifications listed in Article 4.05.
 - iii. Report to the church body the process and progress of the pastor search
 - iv. Ensure the search process is conducted in an orderly fashion
 - v. Engage a man as a candidate for the position of pastor

- vi. Ensure only one candidate shall be heard and decided upon before calling another man to candidate.
 - vii. After the call and acceptance of the pastor, the pulpit committee shall be dissolved.
2. The Candidacy process shall be as follows:
- i. The pulpit committee will extend an invitation to a potential pastoral candidate to preach at a regular church service, after which the pulpit committee will personally interview the potential candidate
 - ii. After satisfactory examination has been made, the pulpit committee may by unanimous vote extend to the invitation to candidate to the individual
 - iii. The candidate shall then preach once again and also take part in a question and answer session with the congregation.
 - iv. Notice of a church administration meeting to vote on the candidate as new pastor must then be given at least one week prior to said meeting.
 - v. Only those candidates receiving a 75% vote of the members present will be called as pastor.
- B. The number of deacons shall be no less than two, with deacons being added at the request of the Pastor.
- 1. Nominations to fill a vacant office of a deacon must be submitted in writing at a duly called administration meeting two weeks prior to being voted on by the church.
 - 2. Unless deemed unqualified by the pastor with the counsel of the deacons in accordance with section 4.05(b), all nominees shall be submitted to the church for election at a duly called administration meeting
 - 3. The nominee (or nominees if more than one position is being filled) that receive(s) the most votes and not receiving less than a 50% vote of the members present will be elected to office. If no nominee receives a 50% vote, then those receiving the highest vote count shall be resubmitted for vote, the number of which to be determined by the number of positions to fill plus one.
 - 4. Those nominees who have not previously been ordained as a deacon, after receiving a majority vote to become a deacon shall be ordained at a regular church service. Only after their ordination shall they serve as a deacon.
- C. All other positions or offices in the church shall be by appointment of the pastor.

SECTION 4.05 QUALIFICATIONS OF OFFICERS

- A. Before extending a call to a prospective pastor, he shall be thoroughly examined by the pulpit committee as to his character, fitness for office, previous ministry experience and ability to minister the Word. The candidate must:
- 1. Meet the Biblical character qualifications as listed in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:7-9 including:
 - i. No legitimate charge can be laid against his Godly character;
 - ii. Faithfully married having never committed adultery or been divorced;
 - iii. Maintains self control in his public and private life;
 - iv. Shows appropriate behavior for all circumstances;
 - v. Not a drinker of alcoholic beverages;
 - vi. Not inclined to quarrels or contention nor quick with fist or tongue

- vii. Not a lover of money nor desire easy or quick financial gains
 - viii. Gentle and moderate in all situations;
 - ix. Has a testimony of Godliness.
2. Meet the Biblical ministry qualifications as listed in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:7-9 including:
 - i. Hospitable;
 - ii. Watchful of the spiritual safety of the body of Christ;
 - iii. Able to effectively communicate the truths of God's Word;
 - iv. Not a novice in the things of the Lord;
 - v. Practice Godly leadership in his home before seeking to lead the church;
 - vi. Hold tightly to the truths of the Word
 3. Show four mutual qualities between himself and the people of the church: love, trust, respect and loyalty.
- B. Before being elected as a deacon, deacon nominees must have exhibited in their lives Biblical character, leadership, wisdom and a willingness to serve. The deacons must:
1. Show the Biblical character qualities as described in 1 Timothy 3:8-12 including:
 - i. Honorable character;
 - ii. Not deceptive or manipulative in speech;
 - iii. Not a drinker of alcoholic beverages;
 - iv. Lead a Lifestyle that is not condemned by the Word;
 - v. Faithfully devoted to his wife, having never been divorced;
 - vi. Leading his home and family with excellence;
 - vii. Having a Godly wife
 2. Have the ministry qualifications as described in 1 Timothy 3:8-12 and Acts. 6:3, including:
 - i. Controlled by the Holy Spirit;
 - ii. Directed by Divine wisdom;
 - iii. Available for service in the church;
 - iv. Maintain his convictions of the truth of the Word;
 - v. Approved as ministers in the work
 3. A deacon must also have been a member of the church for at least one year

