

# Richland Southern Baptist Church Constitution

## ***Preamble***

We, the members of Richland Southern Baptist Church, declare and establish this constitution for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith and that this body, known as the church, may be governed in an orderly manner. We fully acknowledge that the church is not a building, organization, club, or other entity, but by biblical definition, is made up of individuals who have and maintain a loving relationship with Jesus Christ, our Savior, and have committed themselves to membership in this body of believers. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches (I Corinthians 12:12-31 and Ephesians 5:23).

## ***Article I. Name and Incorporation***

This body shall be known as "Richland Southern Baptist Church" of East Peoria, Illinois, incorporated in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois as a nonprofit organization. The name of this church will be represented as "RSBC" throughout this document.

## ***Article II. Mission Statement and Purpose***

"Leading people to know and love Jesus Christ, love others, and serve the world to the glory of God."

## ***Article III. Statement of Faith***

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God and as the only basis for our beliefs and practice. RSBC accepts the Southern Baptist Convention's current confessional statement, "The Baptist Faith and Message," as a general statement of faith.

RSBC maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. It recognizes the needs for mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptist Churches. RSBC voluntarily affiliates with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Illinois Baptist State Association, and the Metro-Peoria Baptist Association.

## ***Article IV. Church Covenant***

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ and, on profession of our faith, having been baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, 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 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 throughout all nations.

We also engage

- to maintain family and personal devotions;
- to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our family members and acquaintances;
- to walk with Christian virtues in the world;
- to be just in our manner; to avoid unkind remarks, and excessive anger;
- to abstain from addictions and anything that hinders our relationship with God and/or harms our witness to others or causes others to sin;
- 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 one another in prayer;
- to aid one another in sickness and distress;
- to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech;
- to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it 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 V. Rights of Property***

We acknowledge that all property of the church ultimately belongs to the Lord, and we as servants of the Lord, are merely stewards of His property. Should a division of membership occur because of doctrinal difference, the title to and possession of all property and assets owned by RSBC shall remain with the group holding the doctrinal position common to the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. Should RSBC dissolve, all assets of the church, after outstanding debts are paid, including funds ensued by the sale of property, shall be donated to the local Southern Baptist association to be used for mission endeavors of the denomination.

#### ***Article VI. Church Organization***

##### ***Introduction***

According to biblical teaching, we acknowledge that God has five specific purposes for His church as taught directly from Jesus Christ in the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20): evangelism, worship,

fellowship, discipleship, and ministry/service. It is the duty of RSBC to complete these purposes under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

We recognize that individuals are at different levels of commitment in their relationship with God. It will be the goal of all RSBC programs, activities, and ministries to meet individuals where they are in their walk with the Lord, and move them along on the path of spiritual maturity, ready and equipped to go back out into their community to reach others for Jesus Christ (Hebrews 5:12-14).

All functions, organizations, interests, and activities will focus on the five purposes of the church. Therefore, RSBC will be organized as follows to complete the intentions that Jesus Christ has for His church.

### ***Section 1: Mission (Evangelism)***

#### ***Purpose***

According to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19a), we are commanded to "go and make disciples of all nations." We fulfill this commandment through evangelism.

RSBC shall make every effort to reach people in the local community and throughout the world in the name of Jesus Christ, sharing His love for each person and leading them towards a saving relationship with Him.

#### ***The Mission Team***

The Mission Team will focus on the evangelistic aspect of church life. This team will be responsible for leading the church in evangelistic events and activities which will make statements for Jesus Christ in our community and around the world. The Mission Team will be comprised of other related departments.

The Mission Team will be led by a Mission Team Director who will have the responsibility for organization of the team at RSBC and serve on the Church Council. If the Mission Team Director is a lay person, he/she shall be nominated to the church body by the Team Building Committee and voted on by the church in the July regular business meeting and serve for one (1) calendar year. If the Mission Team Director is a member of the pastoral staff, he shall fall under the constitutional requirements of the office of Associate Pastor.

The Mission Team will be comprised of the departments of missions, WMU, Baptist Men, outreach, and any other church-sponsored organizations which are deemed by the church to be encompassed in evangelism.

The Mission Team will focus on the individuals who are unchurched, and have not had a genuine salvation experience with Jesus Christ.

The focus of the Mission Team is to move people towards salvation in Jesus Christ and direct them to worship and attendance at RSBC or another local New Testament church.

## ***Section 2: Magnification (Worship)***

### ***Purpose***

According to the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37), we are commanded to "love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all of your mind." Expressing our love and devotion to God requires that we worship Him.

RSBC is committed to sincere and true biblical worship. Our primary responsibility as Christians is to uplift privately and collectively the name of Jesus to God alone.

### ***The Magnification Team***

The Magnification Team will focus on the worship aspect of church life. This team will be responsible for leading those in attendance in collective worship, organization and delegation of all music and any other related departments.

The Magnification Team will be led by a Magnification team Director who will have the responsibility for organization of the team at RSBC and serve on the Church Council. If the Magnification Team Director is a lay person, he/she shall be nominated to the church body by the Team Building Committee and voted on by the church in the July regular business meeting and serve for one (1) calendar year. If the Magnification Team Director is a member of the pastoral staff, he shall fall under the constitutional requirements of the office of Associate Pastor.

The Magnification Team will be comprised of the departments of praise and worship (music), multi-media, drama, and any other church-sponsored organizations which are deemed by the church to be encompassed in worship.

The Magnification Team will focus on the group of people collected together, members and non-members of the church, to worship, and move individuals who regularly attend worship services and other church activities at RSBC into official members of RSBC.

### ***Collective Worship***

RSBC acknowledges that we were created and designed to worship God and Him alone. Worship, while collective, is also private and personal to each individual. RSBC recognizes that an outward sign to a growing genuine faith in Jesus Christ is active participation in collective worship.

Public worship services will be maintained on Sunday mornings and at other times as deemed necessary by the congregation.

Active members in good standing are expected to be regular attendees and participants in collective worship services (Psalm 149:1, John 4:23-24, and Hebrews 10:25).

Dates and times of worship services will be set by a majority vote of the congregation, and information concerning those times and dates will be actively communicated to the community.

### ***Section 3: Membership (Fellowship)***

#### ***Purpose***

According to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19b), we are commanded to "baptiz(e) them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." We fulfill this commandment through fellowship.

RSBC believes that we are called not only to believe in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior, but that He also calls us to belong to His family by uniting with a local church body.

