

**LINDEN HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH
CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
PROPOSED MARCH 2025**

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CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly and democratic manner, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each member of this church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith and doctrine, we do declare and establish this Constitution. The Constitution shall include the following articles: Name, Articles of Faith, Covenant, Character, Membership, Pastor, Deacons, Meetings, Conflict Resolution, and Rules of Order. Changes to these articles shall be decided at a meeting called in accordance the Quorum and Voting for Specific Circumstances rules outline in Article X.

ARTICLE I NAME

The body shall be known as Linden Heights Baptist Church of Staunton, Virginia. The official address shall be 371 Linden Drive, Staunton, Virginia 24401.

ARTICLE II ARTICLES OF FAITH

We believe the Holy Scriptures are the authoritative Word of God; that they are all sufficient and only guide in faith and practice.

We believe in one God, ruler over all, the triune Godhead, revealed to us as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe that all persons are by nature, sinners; alienated from God, and that they must repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior in order to be saved.

We believe that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ, and not of ourselves; grace is the gift of God.

We believe that man must be reborn by the power and work of the Holy Spirit justified by imputed righteousness, a gift of God to believers in Christ only. When saved, we have eternal life in Christ.

We believe that the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath and the Lord's Day, that it should be kept sacred and holy as unto the Lord, that it is to be religiously observed by the church collectively and by individual members thereof.

We believe that there are only two positive ordinances given to the church by its great head, Jesus Christ: They are Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is to be administered to believers only. The Lord's Supper is to commemorate the death of Christ until he comes again.

We believe that the visible church of Christ is a congregation of believers baptized upon profession of their faith in Christ as their only Savior associated by covenant in faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by his laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word.

We believe that there will be a bodily resurrection of both the just and the unjust and that all will appear at the judgment seat of God to be judged according to the deeds done in the body. In the final separation of the wicked from the righteous, we believe that the wicked shall go away into eternal punishment and the righteous into eternal life.

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ARTICLE III COVENANT

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the 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, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, disciplines, 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 through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our family and acquaintances; to walk righteously in the world; to be just in our dealings, to be faithful in our engagements, to avoid behavior that is hurtful to others, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate sympathy in feeling and 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 another church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE IV CHARACTER

Section 1. Purpose. It is the purpose of the church to win souls to Christ, to bring them into fellowship, which shall stimulate growth in Christian love and the capacity for Christian living, and to help extend the cause of Christ to all parts of the world so that all may be drawn unto Him.

Section 2. Policy. It shall be the policy of the membership of this church to embrace a culture of holiness and love that will generate a spirit of friendliness and good fellowship, which will be evident even to visitors in our midst. In this church all members are equal in the sight of God and man, and one's influence is enhanced only by his spiritual activities and usefulness in the church.

Section 3. Polity. We believe that the will of God is discerned by the priesthood of all believers; therefore, the government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation, which is common among Baptist churches.

Section 4. Doctrine This church receives the scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth, as contained therein, is in essential accord with the Baptist Faith and Message of 1963 as follows:

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE

The 1962 session of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in San Francisco, California, adopted the following motion. "Since the report of the Committee on Statement of Baptist Faith and Message was adopted in 1925, there have been various statements from time to time which have been made, but no overall statement which might be helpful at this time as suggested in Section 2 of that report, or introductory statement which might be used as an interpretation of the 1925 Statement.

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"We recommend, therefore, that the president of this Convention be requested to call a meeting of the men now serving as presidents of the various state Conventions that would qualify as a member of the Southern Baptist Convention committee under Bylaw 18 to present to the Convention in Kansas City some similar statement which shall serve as information to the churches, and which may serve as guidelines to the various agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention. It is understood that any group or individuals may approach this committee to be of service. The expenses of this committee shall be borne by the Convention Operating Budget."

Your committee thus constituted begs leave to present its report as follows:

Throughout its work your committee has been conscious of the contribution made by the statement of "The Baptist Faith and Message" adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1925. It quotes with approval its affirmation that "Christianity is supernatural in its origin and history. We repudiate every theory of religion which denies the supernatural elements in our faith."

Furthermore, it concurs in the introductory "statement of the historic Baptist conception of the nature and function of confessions of faith in our religious and denominational life." It is, therefore, quoted in full as part of this report to the Convention.

- (1) That they constitute a consensus of opinion of some Baptist body, large or small, for the general instruction and guidance of our own people and others concerning those articles of the Christian faith which are most surely held among us. They are not intended to add anything to the simple conditions of salvation revealed in the New Testament, viz., repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- (2) That we do not regard them as complete statements of our faith, having any quality of finality or infallibility. As in the past so in the future Baptists should hold themselves free to revise their statements of faith as may seem to them wise and expedient at any time.
- (3) That any group of Baptists, large or small have the inherent right to draw up for themselves and publish to the world a confession of their faith whenever they may think it advisable to do so.
- (4) That the sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Confessions are only guides in interpretation, having no authority over the conscience.
- (5) That they are statements of religious convictions, drawn from the Scriptures, and are not to be used to hamper freedom of thought or investigation in other realms of life."