SECTION 4.06 TERMS OF OFFICE

- A. The relationship between the pastor and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice, or less by mutual consent. The calling of a pastor or severance of the relationship between the pastor and the church may be considered at any regular church administration meeting, provided notice to that effect shall have been given from the pulpit to the church two Sundays prior to said regular church administration meeting. A three-fourths majority of the eligible members present and voting shall be required to call a pastor or to sever the relationship between the pastor and the church. Disciplinary removal of the pastor from office automatically

terminates his membership. A restoration to membership after disciplinary removal will be subject to the requirements of Section 3.01

- B. The term of service for church clerk and church treasurer shall be two years, at the expiration of which the officers may be re-appointed.
- D. A vacancy occurring in the office of deacon before the annual church administration meeting, may be filled at any regular church administration meeting.
- E. All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed.
- F. A deacon or the pastor will be removed from office if he becomes subject to the all the disciplinary actions outlined in section 3.04(a)-(d), even after repentance.
- G. After the number of deacons reaches five, the term of a deacon shall be two years. After serving for two consecutive terms, a deacon must be out of office for at least a year before being elected again. Vacancies due to the completion of terms are to be filled at the annual church administration meeting.

SECTION 4.06 PASTORAL OVERSIGHT OF OFFICERS AND STAFF

- A. Subject to the church membership approving of salary and benefits and on the condition that they shall become a member of the church upon assuming their duties, the pastor may hire associates and assistants to assist the him in carrying out his God-given responsibilities.
- B. All church staff, whether paid or volunteer, shall be under the supervision of the pastor who has the sole authority to dismiss the same. No employee or volunteer shall be hired, appointed, or retained who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith

ARTICLE 5 – DUTIES AND POWERS OF OFFICERS

SECTION 5.01 THE PASTOR

- A. The pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God as the Lord leads him. He shall administer the ordinances of the church, act as moderator at all church meetings for the transaction of church matters, supervise the teaching ministries of the church, and tenderly watch over the spiritual interests of the membership.
- B. The pastor shall serve as the president of the corporation. He shall inform all newly elected officers of the particular function and the responsibilities of their respective offices. He shall perform such other duties as generally appertain to such a position. The pastor shall be free to choose the means and methods by which he exercises the ministry that God has given him, provided those means and methods do not violate Biblical commands.
- C. He shall oversee the Sunday School staff and lessons, appoint non-elected officers, handle publicity, advertising, extension work of the church, missions program, and speakers and special meetings.
- D. All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof, including time and place and the use of the property belonging to the church for purposes other than the stated appointments, shall be under the control of the pastor.
- E. He shall be free to engage in revival or special services elsewhere as the Lord shall lead.

SECTION 5.02 THE DEACONS

- A. The deacons shall assist the pastor, in such manner as he shall request, in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in conducting the religious services, and in performing all other work of the church. They shall make provision for the observance of the ordinances of the church. They shall, if requested by the pastor, consider applications for church membership. They shall, in cooperation with the pastor, disburse the benevolence fund. They shall assist the pastor in visitation and all other evangelistic efforts of the church. The deacons shall assist the pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries as requested by the pastor. They shall provide the pulpit supply and choose a moderator for church meetings if the pastor is unavailable or the office of pastor is vacant. The deacons are not a legislative body but will recommend and perform business duties of the church as deemed necessary by the pastor.
- B. At the first deacons meeting following the annual administrative meeting, the pastor shall appoint a head deacon who shall serve as the vice-president in corporate matters. The head deacon will be the spokesman for the deacons at church administration meetings.
- C. The deacons shall constitute the board of trustees of the corporation. The board of trustees shall exercise only the following specific powers, upon direction by the pastor and authorization by a majority vote of the members present at a duly called church administration meeting:
 - 1. To purchase, hold, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church;
 - 2. To sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church, to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and the use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges; and
 - 3. To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church corporation.

