

**Vision  
Constitution  
and By-Laws**

of the  
**Philadelphia Baptist Church**



Adopted  
May 22, 2005

# **PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST CHURCH**

## ***PBC Vision Statement***

***Spreading the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ as LORD, for the glory of GOD, among all peoples.***

## ***PBC Mission Statement***

***Philadelphia Baptist Church exists to spread the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ as Lord, for the glory of God, among all peoples through Christ-centered worship, evangelism, discipleship, ministry, missions, and fellowship.***

### ***Worship***

*Celebrating the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ in worship*

### ***Evangelism***

*Sharing the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ in the Gospel*

### ***Discipleship***

*Growing in the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ through the teaching and application of God's Word*

### ***Ministry***

*Demonstrating the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ through loving ministry*

### ***Missions***

*Taking the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ to all peoples*

### ***Fellowship***

*Growing as God's family in the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ*

**Constitution**  
of the  
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**Preamble**

We, the members of Philadelphia Baptist Church, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Holy Spirit, have recognized the need to constitute ourselves in conformity to His will. We, the members of Philadelphia Baptist Church of Jefferson County, Alabama, do ordain and establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves. We adopt this Constitution, and it is to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. This Constitution replaces the Constitution approved on September 21, 1997.

**Article 1 - Name**

The name of the church is Philadelphia Baptist Church.

**Article 2 - Affiliation**

The church as she deems appropriate will cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Alabama Baptist Convention, the Birmingham Baptist Association, and others in carrying out the local mission program and the world mission program of Christ as expressed in the Great Commission.

**Article 3 - Purpose**

This church exists by the grace of God and for the glory of God. This reality shall be reflected in all her activities. This church glorifies the one triune God (revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) through worship, evangelizing the lost, and edifying the saints. We are committed to proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world; defending the "faith once delivered to the saints," (Jude 3); encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work locally and globally; administering the ordinances of believers' baptism and the Lord's Supper; encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers; and serving others in the Name of Jesus Christ.

**Article 4 - Statement of Faith**

**Philadelphia Baptist Church Statement of Faith**

The Philadelphia Baptist Church Statement of Faith reflects what we believe to be both timeless and essential truths of the Christian faith. While the Bible is always the final authority for doctrine, life, and practice this document reflects what we as a church believe to be the essentials of the Christian faith. This statement reflects the influence of many historic Baptist documents. These documents include, but are not limited to: *The Baptist Faith and Message of 2000*, *The Abstract of Principles of 1858*, *The New Hampshire Confession of 1833*, and *The Second London Confession of 1689*.

## I. **Scripture**

We believe the Holy Bible is God's inspired, inerrant, plenary, and infallible Word to man. It is comprised of the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament. The Scriptures are the authoritative rule and guide for Christian living. The central theme of the Bible is God's activity in history to present Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior. It reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and religious opinions should be tried.

## II. **God**

There is one God. He exists eternally as three distinct persons. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit exist in perfect unity and without division of their essence, nature, or being. All three persons make up the Triune God Who is infinitely wise, powerful, loving, just, and holy.

### *God the Father*

God the Father, through His Son, is the creator of all things. He brought all of creation into being through His powerful Word. He rules over all of creation, and no plan of His can be halted or interrupted. He enjoys a perfect and eternal relationship with the Son and the Holy Spirit. In redemption, the Scriptures identify the Father as the One Who chooses and draws individuals to salvation in the Son.

### *God the Son*

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He has existed from all eternity past with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Conceived of the Holy Spirit and born to the virgin Mary, He is fully God and fully man. He lived a sinless, perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, was raised from the dead on the third day, and has ascended to the right hand of the Father where He awaits the time of His return to earth to gather all of the redeemed from all of the ages to Himself. He is the Head of His Body, the Church. He lives in the heart of every believer through faith. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, partaking of the nature of God and of man, and in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He is presently our advocate before the Father. There is no hope of salvation outside of the work and message of Jesus Christ.