#### ***The Membership Team***

The Membership Team will focus on the fellowship aspect of church life. This team will be responsible for leading people attending our church who have had a genuine salvation experience with Jesus Christ into membership at RSBC. Biblically, we are led to believe and led to belong to the body of Christ.

The Membership Team will be led by a Membership Team Director who will have the responsibility for organization of the team at RSBC and serve on the Church Council. If the Membership Team Director is a lay person, he/she shall be nominated to the church body by the Team Building Committee and voted on by the church in the July regular business meeting and serve for one (1) calendar year. If the Membership Team Director is a member of the pastoral staff, he shall fall under the constitutional requirements of the office of Associate Pastor.

The Membership Team will be comprised of the departments of church fellowship, recreation, social functions, and any other church-sponsored organizations which are deemed by the church to be encompassed in fellowship.

The Membership Team will focus on the actual members of RSBC and move people forward in godly growth and prepare them for ministry involvement within the church.

#### ***Qualifications for Church Membership***

First and foremost, any individual who is a candidate for membership at RSBC must profess to have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior (a genuine salvation experience) followed by baptism by immersion.

Second, an individual desiring to be received as a candidate for membership of RSBC must engage in a counseling session by the senior pastor, or his designee. The counseling session shall include a discussion of the candidate's standing in their relationship with Jesus Christ as well as a clear explanation of the responsibilities as a member of RSBC. The Church Council may be consulted in any request for membership situation that is deemed to be questionable.

Third, the individual must then express in the presence of the Congregation the desire for membership. The Congregation will then vote whether or not to receive that individual as a member by majority vote.

Candidates approved by vote receive membership at the time of the vote or, in the case of an individual who has yet to be baptized, at the time of their baptism by immersion.

### ***Receiving of Church Members***

RSBC will only receive candidates that fall into one of the following categories:

- an individual who has made a public profession of genuine faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and a request for biblical baptism by immersion
- an individual for whom a letter of recommendation or statement of explanation from another Southern Baptist Church has been obtained showing that member to be in good standing
- an individual who makes a public statement of genuine faith in Jesus Christ and a prior biblical baptism by immersion (as defined by God's Word and this constitution) following salvation

### ***Rights and Responsibilities of Membership***

Only active members in full fellowship and regular standing may act and vote in the transactions of the church.

"Full fellowship" shall be defined as a member who has entered into a covenant relationship (agreement) with the church for mutual love, concern, and ministry and whose membership has not been terminated.

"Regular standing/good standing" shall be defined as a member who is active in the church and in attendance during the time for collective worship. Members of the church are encouraged to examine their commitment to attendance and involvement. Active members of RSBC are expected to be:

- actively participating in the life of the church body
- actively seeking to discover and use their spiritual gifts through a specific ministry of the church
- actively supporting the fulfillment of the five purposes of the church
- actively following the Biblical standard to financially support the ministries of RSBC and those entities supported by RSBC around the world.

Any member who is not actively involved in the ministries of the church as a member in regular standing for one (1) year or more without justifiable cause (illness, shut in, unavoidable work conditions, etc.) as defined by the church body will be moved to the church's list of inactive members and ineligible to vote in transactions of the church by the Church Council after biblical attempts for restoration. Active members must be sixteen years or older to vote in a business meeting.

### ***Termination of Membership***

Membership at RSBC may be terminated by one of the following situations:

- Any member in full fellowship who desires a letter of recommendation to any church affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention is entitled to have such a letter forwarded to the church clerk of the receiving church.
- Any member in full fellowship who desires to join a non-Southern Baptist Church may request that their membership at RSBC be terminated.
- Any member of RSBC who has become involved in biblically immoral, disobedient, or unchristian conduct may have their membership terminated only by following the steps outlined below:

The member should be approached, according to Scripture (Matthew 18:15-17), to restore fellowship with Jesus Christ and His church, by an individual, or later, individuals, as designated by the church.

If the member in question continues to refuse biblical restoration and repentance, the church may then give the individual due notice of at least seven (7) days that a hearing will take place before the church body to deal with the matter and vote on the revocation of membership. The church, by majority vote, may terminate the individual's membership.

### ***Discipline***

All matters pertaining to the purposes of RSBC shall be supported and done with the consent of the church body.

Personal grievances shall at no time be considered a matter of church concern unless the harmony, unity, and/or fellowship of the church body are in jeopardy.

All matters of church discipline will be dealt with according to the biblical standards (Matthew 18:15-17).

Church discipline shall be administered only after every spiritual method has failed to restore the offender to full harmony and fellowship.

### ***Restoration***

Any individual whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by majority vote of the church upon satisfactory evidence of the individual's repentance, changed lifestyle, and public explanation to the church.

### ***Church Business Meetings***

Meetings of the church body will be scheduled at regular intervals as decided by vote of the church for the following purposes:

- To allow time for church leaders or committees to give ministry reports to the church body
- To hear correspondence sent to the church
- To consider and vote on recommendations from the Church Council
- To review and vote on any business of the church as called for in this constitution
- To give the members of RSBC opportunity to question, commend, show concern for, or recommend items of business before the church body

In order to conduct business, a quorum of at least ten percent (10%) of the active membership must be present.

Agendas for business meetings will be conducted along the basic format:

1. Call to order and prayer
2. The Congregation may approve, by majority vote, a report from the church clerk, or his/her designee, on the minutes from the previous meeting and any special meetings or votes that have occurred since the last business meeting.
3. The Congregation may approve, by majority vote, a report from the church treasurer, or his/her designee, on financial transactions of the church since the last business meeting including monies taken in by the church, monies spent by the church, amounts designated for special purposes, budget updates, final account balances, etc.
4. The church may collectively approve reports given by the chairpersons of the deacons, the Mission Team, the Magnification Team, the Membership Team, the Maturity Team, the Ministry Team, and any other church leaders.
5. The church will consider recommendations from the Church Council.
6. The Congregation will discuss and take action on any items of old business that still lay before the church body.
7. The church will hear correspondence written to the church body and take any necessary action.
8. The floor will be opened up for new business to be brought before the Congregation.
9. By majority vote of the church, the meeting will adjourn.

All procedures, unless otherwise noted, will follow the procedures outlined by the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

### ***Special Business Meetings***

The church may, from time to time, need to conduct special business requiring consultation and/or action from the church body.

Special business meetings may be called by the pastoral staff and/or the Chairman of the Deacons.