SECTION 5.03 THE CHURCH CLERK

The church clerk shall:

- A. Certify and keep at the office of the church, the original bylaws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the bylaws.
- B. Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law;
- C. See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. (In case of the absence or disability of the secretary, or his or her refusal or neglect to act, notice may be given and served by the pastor or by the head deacons.);
- D. Be custodian of the records of the church, including the membership roll, baptisms, and certificates of ordination, licenses and commissions;
- E. See that the reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed;
- F. Exhibit at all reasonable times to proper persons on terms provided by law the bylaws and the minutes of the meetings of the church members; Keep an account of any special events in the life of the church which are of historical interest and give a report at the *annual* church administration meeting of the status of the church membership roll in the past year;
- G. Keep all records at the office of the church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office; and
- H. Serve as the secretary of the corporation.

SECTION 5.04 THE CHURCH TREASURER

The church treasurer shall:

- A. Have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds of the corporation, and deposit all funds in the name of the church in banks, trust companies, or other depositories as shall be selected by the pastor with the counsel of the deacons; Receive, and give receipt for all contributions, gifts, and donations to the church; Disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the church as may be directed by the pastor, the deacons, or the budget adopted by the members of the church at the annual church administration meeting, taking proper vouchers for the disbursements; Keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the church's properties and business transactions including account of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, and capital, Make all expenditures of the church (except miscellaneous petty cash disbursements) by check;
- B. When and as requested, render to the pastor or the deacons accounts of all his transactions as minister of finance and of the financial condition of the church;
- C. Present a financial statement to the pastor each month containing an itemized report of all expenditures and all account balances for the previous month;
- D. Keep all church financial records at the office of the church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office; and
- E. Serve as treasurer of the corporation.

SECTION 5.05 ASSISTANT PASTORS

- A. Under the direction and guidance of the pastor, the assistant pastor(s) of the church shall assist the pastor in carrying out the ministries of the church.
- B. Assistant pastors must meet the qualifications of a pastor as outlines in section 4.05 (A)

SECTION 5.06 DUTIES OF ALL OFFICERS

- A. All officers shall surrender all records in their possession to the church clerk at the close of their term of office to be filed as a permanent record of the work of the church. All records are the property of the church.
- B. Any officer who neglects his or hers duties as outlined in the bylaws for a period of three months may be removed from his office, at the discretion of the pastor, and another may be appointed by the pastor to serve the un-expired term.

ARTICLE 6 - COMMITTEES

SECTION 6.01 STANDING COMMITTEES

The pastor (or the deacons if the office of pastor is vacant) may appoint standing committees and designate a chairperson for each standing committee and, except when otherwise specifically provided in these bylaws, shall determine the membership of each standing committee.

SECTION 6.02 SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The pastor, with the counsel of the deacons, at his discretion, may create special committees to provide advice and information regarding matters submitted to the committee by the pastor for consideration. The committee shall have no authority to act on behalf of the church. The members of the committee shall be chosen by the pastor and shall serve solely at the pleasure of the pastor. The special committee shall be subject to the control and direction of the pastor at all times.

ARTICLE 7 – MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

SECTION 7.01-MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

The church shall meet each Sunday for public worship both morning and evening and at least once during the week for Bible study and prayer. In the case of extenuating circumstances, a service may be cancelled at the discretion of the Pastor. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed periodically at the discretion of the Pastor.