### *God the Holy Spirit*

The Holy Spirit is the fully divine spirit of God. He exists eternally with the Father and the Son. He was active with the Father and the Son in creation. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. The Spirit applies salvation to the human heart, beginning with regeneration and continuing by indwelling the believer. The Spirit is the comforter, teacher, and guide Who was promised by Jesus. Every believer is baptized with the Spirit when he is born again and is empowered by Him to live a godly life. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. The Spirit gives gifts to every believer to be used in service to God.

### III. Human Beings

Human beings were created in the image of God. The first humans were Adam and Eve. Human beings are the crown of God's creation. God created them male and female. God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The entire human race is descended from these first parents. Adam and Eve were created innocent and morally upright. In their original state, they were without sin. When tempted by Satan, they chose to disobey God's Word. It is through this act that sin and death entered the world. Every human being suffers the consequence of the rebellion of Adam and Eve. Every human is considered as having sinned in Adam. Every person is born with a natural inclination to sin (sin nature). Because of the profound consequence of Adam's sin (the Fall), no person can fulfill the righteous requirement of God; and therefore every person is born as an object of God's wrath. Every person is born in need of God's mercy to deliver him from the just penalty for his sin.

#### Human Freedom

Every human being is accountable to God for the way in which he lives his life. Every human being freely and willfully makes moral choices. A person is considered free, when he acts according to his own nature. Because these things are true, every human being freely acts according to his own sinful nature. Because of his own sinfulness, no human being will come to Christ apart from the enabling grace (drawing) of the Father.

### IV. Salvation

Salvation is a right relationship to God. It is the free gift of God to all who trust in Jesus Christ. No person is ever saved apart from hearing the Gospel of Jesus' saving work. All three persons of the Godhead are active in salvation. The Father has in eternity past ordained salvation's plan and elected individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1). The Son fulfilled the desires of the Father and His righteous demands, and died as a perfect sacrifice for sin. The Holy Spirit applies salvation to the human heart and lives and ministers in the life of the believer. Salvation is given by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Where saving faith is present, there is always repentance. Those who are saved will persevere to the end and will never lose or forfeit their salvation.

#### Election

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is a glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

#### Regeneration

Regeneration is the work of the Spirit that produces the new birth. The person who is dead in trespasses and sin will not and cannot repent and believe until God exercises His power in the unbeliever's life and brings about the new birth. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Through regeneration, a person becomes a new creation in Christ.

### Faith, Belief

Faith (or belief) is trust in Christ's work on our behalf for our salvation. Faith involves:

1. knowledge of the Gospel
2. belief that the Gospel is true
3. affectionate reliance upon Christ's work alone for eternal salvation.

All three elements of faith must be present in saving faith.

### Repentance

Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is the turning from sin and self to Christ in godly sorrow. It is the renouncing of the old way of life and allegiances, and yielding to Christ's Lordship.

### Justification

Justification is an act of God by which He declares believers just in His sight. Because of the atoning work of Christ, God reckons the believer no longer guilty of his sin. In justification, the believer is not only pronounced "not guilty;" he is also credited with perfect righteousness based on the performance of Christ. The believer is justified through faith alone.

### Sanctification

Sanctification is the process by which God's people are conformed to Christ. It is both instant and progressive. It is instant in that when a person is converted he is set apart or made holy through the blood of Christ. Sanctification is also progressive, because the believer grows in his experience and appreciation of his salvation as he matures in Christ.

Sanctification (in the progressive sense) involves two related aspects:

1. the believer growing in likeness or conformity to the character of Jesus Christ
2. the destruction of sin and its strongholds in the life of the believer.

Christian living is the experience of this two-fold sanctifying work in the life of the believer.

### Glorification

Glorification is the completion of God's work of salvation in the life of the believer. Glorification is completed at the resurrection of the believer's body upon the return of Christ.