### ***Church Ordinances***

RSBC recognizes two ordinances of the church as called for in Scripture: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

#### ***Baptism***

Biblical baptism is only for individuals who have made a profession of genuine faith in and have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Baptism is a public picture of the relationship that already exists between the individual and the Lord (Acts 2:38 and Acts 8:26-40). We recognize that baptism does not bring about salvation, but is public recognition of a true salvation experience after a personal commitment has been made to the Lord.

RSBC recognizes baptism only by immersion of the individual in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, and John 1:31-34).

The ordinance of baptism is conducted after an affirmative vote of the church body with the Senior Pastor or the church's designee baptizing the individual.

#### ***The Lord's Supper***

RSBC recognizes that Jesus Christ encouraged all of His followers to come together and remember the sacrifice of His body and blood made for our sins on the cross (Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:17-20, and I Corinthians 11:17-34).

Dates and times for the observation of the Lord's Supper will be set by the Senior Pastor in consultation with the pastoral staff and the deacons.

Individuals desiring to partake in the Lord's Supper must have professed a genuine faith and have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and take the Lord's Supper only after careful examination of their lives as outlined by Scripture (I Corinthians 11:27-30).

The Lord's Supper will be officiated by the Senior Pastor, his designee, or a designee appointed by the church.

The deacons of RSBC will serve the church body the elements (usually unleavened bread and juice) according to the direction of the Chairman of the Deacons. In the absence of the necessary number of deacons to administer the Lord's Supper, the church may designate other members of the church to serve.

#### ***Section 4. Maturity (Discipleship)***

##### ***Purpose***

According to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:20a), we are commanded to "teach them to obey everything I (Jesus Christ) have commanded you." We fulfill this commandment through discipleship.

RSBC will be committed to the further growth and life development of its members and attendees through active discipleship programs, encouraging individuals to become more like Jesus Christ in their spiritual walk. The educational programs of RSBC will be centered around four (4) fundamental beliefs about maturity:

- All educational programming will be based on sound, biblical principles (Titus 2:1).
- All educational programming will focus on specific learning outcomes – targeted principles – that God can use to change a person more and more to the likeness of His Son (Colossians 3:15-17).
- All educational programming will include methods and means by which individuals can easily recall Scripture through the strict teaching of God's Word (Psalm 119:11).
- All educational programming will be led by Christians who are deemed to be matured in the faith, regardless of age, and are members of the church and have the responsibility to mentor and guide others in their Christian walk. Guest leaders/speakers may be invited with the approval of the church body (Titus 2:1-10).

##### ***The Maturity Team***

The Maturity Team will focus on the discipleship and education aspects of church life. This team will be responsible for leading people, through the teaching of God's Word, to grow and develop in their personal walk with Jesus Christ.

The Maturity Team will be led by a Maturity Team Director who will have the responsibility for organization of the team at RSBC and serve on the Church Council. If the Maturity Team Director is a lay person, he/she shall be nominated to the church body by the Team Building Committee and voted on by the church in the July regular business meeting and serve for one (1) calendar year. If the Maturity Team Director is a member of the pastoral staff, he shall fall under the constitutional requirements of the office of Associate Pastor.

The Maturity Team will be comprised of the departments of Sunday School, discipleship classes, Children's Church, Vacation Bible School, small learning groups, and any other church-sponsored organizations which are deemed by the church to be encompassed in discipleship.

To ensure that an individual understands the commitment necessary for biblical church membership, the Maturity Team will provide new members with age and situation appropriate orientation/training.

The Maturity Team will focus on the members of RSBC who are growing and whom God is preparing for ministry work.

The focus of the Maturity Team is to move people from being members of RSBC who are growing and whom God is preparing for ministry work to being a part of the dedicated group of workers and leaders that have committed themselves to specific ministries under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

## ***Section 5. Ministry (Ministry/Service)***

### ***Purpose***

According to the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:39), we are commanded to "love your neighbor as yourself." We fulfill this commandment through ministry and service to others.

RSBC desires to seek opportunities where the church body can help meet the needs in our membership, community, nation, and around the world through service projects and programs. RSBC encourages each member to discover their God-given spiritual gifts and, through training, use those gifts to serve others and the church.

### ***The Ministry Team***

The Ministry Team will focus on the ministry and service aspect of church life. This team will be responsible for leading people to demonstrate God's love to others by helping to meet their spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical needs and bring healing to their hurts in the name of Jesus Christ.

The Ministry Team will be lead by a Ministry Team Director who will have the responsibility for organization of the team at RSBC and serve on the Church Council. If the Ministry Team Director is a lay person, he/she shall be nominated to the church body by the Team Building Committee and voted on by the church in the July regular business meeting and serve for one (1) calendar year. If the Ministry Team Director is a member of the pastoral staff, he shall fall under the constitutional requirements of the office of Associate Pastor.

The Ministry Team will be comprised of the departments of pastoral ministries, deacon ministries, trustees, ushers, food and clothing pantries, service projects, various church committees, and any other church-sponsored organizations which are deemed by the church to be encompassed in ministry.

The Ministry Team will focus on the active members of RSBC who are equipped and ready for ministry. The focus of the Ministry Team is to move people who are equipped and ready for ministry into using those skills to return to the community to reach others for Jesus Christ.

### ***Church Officers***

RSBC will select officers who fulfill the qualifications as listed in the New Testament. We recognize that there are two biblical offices, that of the pastor and the deacon.

The Congregation of RSBC is encouraged through Scripture (I Thessalonians 5:12-13 and Hebrews 13:17) to show honor, respect, and dutifully submit to the spiritual leadership of those God has selected to serve.

### ***Pastoral Staff***

#### ***Qualifications***

A man desiring to hold a pastoral position must have the following Scriptural qualifications (I Corinthians 6:19-20, I Timothy 3:1-7, II Timothy 1:3-9, Titus 1:4-8, and I Peter 5:1-4):

- a specific testimony of how the individual has been called by God to serve in a pastoral role
- a life which is honorable, with a good reputation, and welcoming to others
- faithfulness to one wife (not divorced); managing his family with love, honor, and respect
- self-control, gentleness of spirit, and wisdom in decisions in order to lead by example
- teaching abilities
- maturity in the Christian experience (not a new believer)
- a genuine caring spirit willing to serve others
- a life that recognizes his body as temple of the Holy Spirit, free from addictions and anything that hinders his relationship with God

### ***The Senior Pastor***

#### ***Election***

A senior pastor shall be chosen and called by the Congregation whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose with

at least seven (7) days public notice to the Congregation.