SECTION 7.02-MEETINGS FOR CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

- A. A quarterly administration meeting shall be held during the months of March, June, September, with the annual church administration meeting being the fourth quarterly meeting.
- B. The annual church administration meeting shall be held within 45 days of the beginning of each fiscal year, at which time the regular church administration shall be considered. A quorum shall consist of the members present.
 1. If new deacons are to be elected, the procedures outlined in section 4.04(B) must be followed.
 2. The pastor with the counsel of the deacons shall draft an annual budget which shall be submitted to the membership two weeks prior to the annual church administration meeting.
 - i. Questions regarding the budget may be submitted to the pastor and deacons in writing prior to the annual administrative meeting. All questions, unless deemed inappropriate or divisive by the pastor, shall be answered in writing prior to the annual church administrative meeting.
 - ii. The budget will outline all planned expenditures of the church for the fiscal year for which it is prepared. A vote to approve the budget by the church is a vote to approve the expenditures outlined.
 - iii. The budget must be approved by a simple majority of the members present.
- C. All church administration meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer for divine guidance and blessing.
- D. The moderator (pastor, or deacon if the office is pastor is vacant) shall determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure, and his decision is final and controlling. The following order shall be observed at church administration meetings:
 1. Prayer
 2. Reading of minutes
 3. Distribution of previous months' financial statements
 4. Notice of members received

5. Notice of members dismissed
 6. Unfinished matters
 7. New matters
 8. Adjournment
- E. No new matters will be heard from the floor at any church administration meeting. Any matters that a member would like to discuss must be submitted in writing at least one week prior to a church administration meeting. Matters will then be presented at the meeting unless they are deemed inappropriate or divisive by the pastor with the counsel of the deacons.
- F. For any meeting under this article, the moderator, in his sole discretion, shall have full and unilateral authority to require nonmembers to leave the meeting room and to order the immediate removal of any member or other person present who is deemed by the moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings by act or presence. The moderator shall have full authority to order the removal of all children (ages to be determined by the moderator) if the moderator determines, in his sole discretion, that circumstances so warrant. If the moderator determines that compliance with his order of removal is unsatisfactory, the moderator may, in his sole discretion, revoke the disruptive person's right to remain on the premises in accordance with Section 3.03(C) and treat the person as a trespasser.

SECTION 7.03 SPECIAL MEETINGS

- A. The pastor (or deacons if the office of pastor is vacant or the pastor is the subject of possible disciplinary action) may call a special meeting by giving notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called to the church from the pulpit at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting. A meeting for the calling of a pastor or the severance of the relationship between the church and pastor shall be called in accordance with the provision of Section 4.04(A).
- B. Bible conferences, missionary conferences, and revivals may be held as the pastor deems beneficial.

ARTICLE 8 - FINANCES

SECTION 8.01 FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1st and end December 31st.

SECTION 8.02 ANNUAL BUDGET

The annual budget approved at the annual church administration meeting shall be the rule by which the church finances are run. Approval of the annual budget is approval to spend up to the amount listed in each budget category for that fiscal year without a subsequent vote of the church.

SECTION 8.03 SALARIES AND BENEFITS

- A. The salaries and benefits of each paid staff member shall be reconsidered annually and resubmitted in the annual budget. Salaries and benefits must be itemized in the annual budget, showing the salary and benefits of each individual staff member.
- B. The church may consider approving a salary and benefit package for a new staff member during the fiscal year. Salary and benefits must be approved by a majority vote of members present at a duly called administration meeting.

SECTION 8.04 REOCCURRING EXPENSES AND DEBTS

No reoccurring expense or debt may be incurred without the consent of the church. Approval must be given by the church through a majority vote of the members present at a duly called church administration meeting.

SECTION 8.05 NON BUDGETED EXPEDITURES

Any non budgeted expenditure totaling more than \$500 must be submitted to the church for approval by a majority vote of the members present at a duly called church administration meeting.

SECTION 8.06 DEPOSITS

All donations must be deposited with the next general church deposit. No funds may be held for any reason.

SECTION 8.07 DESIGNATED FUNDS

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the pastor and the deacons. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Section 1.02.

ARTICLE 9 - ORDINATION

SECTION 9.01 ORDINATION QUALIFICATIONS

Any member of this church, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications outlined in section 4.05 (A), may be ordained as a minister of the Gospel.