### Perseverance

Perseverance is God preserving believers in faithful obedience. All who are genuinely saved persevere in their faith until the end. Salvation cannot be lost, but a believer, through his own neglect and/or willful rebellion, can bring serious harm to himself, to his church, and to others, and can grieve the Holy Spirit. All who are genuinely converted can live with the certainty of their being resurrected to spend eternity with Jesus Christ.

### *The Work of Christ*

The Work of Christ has secured salvation for those who believe in Him. He became a man and lived in perfect obedience to God's Law. It is through Christ's obedience as the perfect man that the believer is credited with righteousness. Because Christ was perfect in performance and essence, He could die as the final and perfect sacrifice for sins. Jesus took upon Himself the penalty for the sins of the world. He suffered the punishment every human being deserves. He satisfied the demands of God's holy Law. Through the shedding of His blood, the believer is cleansed from sin. Jesus' life and work was vindicated by conquering sin and death through His resurrection from the dead. Because of His victory over death, the believer lives with the knowledge that death will not win the final victory. Jesus now makes intercession for the believer before the Father.

### *Good Works*

Good Works are evidences of saving grace. The clear teaching of Scripture is that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Good works do not contribute in any way to the believer's justification. However, good works are the fruit of sanctification. It is consistent with the nature of salvation for the believer to bear "fruits of righteousness." These fruits include a lifestyle of obedience to Christ, faithful service to His church, and love for fellow believers.

## V. **The Gospel**

The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The Gospel is the Good News of salvation to sinners. The Gospel is God's plan to bring individuals to salvation through the life and death of His Son, Jesus Christ. To be saved, the Gospel must be understood, believed, and completely relied upon for salvation. For the Gospel to be understood and received, it must be viewed against the background of mankind's need for salvation.

The essential saving events and message of the Gospel are that:

1. God sent His divine Son, Jesus Christ, into this world to become a man.
2. Jesus Christ was fully man and fully God.
3. Jesus Christ lived in perfect obedience to God's will and Law.
4. Jesus Christ died as the sacrifice for our sin and was punished in our place for our disobedience to God.
5. Jesus Christ was buried and on the third day was raised from the dead.
6. Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father, and now makes intercession for the believer. He now indwells the believer through the Holy Spirit empowering Him to live for God.

The only way to salvation is through hearing and believing this Biblical message of Jesus Christ.

## VI. **The Church**

The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is both universal and local in nature. It is universal in the sense that it is made up of all of the redeemed now and throughout history who have been saved by grace through faith in Christ. The local church is made up of baptized believers who live in covenant together. They regularly gather on the Lord's Day for worship through proclamation, through praise, through public reading of the Scripture,

through prayer, and through the observation of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. This church is an autonomous body, operating congregationally under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The two scriptural offices of the church are pastor (elder, bishop) and deacon. The Bible prescribes that only men may serve as pastors. The pastors (elders, bishops) of the church are to teach and exercise spiritual oversight. The deacons function as servants in the church. The church is to submit to her Head, Jesus Christ. The local church is not to be governed by any outside individual or agency.

Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom.

## VII. **The Ordinances**

### *Baptism*

Scriptural baptism is by immersion in water in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and is administered to believers. Baptism is a dramatic outward sign of an inward renewal that has occurred in the life of the believer. No one is saved because of, or through water baptism, but all who are genuinely converted should follow the Lord's example through baptism. Church membership is reserved for those who have been baptized according to Scripture.

### *The Lord's Supper*

The Lord's Supper is a memorial to be observed in each local church. It is to be observed by all baptized believers. The Lord's Supper is a remembrance and dramatic portrayal of our Lord's sacrifice and shed blood. It is also a celebration in anticipation of the return of Christ, and of the believer living in the presence of our Lord throughout eternity. The meal is to be observed using bread and the fruit of the vine. No Christian should participate in the Lord's Supper without a period of sober self-examination. All who are converted should participate in the Lord's Supper.