A Pastoral Search Committee of five (5) active members in good standing shall be appointed by the Congregation to seek out a senior pastor who meets the necessary biblical qualifications and is suitable to bring for consideration to the church body. This recommendation will constitute a nomination from that committee. The committee will bring only one recommendation at a time as a candidate for senior pastor. Subsequent nominations, if necessary, will require additional meetings per number of candidates.

The election of the senior pastor will be made by secret ballot with an affirmative vote of at least nine-tenths (90%) of those present.

The senior pastor, once elected, shall serve for an indefinite period unless termination is desired.

### ***Termination***

The relationship between the senior pastor and the church may be terminated upon thirty (30) days notice by the senior pastor unless the senior pastor and the church mutually agree upon a waiver of those thirty (30) days.

Should the Congregation desire to terminate this relationship, termination must take place during a meeting called for that purpose, notifying the active church body at least ten (10) days prior to that meeting. This meeting shall be conducted with a quorum of at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the Congregation (active membership) present. Termination will result with an affirmative vote by secret ballot of at least three-fourths (75%) of those present to approve termination. If termination is approved, the senior pastor will be given thirty (30) days notice before such termination shall go into effect unless the senior pastor and the church mutually agree upon a waiver of those thirty (30) days.

If the senior pastor is called into question due to an accusation, the Congregation must provide at least two or three witnesses to the offense for the offense to be taken seriously (I Timothy 5:17-19) with the exception of a serious offense that could require legal involvement.

### ***Suspension***

In the event that there is an issue requiring immediate suspension of pastoral duties, notification will be made to the deacons who will convene and have the authority to temporarily suspend pastoral duties pending an investigation. The pastor will receive regular pay during such time as an investigation is being conducted. As much as possible, the congregation will be kept informed. No information is to be shared which might inhibit an investigation.

### ***Duties***

It shall be the senior pastor's duty to preach God's Word during stated times agreed upon by the church (Acts 6:4). It will be the duty of the senior pastor to find an individual within the church to provide pulpit supply should he be temporarily absent. If there are no individuals available within the church, or if there are special circumstances, the senior pastor may seek an outside individual for pulpit supply to whom an honorarium will be offered.

The senior pastor, serving in the role of shepherd (John 21:15-17), serves as an ex-officio member of all church organizations.

The senior pastor is also to be a man of prayer and the ministry God has given him to teach the Word of God (Acts 6:3-4).

The senior pastor will maintain a church calendar in cooperation with the Church Council and the church body.

The senior pastor is the immediate supervisor of all other pastoral staff and other church employees, providing an annual evaluation of performance to those staff members as well as copies to the church Personnel Committee each May.

### ***Benefits***

Benefits provided to the senior pastor will be outlined by the Personnel Committee with approval by majority vote of the Congregation present.

### ***Associate Pastors***

Associate pastors may, from time to time, be elected by the church to provide a specific function within the church as well as providing ministerial support to the senior pastor.

Associate pastors will follow the same process for election, term, termination, suspension, and benefits as outlined for the senior pastor. The Personnel Committee may make further recommendations as to job description, salary, and benefits.

Associate pastors are assigned duties at the time of their election by mutual agreement of the church and the senior pastor.

## ***Deacons***

### ***Qualifications***

A man qualified to hold a position of deacon must have the following Scriptural qualifications (I Timothy 3:8-12):

- a life which is respected and shows integrity
- a faithfulness to one wife (not divorced) and good management of the family with love, honor, and respect
- self-control, gentleness of spirit, and wisdom in decisions
- maturity in and commitment to the Christian experience (not a new believer)
- an examined lifestyle by the church body
- wives who are also respected and show self-control
- a life that recognizes the individual's body as temple of the Holy Spirit, free from addictions and anything that hinders the individual's relationship with God

### ***Election*** (Acts 6:1-4)

Deacons shall be elected for a lifetime term unless the man no longer meets the qualifications as set by this constitution.

Deacons within the Congregation are to be considered either "active" or "inactive." Inactive deacons do not serve the duties of deacons within the church body.

The number of deacons serving at any given time shall be decided upon by the church.

New deacons are elected by the church membership during a regular business meeting, or, if the candidate is not previously ordained, at the time of ordination.

At such time that is necessary to elect deacons, the members present will be asked by the Chairman of the Deacons to submit one to three names of qualified individuals to be considered.

Qualified men will be submitted to the Congregation for candidacy by secret ballot during a regular business meeting with members voting "yes" or "no" for each individual candidate.

Candidates for the office of deacon will be mentored by the current deacons for a one (1) year period prior to ordination.

Qualified men previously ordained as deacon from a Southern Baptist church may be activated at RSBC by church vote after a six (6) month period of active membership.

### ***Duties***

Deacons are to be servants, working under the shepherding of the pastoral staff (Acts 6:1-7).

The active deacons of the church shall annually elect an individual to serve as Chairman of the Deacons to conduct their meetings and represent this group on the Church Council.

It shall be the duty of the deacons to assist the pastoral staff in attending to the individuals and families within the Congregation. Deacons shall be assigned a list of church members/families to serve.

The deacons will distribute the elements during the Lord's Supper. In the absence of the correct number of deacons needed, the church may designate other members to serve.

### ***Ordination***

RSBC recognizes that there are two types of ordination, one for the office of pastor and one for the office of deacon.

It shall be the duty of the Chairman of the Deacons to bring before the church names of individuals for ordination during a business meeting with approval of a majority vote of the Congregation present.

Special services for ordination will be set by the church.

An Ordination Council shall be formed containing ordained individuals invited by the Chairman of the Deacons to participate in the Ordination Council. The Ordination Council will select, by a vote, a chairman to conduct this service.

Each individual set for ordination will be given time to share their personal testimony concerning their relationship with the Lord.

Each individual set for ordination will be duly questioned by the Ordination Council Chairperson, causing the individual to give complete answers to fair, biblical questions.

After questioning from the chairperson, any member of the Ordination Council or any member of the Congregation or any other attendee may question candidates, eliciting a response.

The Ordination Council will then meet in executive session to discuss the individuals set for ordination and, upon returning from executive session, make any necessary recommendations to the church body.

Individuals shall be duly ordained by majority vote of the church body of RSBC.

The newly ordained individual will be given the opportunity to select a previously ordained individual to speak at the Ordination Service to give a "charge" to the individual and to the church.

Members of the Ordination Council will spend a few moments in individual prayer with the newly ordained person before the adjournment of the ordination services as called for by the chairman of the Ordination Council.

### ***Church Council***

The Church Council serves as an advisory council to the pastoral staff and Congregation.