SECTION 9.02 ORDINATION PROCEDURE

Upon a conference with the pastor and after the pastor has approved the candidate for ordination, the pastor shall call a council to examine and pass on the qualifications of the candidate. The ordination council shall consist of the pastor and deacons. Ordained ministers of like faith may be invited to participate in the examination of the candidate as well. If the candidate is found worthy of ordination by the council, the candidate shall be presented to the church for ordination. The pastor shall arrange for the ordination service, during which the church will vote to ordain the candidate. Only those candidates receiving a majority vote of the members present will be ordained.

Article 10 - Indemnification

SECTION 10.01 ACTIONS SUBJECT TO

- A. The church may indemnify any person who was or is a party to or is threatened to be made a party to any action, suit, or proceeding, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts said in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding. This applies to an action, suit or proceeding whether it is threatened, pending or completed and whether it is civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals.
- B. The following conditions must be met in order for the church to indemnify any person against these expenses:
 - 1. The suit, action or proceeding must be by reason of the fact that the person is or was a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church
 - 2. That person must have acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church.
 - 3. With respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful.
- C. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or a plea of no contest or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

SECTION 10.02 EXPENSES SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION

To the extent that a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent has been successful (on the merits or otherwise) in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, he or she may be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.

SECTION 10.03 LIMITATIONS OF INDEMNIFICATION

Any indemnification made under this Article, may be made by the church only as authorized in the specific case on a determination that indemnification of the pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because he has met the conditions forth in Section 10.01. The determination shall be made by a majority vote of the members of the church present at a duly called administration meeting.

SECTION 10.04 TIMING OF INDEMNIFICATION

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article, may be paid by the church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by the church in the specific case. If it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the church, the amount must be repaid.

SECTION 10.05 EXTENT OF INDEMNIFICATION

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by the church. Indemnification may be both as to action in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office. Indemnification may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

SECTION 10.06 INSURANCE

The church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the church against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in that capacity, or arising out of his status in that capacity, whether or not the church would have the power to indemnify him against liability under the provisions of this Article.

ARTICLE 11 – BINDING ARBITRATION

SECTION 11.01 SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION

Believing that lawsuits between church members are prohibited by Scripture, all members of this church agree to submit to binding arbitration any church matters which cannot otherwise be resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bringing any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgment upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof

SECTION 11.02 NOTICE OF ARBITRATION

In the event of any dispute, claim, question, or disagreement arising out of or relating to these bylaws or any other church matter, the parties shall use their best efforts to settle such disputes, claims, questions, or disagreement as befits Christians. To this effect, they shall consult and negotiate with each other in good faith and, recognizing their mutual interests not to disgrace the name of Christ, seek to reach a just and equitable solution. If they do not reach such solution within a period of sixty (60) days, then upon notice by either party to the other, disputes, claims, questions, or differences shall be finally settled by arbitration as described in Section 11.01, above, and such Procedures for Arbitration as are adopted pursuant to Section 11.04, below.

SECTION 11.03 LIMITATIONS ON ARBITRATION DECISIONS

- A. Should any dispute involve matters of church discipline, the arbitrator shall be limited to determining whether the procedures for church discipline as outlined under Section 3.04, were followed.
- B. Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the pastor or any church officer, the arbitrator shall be limited to determining whether the procedures set forth in Sections 4.04 or 5.06 were followed.

SECTION 11.04 ARBITRATION PROCEDURES

The Procedures for Arbitration shall be as adopted by the pastor with the counsel of the deacons.

ARTICLE 12 - AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be revised or amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any regular church administration meeting, provided that said revision or amendment has been submitted to the church in writing and announced from the pulpit fourteen (14) days before the vote is taken.

ACCEPTANCE

These bylaws were adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting of the church in which a quorum was present. These bylaws supersede any other bylaws of the church.

Date

Signature of Church Clerk