## VIII. **The Lord's Day**

The practice of the early church was to gather for worship on the first day of the week. The Christian has been freed by grace from the legalistic observance of the Sabbath Day. However, it is the duty of every believer to participate regularly and faithfully in corporate worship in the local church. Any believer who neglects this duty does so at the peril of his own soul.

## IX. **Evangelism and Missions**

The last words our Lord spoke to His disciples were His command to preach the Gospel to all people in all nations. The church and every believer are under the same mandate. Every believer should seriously consider the reality that no one is saved apart from the preaching and hearing of the Gospel. While it is God who saves, He saves through the instrumentality of evangelism. Evangelism is the responsibility of every believer and is to begin at home and extend throughout the world. It is a consistent and necessary aspect of fulfilling the Great Commission to reveal the love of Christ through the ministry of benevolence. To provide financial and material resources for the purpose of improving the

living conditions and alleviating the suffering of the poor, the sick, the afflicted, and the dispossessed is a part of the mission endeavors of this church.

Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus.

X. **Stewardship**

The duty and privilege of every Christian is to support God's work with his financial resources. Christian giving is to be proportionate with income and resources, it is to be cheerful, and it is to be done regularly as a part of Christian worship. The faithful steward lives in recognition that all blessings, whether material or spiritual, are gifts from God. These blessings include, but are not limited to, our time, talents, and gifts, which should all be devoted to God.

XI. **Church and State**

The growth and advancement of God's Kingdom is carried out only by spiritual means. No one can or should be forced by civil government to align themselves with, or participate in, public or private religious practices. We believe that it is the duty of all Christians to support, obey, and pray for those in civil authority over them. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. We do not believe that it is the duty of civil government to deny the right of any citizen to engage in or to express his religious convictions. This does not include religious expressions that are a threat to individual or public safety or those who needlessly disobey civil authority. We believe that Christian virtue cannot be legislated, however civil law can and should reflect the eternal moral standards revealed in Scripture.

XII. **Last Things**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

XIII. **The Family**

The family is a gift from God to humanity. Marriage is a life-long commitment of a man and woman to each other as long as both are alive. Children are a gift and a blessing from God to a husband and his wife. The husband is the spiritual head of his family. He is charged by God to love his wife as Christ loves the church. Any husband who willfully refuses to provide for the spiritual and material well being of his family sins against God and his family. The wife is to submit lovingly to the leadership of her husband. Children are to live in obedience to their parents. Parents are to teach and model Christ-like character to their children. Parents are the most important means of grace that God uses to bring children to salvation.

## **Article 5 - Membership**

### **Section 1 - Qualifications**

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who gives credible testimony of regeneration, who has been baptized by immersion in obedience to Christ following his regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must accept the Statement of Faith and the Church Covenant. The pastor/elders shall be responsible for determining whether a person qualifies for membership. In making that determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, a letter from the person's previous church, or such other evidence as the pastor/elders deem appropriate.

### **Section 2 - Admission**

The following procedures are to be followed for admitting a candidate to membership in Philadelphia Baptist Church.

1. The candidate shall request membership.
2. The pastor/elders shall notify the church of those who have applied for membership by recognizing them at a regularly scheduled worship service.
3. The candidate shall be interviewed by the pastor/elders. This interview shall include the following:
  - a. the candidate's testimony of his conversion experience
  - b. the candidate's understanding of his growth in God's grace
  - c. the candidate's understanding of Christian doctrine
4. The candidate shall be recommended by the pastor/elders for admission into membership of the church.
5. The candidate shall be accepted by the members at any regular or special meeting of the congregation. At that time the candidate shall relinquish his membership in other churches.

### **Section 3 - Duties and Privileges**

In accordance with the Church Covenant, each member is given the privilege and is expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Those entitled to serve in the ministries of the church will be members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the pastor/elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

It is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and to participate in the election of officers, in decisions regarding membership, and in such other matters as may be submitted.