#### ***Functions***

The Church Council will seek to correlate and coordinate the activities, organizations, and events of the church.

The Church Council serves in an advisory capacity only, making recommendations to the Congregation in a regular business meeting. These recommendations are approved by a majority vote or acclamation of the Church Council before being presented as a recommendation to the church body.

The senior pastor may, from time to time, use the Church Council to gain counsel and/or action upon issues and serious matters which may affect the life of the church body.

#### ***Members***

The members of the Church Council shall be as follows: The senior pastor, associate pastors, other church staff members (who are also members of RSBC), the Mission Team Director, the Magnification Team Director, the Membership Team Director, the Maturity Team Director, the Ministry Team Director, the church clerk, the treasurer, the

parliamentarian, the Chairman of the Deacons, the Chairperson of the Trustees, and the Safety Director.

Members of the Church Council must be active members of RSBC in full fellowship and good standing.

Lay members of the Church Council are nominated to the church body by the Team Building Committee and voted on by the church in the July regular business meeting and serve for one (1) calendar year.

Other members of the Church Council not previously stated above may be approved by vote of the Congregation.

The senior pastor, or his designee, shall preside over the Church Council.

Meetings of the Church Council will be held according to the regular business meeting calendar for the church body or a specially called meeting by the Senior Pastor or Chairman of the Deacons. These meetings are open session unless voted on by a majority vote of the council to go into Executive Session.

Members of the church are allowed, upon request, to address the Church Council.

### ***Other Church Staff***

RSBC may call, from time to time with approval from the church, other staff members to fulfill specific needs within the church body.

For each paid church staff member, a full written job description will be constructed by the Personnel Committee, with consultation from pastoral staff, and submitted to the Congregation for a vote.

These staff members will be recommended by the Personnel Committee and called in a regular business meeting by secret ballot majority vote of the members present.

Pay and benefits will be decided upon by vote of the church body based upon recommendations from the Personnel Committee.

These staff positions may be terminated at any time by the person employed in this position and/or the church (based on a majority vote of the Congregation).

### ***Lay Leadership***

#### ***Election***

All lay leadership positions are nominated to the church body by the Team Building Committee and voted on by the church in the July regular business meeting.

All lay leaders serve for one (1) calendar year.

Members of the leadership are to be active members of the church in good standing, full fellowship, and practice biblical tithing.

Any person nominated and approved by the church may resign the position elected by a written note to the church body. It shall be the responsibility of the Team Building Committee to fill any open position by a nomination to the church body.

### ***Church Clerk***

RSBC will annually elect a church clerk.

The church clerk shall keep a suitable record of all business transactions of the church and certain departmental and committee reports submitted for information purposes to the church body. Information presented at a regular business meeting shall include written minutes from the previous business meeting as well as records of church membership and correspondence to the church.

The church clerk shall keep a register of names and current contact information of all resident members of the church as information is available.

The church clerk shall maintain records of all dates of admission of church members to the church body, termination of memberships, and records of baptisms.

It will be the duty of the church clerk, upon approval of the church, to issue letters of transfer or recommendations to other Southern Baptist Churches of like faith and order when requested within sixty (60) days.

The church clerk, in cooperation with the leadership of the church, will complete annual denominational reports of the activities of RSBC.

The church clerk shall preserve on file all communicated and written official reports for a minimum of five (5) years.

All books and records kept by the church clerk shall be considered property of the church. The books shall be open to inspection at all time by any member of the church.

The church clerk shall also be responsible for giving legal notice of all meetings where such notices are required as indicated in this church constitution.

The church clerk shall serve as a member of the Church Council.

### ***Treasurer***

RSBC shall annually elect a church treasurer.

It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out monies as directed by the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements.

Payment of bills for work and expenses shall be made promptly.

It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each business meeting an itemized account showing the receipts and disbursements that have occurred since the previous meeting.

It shall also be the duty of the treasurer to maintain a church budget, reporting to the church at a business meeting the church's budget activities.

All files, records, and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be considered property of the church. The files shall be open to inspection at all times by any member of the church.

The treasurer shall provide upon request the legal sales tax exemption letter for church purchases. (At no time will a member be allowed to use the church's tax exemption status for personal purchases).

The treasurer will automatically serve as a member of any financial committee the church may put into place as well as a member of the Church Council and serve as a member of the Personnel Committee.

### ***Financial Secretary***

RSBC shall annually elect a financial secretary.

The financial secretary shall receive the empty offering records (envelopes) and from these shall record proper individual credit. These records (envelopes) shall be kept on file for at least fifteen (15) months.

It shall be the duty of the financial secretary to create and distribute an annual financial statement to all contributing members by the end of the month of January.

Members of the church are allowed to request the financial secretary to open the records for examination, only viewing their own personal annual statement. Members of the church, including pastoral and other staff, are forbidden to view the annual statement of other members. The financial secretary shall serve as a member of the Finance Committee.

### ***Safety Director***

RSBC will annually elect a Safety Director.

The safety director shall have the responsibility to oversee the security and safety of all persons on church property and all persons involved in a church-sponsored activity.

Areas of responsibility covered by the safety director shall be security and emergency procedures, including weather-related emergencies and injuries. To that end, the safety director or his/her designee would serve as a liaison between RSBC and law enforcement, emergency management, health services, disaster relief, or other related agencies. The safety director, along with pastoral staff, would also communicate with the media in the event that it becomes necessary.

The safety director shall also be responsible for maintaining any confidential materials (i.e. background checks, medical information, credentials of responders) in a secure location. The safety director shall operate under written procedures approved by the church, shall be provided and be expected to complete training necessary to accomplish the objectives of the position, shall coordinate the training of the response team members, and shall regularly review safety and security procedures with church members.

The safety director shall serve as a member of the Church Council.

### ***Trustees***

RSBC shall annually elect trustees.

The number of trustees is to be determined by a vote of the church body during a business meeting.

The trustees shall have the responsibility to oversee all properties owned by the church and the upkeep of those properties and equipment necessary for their upkeep subject to the authority of the church.

The trustees shall have no authority to sell, buy, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church body authorizing such action.

All legal documents pertaining to all properties (deeds and licenses) of the church shall be maintained by the trustees and kept in a safe deposit box. Other documents, such as warranties, insurance policies, etc. shall also be maintained by the trustees and kept in a safe on site.

The church shall nominate one trustee to serve as Chairperson of the Trustees. This chairperson will serve as the key leader for this entity and serve as a member of Church Council.

### ***Moderator***

RSBC shall annually elect a moderator.

The moderator serves as the presiding officer of all church business meetings.

In the absence of the moderator the church shall designate, by majority vote, an individual to serve. The church clerk shall call the meeting to order and a moderator pro-tem shall be elected.

### ***Parliamentarian***

RSBC shall annually elect a parliamentarian.

The parliamentarian shall have the duty to make recommendations and rulings pertaining to, and to assist the moderator in, the conducting of church business.

The parliamentarian shall be familiar with the church constitution and the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order which shall be provided by the church.

The parliamentarian shall be a member of the Church Council.

### ***Committees***

The church shall create necessary committees to complete the work of the church in accordance with this constitution. Members of standing committees listed in this constitution are elected by a majority vote of the Congregation for a term of one (1) year.

#### ***Standing Committees***

##### ***The Team Building Committee***

The senior pastor, in consultation with other pastoral staff, shall appoint a chairperson to lead a Team Building Committee. It will be the duty of the chairperson to nominate to the church body at the April business meeting four (4) members to serve on the Team Building Committee.

It shall be the duty of the Team Building Committee to seek out and nominate to the church individual church members to serve in various positions within the church. The Team Building Committee has no authority on its own to fill positions. Positions are filled by majority vote of the church body.

No positions within the church shall be presented without consultation of the Team Building Committee unless deemed otherwise in this constitution (i.e. pastoral appointment, Church Council appointment, personnel, deacons, etc.)

The Team Building Committee will begin its work after the April business meeting, presenting names of prospective church lay leaders to the church at the July business meeting. The members of the Team Building Committee will consult with other church leaders to fill subsequent positions within the church.

The Team Building Committee will complete its work of nominations for other positions within the church at the August business meeting.

Any person nominated and approved by the church may resign the position elected by a written note to the church body. It shall be the responsibility of the Team Building Committee to fill any open position by a nomination to the church body.

### ***The Personnel Committee***

The Personnel Committee shall consist of four (4) duly elected active church members (who are not paid church staff members), plus the financial secretary and the church treasurer. There will be a chairperson of this committee as selected by the Team Building Committee.

Other than pastoral staff, it shall be the duty of the Personnel Committee to bring nominations to the church for employees and staff members as defined in this constitution.

The Personnel Committee will assist the senior pastor in maintaining the job descriptions of other pastoral staff, and paid employees.

The Personnel Committee will receive copies of evaluations of other pastoral staff and church employees from the senior pastor by the end of May.

The Personnel Committee will recommend to the church the starting salaries, all other salary adjustments, and benefits for the senior pastor, other staff, and employees.

The Personnel Committee will recommend to the church body an interim senior pastor during the period that the church is without a senior pastor if needed.

### ***The Finance Committee***

The Finance Committee shall consist of eight (8) duly elected active church members, plus the financial secretary and the church treasurer. There will be a chairperson of this committee as selected by the Team Building Committee. Neither the church treasurer nor the financial secretary is to serve as chairperson.

The Finance Committee shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget of itemized accounts. This committee shall solicit from each church leader responsible for a budget line item an anticipated

expense amount for the upcoming fiscal year, seeking advice from members of the Church Council for their input into the final budget proposal. The term of the budget year shall be September 1 of the current calendar year to August 31 of the following calendar year. The budget shall be submitted to the church for approval no later than the regular August business meeting.

It shall be the duty of the treasurer or his/her designee and two (2) members of the Finance Committee at one time to count and properly record all tithes and offerings of the church. Once money is counted and collected, all money shall be immediately turned over to the treasurer, and all financial records (envelopes) shall be immediately turned over to the financial secretary.

The chairperson of the financial committee shall receive weekly deposit receipts from the bank verifying the amount of the week's offerings and the week's deposits.

The Finance Committee shall assist the treasurer and the financial secretary in their respective duties and responsibilities.

It shall be the duty of the Finance Committee to initiate an annual audit of all financial records of the church from an outside entity that will then render to the church body an opinion of validation and an annual balance sheet showing all receipts, disbursements, and cash on hand.

### ***Other Committees***

As need arises, the church may designate other standing committees to serve a specified purpose.

Chairpersons and members of these standing committees will be sought out and nominated to the church by the Team Building Committee and appointed by majority vote of the church body.

All committees must be assigned directly under the leadership of the Mission Team, the Magnification Team, the Membership Team, the Maturity Team, or the Ministry Team.

### ***Ad Hoc Committees***

Ad Hoc committees may, from time to time, be necessary for a specific purpose as called for by the church.

The senior pastor shall appoint a chairperson for an Ad Hoc Committee.

Members of an Ad Hoc Committee will be sought out by the chairperson and voted on by the church body in a regular business meeting.

Once the task specific to an Ad Hoc Committee is completed or if the church decides so by majority vote, the committee is then disbanded.

### ***Duties of Leadership***

It shall be the duty of each member of the leadership and/or each committee chairperson to maintain a lifestyle of integrity, commitment and involvement in scheduled meetings, and personal spiritual growth. It shall also be the duty of each member of the leadership to report activities under their stewardship to the church body.

### ***Licensing***

Any member of the church who has shown by lifestyle and has expressed a call of God to the ministry of preaching-teaching may be licensed by the Congregation to the Christian ministry. Licensing is in no way to be confused with ordination.

Members who have shown this call on their lives may be candidates for licensing based on examination by the senior pastor, pastoral staff, and deacons based on qualifications of pastors as listed in Scripture and in this constitution.

The person's name and intentions shall be presented, then, to the Church Council for consideration of licensing. If approved, the Church Council will announce a service where the candidate will be asked to take part during a worship service with a vote to be taken following that service.

If approved by a majority vote of the church members present, RSBC will license that individual for the preaching-teaching ministry.

## ***Article VII. Church Finance***

### ***Budget System***

The church shall adopt the scriptural method of tithes and offerings as its plan of church finance (Genesis 14:19-20, Nehemiah 10:37-38, Malachi 3:8-12, and Hebrews 7:4).

"Tithes" are defined as a tenth of one's gross earnings.

"Offerings" are defined as the amount given to God over and above the tithe.

Members of RSBC shall be encouraged to underwrite the inclusive budget of the church by tithing their income into the church treasury. Each new member shall be informed and educated immediately concerning the Scriptural plan of tithes and offerings, and the workings of the church budget.

Individual church offering envelopes shall be available to each member of the church for their use. Envelopes may be collected during Sunday School, during worship services, or at other times as designated by the treasurer.

No special offerings shall be taken other than those designated by the Southern Baptist Convention, except upon a majority vote of the church body.