### **Section 4 - Associate Membership**

Students and others temporarily residing in the greater Birmingham, Alabama area, who are members of an evangelical church may apply for associate membership. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership as set out above, except that home church membership must be retained. A letter of commendation will be sought from the applicant's home church.

Duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for other members with these exceptions:

- a. When absent from the Birmingham, Alabama, area for extended periods of time, they are released from the responsibilities of attending our services.
- b. While they will be encouraged to participate in members' meetings, they will not be eligible to stand for any office.

Termination of associate membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other members, except that the elders shall notify the pastor or elders of the home church of that termination. Associate membership will normally terminate immediately upon the ending of the period of temporary residence in the Birmingham, Alabama area.

## **Section 5 - Church Discipline**

Conduct dishonoring the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ and in opposition to the welfare of the church shall be subject to the admonition of the pastor/elders and the loving discipline of the church. This will be done according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17.

## **Section 6 - Termination**

Termination of membership shall be recognized by the church following the death or voluntary resignation of any church member. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline at the recommendation of the pastor/elders and with the vote of two-thirds of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members.

## **Article 6 - Officers**

### **Section 1 - Summary**

Jesus Christ is the Head of His Church. As Head, He has ordained that individual churches be blessed with spiritual oversight through the ministry of special office holders. The Biblical offices of the church are pastor/elders and deacons. (The Bible uses three words to describe those who have spiritual oversight in the church. The words *elder*, *bishop*, and *pastor* all refer to one office.) In addition, under this Constitution our church recognizes the administrative positions of clerk, treasurer; and pastoral assistants and ministerial staff. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

### **Section 2 –Pastor/Elders**

The pastor/elders shall be comprised of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of pastor/elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. A majority of the active eldership may but not necessarily be composed of church members not in the regular pay of the church, and no pastor/elder shall hold the office of deacon.

The pastor/elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. They are accountable to God and to the congregation. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the pastor/elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as pastor/elders.

A pastor/elder may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that a pastor/elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the pastor/elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Any pastor/elder may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members.

The pastor/elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for global missions. The pastor/elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation (including other paid staff, Sunday School teachers, small group leaders, outside speakers, etc.) share our fundamental convictions.

The pastor/elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The pastor/elders may also propose paid staff positions, and shall present a job description for each position to the membership for approval. The membership may approve all candidates to fill such positions or may delegate this responsibility on a position-by-position basis to the pastor/elders, deacons, or other staff member.

The pastor/elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to the deacons or a staff member.

The senior pastor shall serve as the chairman of pastor/elders and shall moderate at members' meetings. In his absence, the pastor/elders shall designate another pastor/elder to fulfill these duties.

Resolutions and proposals adopted by the pastor/elders may be reported to the church at members' meetings and may be reversed by the church.

### **Section 3 - The Senior Pastor**

The senior pastor is a pastor/elder. He shall perform the duties of a pastor/elder described in Section 2, above, but shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. He shall also serve as chairman of the pastor/elders and shall moderate at members' meetings.

It is the ordinary duties of the Senior Pastor to preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the Constitution (These duties may be delegated to individuals he deems appropriate.).

In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor, a pastor/elder shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which may be delegated.

#### **Section 4 – Pastor/Elders in Regular Pay of Church**

Pastor/Elders in the regular pay of the church will be elected in the same way as the Senior Pastor. They will be ordained ministers of the Gospel. Their term of service will not be limited.

#### **Section 5 – Pastoral Assistant**

The pastor/elders may hire additional staff to assist with pastoral ministry, designated as pastoral assistants. These may also be unpaid positions. These may be recognized as pastor/elders should they be nominated by the pastor/elders and elected by the congregation, in accordance with Article 6, Section 2, Paragraph 6.

The pastor/elders shall assign the responsibilities of the pastoral assistant(s). They shall serve at the will of the pastor/elders.