### ***Receipts***

Money received from all sources shall be deposited in a bank. All local expenses and denomination offerings shall be paid by check or by online banking with printed copies of receipts to be placed on file.

### ***Monthly Contributions***

Monthly contributions to Southern Baptist organizations or other designated entities, preferably a percentage of the budget, shall be made by check or by online banking with printed receipts to be placed on file.

### ***Accountability***

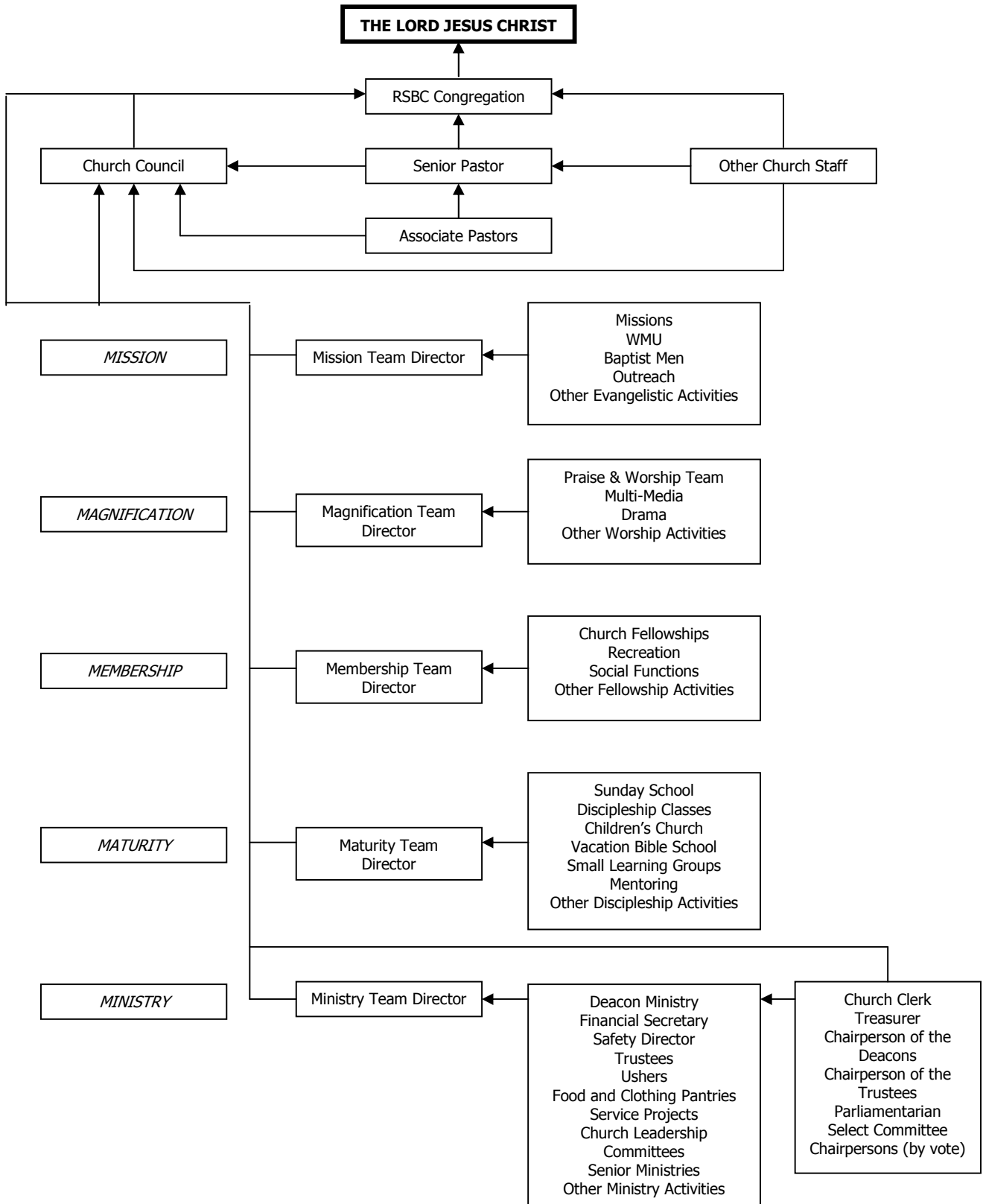
Church leaders assigned line items in the church budget, shall be accountable to the church body to manage appropriate expenditures and answer any questions from the church body concerning those particular line items.

All requests for payments (excluding those paid directly by the treasurer) will be made through a voucher system designed and managed by the church treasurer. Expenditures made out of line items under the supervision of a church leader must have that accountable church leader's signature for payment.

## ***Article VIII. Amendment Process***

This church constitution may be changed by giving notice of such intention six (6) months in advance. All specific changes are to be presented to the church at least thirty (30) days prior to the date set for the voting on said changes. A quorum of ten percent (10%) of active members shall be required for the adoption of changes to the constitution by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the members present at the meeting.

**ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL**



## INDEX

access the financial records	20	discipline	7
accountability	26	drama	4
"active"/"inactive" deacons	15	duties of leadership	19, 25
Ad Hoc Committees	24-25	evaluation	14, 23
agenda for business meetings	8-9	associate pastors	14, 23
amendment	26	other church staff	14, 23
annual financial statements	20	evangelism	3
associate pastors	14-15	fellowship	5-10
benefits	14	Finance Committee	23-24
duties	14	chairperson	23
election	14	duties	23-24
qualifications	14	election	18-19, 22-23
term	14	members	23
audit	24	term	18-19, 21, 22
baptism	9	financial books and records	20
"Baptist Faith and Message, The"	1	Financial Secretary	20
Baptist Men	3	duties	20
budget system	20, 23-24, 25-26	election	18-19, 22-23
business meetings	7-9	qualifications	18
Children's Church	11	term	18-19, 20, 22
church budget	20, 23-24, 25-26	four fundamental beliefs about maturity	10
church business meetings	7-9	full fellowship	6
Church Clerk	19	good standing	6
duties	19, 25	grievances	7
election	18-19, 22-23	immersion	9
qualifications	18, 25	immoral behavior	7
term	18-19, 22	"inactive"/"active" deacons	15
church clerk books and records	19	Incorporation	1
Church Council, The	17-18	lay leadership	18-25
chairman	18	election	18-19, 22-23
election	18-19, 22-23	qualifications	25
function	18	resignation	19
members	18--19	term	18-19
qualifications	18, 25	letters of recommendation	19
term	18-19, 22	licensing	25
Church Covenant	1-2	Lord's Supper, The	9-10
church discipline	7	Magnification (Worship)	4
church fellowships	5	Magnification Team Director, The	4
church finance	19-20, 23-24, 25-26	duties	4
church officers	12-17	election	18-19, 22-23
church ordinances	9-10	qualifications	18, 25
church organization	2-3	term	4, 18, 19
church staff	18	Magnification Team, The	4
collective worship	4	Maturity (Discipleship)	10-11
dates and times	4	Maturity Team Director, The	10-11
leadership	4	duties	11
committees	22-25	election	18-19, 22-23
correspondence to the church	8, 19	qualifications	18, 25
deacon	15-16	term	10, 18, 19
"active" and "inactive"	15	Maturity Team, The	10-11
chairman	16	member responsibilities	6
duties	16	collective worship	6
election	15	participation in church business	6
mentoring of new deacons	16	tithing	6, 25
number of deacons	15	Membership (Fellowship)	5-10
previously ordained	16	membership	5-10
qualifications	15	counseling session	5-11
term	15	discipline	7
denominational reports	19	orientation/training	5-11
disbursements	20, 24	questionable membership	5
discipleship	10-11	qualifications	5-6
discipleship classes	11	receiving members	6

responsibilities	6	receipts	19, 23-24, 26
restoration	7	records	19, 20
rights	6	recreation	5
termination	7	regular standing	6
Membership Team Director, The	5	responsibilities of members	6
duties	5	collective worship	6
election	18-19, 22-23	participation in church business	6
qualifications	18, 25	tithing	6, 25
term	5, 18, 19	restoration of membership	7, 8
Membership Team, The	5	Rights of Property	2
Ministry (Service)	11-25	<u>Robert's Rules of Order</u>	9, 22
Ministry Team Director, The	11-12	Safety Director	20-21
duties	11-12	duties	21
election	18-19, 22-23	election	18-19, 22-23
qualifications	18, 25	qualifications	18
term	11, 18, 19	term	18-19, 20, 22
Ministry Team, The	11-12	senior pastor	12-14
ministry/service	11-25	benefits	14
Mission (Evangelism)	3	duties	14
mission statement & purpose	1	election	12-13
Mission Team Director, The	3	qualifications	12
duties	3	suspension	14
election	18-19, 22-23	term	13
qualifications	18, 25	termination	13
term	3, 18, 19	service/ministry	11-25
Mission Team, The	3	small learning groups	11
mission work	3	social functions	5
Moderator	21	Southern Baptist Convention, The	1
duties	21	special business meetings	9
election	18-19, 22-23	special offerings	26
qualifications	18	staff	18
term	18-19, 21, 22	Standing Committees	22-24
monthly contributions	26	statement of faith	1
multi-media	4	submission to authority	12
music	4	Sunday School	11
Name & Incorporation	1	suspension of the senior pastor	14
new member training/orientation	5, 11	tax exemption status	20
offering envelopes	20, 24, 26	Team Building Committee	22-23
offerings	20, 24, 25-26	chairperson	23
officers	12-17	duties	23
ordinances	9-10	election	18-19, 22-23
ordination	16-17	members	22
Ordination Council	16-17	qualifications	18, 25
organization	2-3	term	18, 22
other church staff	18	termination	7, 13-14
Other Committees	24	membership	7
outreach	3	pastoral relationship	13-14
Parliamentarian	22	tithes	6, 25
duties	22	Treasurer	19-20
election	18-19, 22-23	duties	20
qualifications	18	election	18-19, 22-23
term	18-19, 21, 22	qualifications	18
pastoral authority	12	term	18-19, 22
pastoral staff	12-15	Trustees	21
personal grievances	7	chairperson	21
Personnel Committee	23	duties	21
chairperson	23	election	18-19, 22-23
duties	23	members	21
election	18-19, 22-23	term	18, 21
members	23	Vacation Bible School	11
term	18, 22	voting age	6
praise & worship	4	vouchers	26
preamble	1	WMU	3
property	2, 21	worship	4
public profession of genuine faith	5, 6, 9	dates and times	4
purpose	1	definition	4
quorum	8		

## ***INDEX OF SCRIPTURE REFERENCES***

- Attempting restoration of a member
  - Matthew 18:15-17
- Attitude of members in collective worship
  - Psalm 149:1
  - John 4:23-24
  - Hebrews 10:25
- Baptism by immersion
  - Matthew 3:13-17
  - Mark 1:9-11
  - Luke 3:21-22
  - John 1:31-34
- Church organization
  - Matthew 22:37-40
  - Matthew 28:19-20
  - Hebrews 5:12-14
- Discipline
  - Matthew 18:15-17
- Duties of deacons
  - Acts 6:1-7
- Duties of the senior pastor
  - John 21:15-17
  - Acts 6:3-4
- Election of deacons
  - Acts 6:1-4
- Four fundamental beliefs about maturity
  - Psalm 119:11
  - Colossians 3:15-17
  - Titus 2:1-10
- Great Commandment, The
  - Matthew 22:37-40
- Great Commission, The
  - Matthew 28:19-20
- Lord's Supper, The
  - Matthew 26:26-30
  - Mark 14:22-26
  - Luke 22:17-20
  - I Corinthians 11:17-34
- Magnification/Worship
  - Psalm 149:1
  - Matthew 22:37
  - John 4:23-24
  - Hebrews 10:25
- Maturity/Discipleship
  - Matthew 28:20a
- Membership/Fellowship
  - Matthew 28:19b
- Ministry/Service
  - Matthew 22:39
- Mission/Evangelism
  - Matthew 18:19a
- Preamble
  - I Corinthians 12:12-31
  - Ephesians 5:23
- Profession of genuine faith prior to baptism
  - Acts 2:38
  - Acts 8:26-40
- Qualification of deacons
  - I Timothy 3:8-12
- Qualifications of pastors
  - I Corinthians 6:19-20
  - I Timothy 3:1-7
  - II Timothy 1:3-9
  - Titus 1:4-8
  - I Peter 5:1-4
- Reflection prior to the Lord's Supper
  - I Corinthians 11:27-30
- Submission to authority
  - I Thessalonians 5:12-13
  - Hebrews 13:17
- Termination of membership by the church body
  - Matthew 18:15-17
- Tithes and offerings
  - Genesis 14:19-20
  - Nehemiah 10:37-38
  - Malachi 3:8-12
  - Hebrews 7:4
- Witnesses needed to discuss pastoral accusations
  - I Timothy 5:17-19