#### **Section 6 – Ministerial Staff**

Full-time or part-time (paid or unpaid) ministerial staff may also be selected to perform specific ministry duties under the oversight of the pastor/elders. They will be recommended by the pastor/elders and voted upon by the church. (See Article 6, Section 2, Paragraphs 5 and 6.) These do not hold the position of or function as pastor/elders.

#### **Section 7 - Deacons**

The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, who possess gifts of servant-leadership, and who are called to further service. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. They shall be elected to one term lasting for a maximum of three years and may only be elected to another term after one year.

The work of deacons is practical in nature. Their objective is to relieve the pastor/elders for the ministry of the Word, prayer, and oversight of the church. They are to be accountable to the pastor/elders. The primary nature of the pastor/elder's role is instruction and decision-making, and the primary nature of the deacon's role is action and implementation.

Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, oversee the financial activities and properties of the church, encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration.

Each year, the deacons, under the leadership and approval of the pastor/elders, shall present to the church an itemized budget at a members' meeting. This budget shall be presented for discussion at that time and called up for a vote. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the pastor/elders and deacons.

The deacons shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the church at each member's meeting. They shall receive, hold, and

disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the pastor/elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.

The deacons, with the agreement of the pastor/elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees (Ministry Groups) of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

Resolutions and proposals adopted by the deacons shall be approved by the pastor/elders and thereafter approved by the church at members' meetings. All such resolutions and proposals may be reversed by resolutions and proposals of the pastor/elders, or by the church.

### **Section 8 - Clerk**

It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to ensure an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the pastor/elders, the deacons, or the church.

In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the pastor/elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk.

The clerk shall ensure that dated copies of this Constitution shall be available to all church members.

### **Section 9 - Treasurer**

The treasurer, who shall not be a pastor/elder, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as the deacons shall designate as a depository. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the pastor/elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all financial transactions, and an accurate report of the financial condition of the church.

## **Article 7 - Elections**

### **Section 1 - Principles**

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:

1. Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process.
2. Nominations should proceed with the support of the pastor/elders.
3. All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members.
4. The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Section 2 –Selection of Officers**

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. The pastor/elders will seek to recognize and recommend men in the church that God is calling to serve as pastor/elders. The pastor/elders will seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process for deacons, clerk, and treasurer. A slate of names of nominees to serve as pastor/elders, deacons, clerk and treasurer shall be presented by the pastor/elders at a members' meeting.

Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the pastor/elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the pastor/elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting.

The chairman of the pastor/elders (Senior Pastor) shall declare elected all persons receiving a two-thirds majority of all votes cast for any office; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

## **Section 3 - Calling of Pastor/Elders under regular pay of the church**

In calling men (senior pastor, pastors in regular pay of the church) to these positions, the same basic process of calling a pastor/elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching/teaching gifts of any potential pastor/elder and, before being asked to express judgment, must receive assurance from the pastor/elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant and to his suitability to serve in the proposed position. **Notice of nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as a pastor/elder under regular pay of the church must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.**

### **Article 8 - Resolution**

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (e.g., Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 6:1-8), the church shall encourage its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to Biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts, whenever possible.

### **Article 9 - Amendments**

The Statement of Faith and Church Covenant may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote. The revised version of this Constitution shall be made available to all church members by the church clerk.

## **By Laws**

- I. The Church shall hold its regular members' meeting in conjunction with Philly Family Day.
- II. Any called members' meeting needed in case of emergency can be called by the senior pastor/ moderator.
- III. The Elders can, by majority vote, call a special members' meeting in case the senior pastor/moderator refuses to do so, provided notice is given in writing one month in advance, with the exception of Article II.
- IV. The Elders can, by majority vote, call a special members' meeting in case the senior pastor/ moderator refuses to do so, provided notice is given in writing one month in advance, with the exception of Article II.
- VI. Any By Law can be repealed by a two-thirds vote of the congregation, provided notice is given in writing one month in advance.
- VII. The Church shall be supported by the Tithes and Offerings of the membership.
- VIII. Robert's Rules of Order will be used as guidelines for members' meetings.