The 1925 Statement recommended "the New Hampshire Confession of Faith, revised at certain points, and with some additional articles growing out of certain needs ..." Your present committee has adopted the same pattern. It has sought to build upon the structure of the 1925 Statement, keeping in mind the "certain needs" of our generation. At times it has reproduced sections of the Statement without change. In other instances, it has substituted words for clarity or added sentences for emphasis. At certain points it has combined articles, with minor changes in wording, to endeavor to relate certain doctrines to each other. In still others, "God and Salvation" has sought to bring together certain truths contained throughout the 1925 Statement in order to relate them more clearly and concisely. In no case has it sought to delete from or to add to the basic contents of the 1925 Statement.

Baptists are a people who profess a living faith. This faith is rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." Therefore, the sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is Jesus Christ whose will is revealed in the Holy Scriptures. A living faith must experience a growing understanding of truth and must be continually interpreted and related to the needs of each new generation. Throughout their history Baptist bodies, both large and small, have issued statements of faith which comprise a consensus of their beliefs. Such statements have never been regarded as complete, infallible statements of faith, nor as official creeds carrying mandatory authority. Thus, this generation of Southern Baptists is in historic succession of intent and purpose as it endeavors to state for its time and theological climate those articles of the Christian faith which are most surely held among us.

Baptists emphasize the soul's competency before God, freedom in religion, and the priesthood of the believer. However, this emphasis should not be interpreted to mean that there is an absence of certain definite doctrines that Baptists believe, cherish, and with which they have been and are now closely identified.

It is the purpose of this statement of faith and message to set forth certain teachings which we believe.
Herschel H. Hobbs, Chairman Howard M. Reaves Ed. J. Packwood C.Z. Holland W.B. Timberlake C.V. Koons Malcolm B. Knight Dick H. Hail, Jr. Charles R. Walker Walter R. Davis Garth Pybas V.C. Kruschwitz Luther B. Hall Robert Woodward Douglas Hudgins Paul Weber, Jr. R.A. Long Nane Starnes C. Hoge Hockensmith Hugh R. Bumpas David G. Anderson E. Warren Rust James H. Landes R.P. Downey

I. THE SCRIPTURES

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of Gods revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. 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. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

Ex 24:4; De 4:1-2; 17:19; Jos 8:34 Psa 19:7-10; 119:11, 89, 105, 140 Isa 34:16; 40:8; Jer 15:16; 36:1-32 Mat 5:17-18; 22:29; Lu 21:33; 24:44-46 Joh 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Ac 2:16; 17:11 Rom 15:4; 16:25-26; 2Ti 3:15-17 Heb 1:1-2; 4:12; 1Pe 1:25; 2Pe 1:19-21

II. GOD

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

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A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Gen 1:1; 2:7; Ex 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11; 20:1 Lev 22:2; De 6:4; 32:6; 1Ch 29:10; Psa 19:1-3 Isa 43:3, 15; 64:8; Jer 10:10; 17:13 Mat 6:9; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11 John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7 Rom 8:14-15; 1Co 8:6; Gal 4:6; Eph 4:6 Col 1:15; 1Ti 1:17; Heb 11:6; 12:9; 1Pe 1:17; 1Jo 5:7

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ, he was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself the demands and necessities of human nature and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. 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 now dwells in all believers as the living and ever-present Lord.

Gen 18:1; Psalm 2:7; 110:1; Isa 7:14; 53:1-12 Mat 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16, 27 Mat 17:5; 27; 28:1-6, 19; Mark 1:1; 3:11 Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46 John 1:1-18, 29; 10:30, 38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50 John 14:7-11, 16:15-16, 28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20, 28 Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5, 20 Rom 1; 3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3, 34; 10:4 1Co 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8, 24-28; 2Co 5:19-21 Gal 4:4-5; Eph 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Php 2:5-11 Col 1:13-22; 2:9; 1Th 4:14-18; 1Ti 2:5-6; 3:16 Tit 2:13-14; Heb 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28 Heb 9:12-15, 24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1Pe 2:21-25; 3:22 1Jo 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2Jo 7-9 Rev 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts" by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the assurance of God to bring the believer into the fulness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Gen 1:2; Jud 14:6; Job 26:13; Psa 51:11; 139:7 Isa 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32 Mat 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mk 1:10, 12 Luke 1:35; 4:1, 18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49 John 4:24; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-14 Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17, 39 Acts 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6 Rom 8:9-11, 14-16, 26-27; 1Co 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11 Gal 4:6; Eph 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1Th 5:19 1Ti 3:16; 4:1; 2Ti 1:14; 3:16; Heb 9:8, 14 2Pe 1:21; 1Jo 4:13; 5:6-7; Rev 1:10; 22:17

III. MAN

Man was created by the special act of God, in His own image, and is the crowning work of His creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence; whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin, and as soon as they are capable of moral action become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every man possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Gen 1:26-30; 2:5, 7, 18-22; 3; 9:6 Psa 1:1-6; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isa 6:5; Jer 17:5 Matt 16:26; Acts 17:26-31 Rom 1:19-32; 3:10-18, 23; 5:6, 12, 19; 6:6 Rom 7:14-25; 8:14-18, 29; 1Co 1:21-31; 15:19, 21-22 Eph 2:1-22; Col 1:21-22; 3:9-11

IV. SALVATION

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, sanctification, and glorification.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. 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.

Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.

B. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual perfection through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

C. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Gen 3:15; Ex 3:14-17; 6:2-8 Mat 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6 Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32 John 1:11-14, 29; 3:3-21, 36; 5:24; 10:9, 28-29 John 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31 Acts 17:30-31; 20:32; Rom 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3 Rom 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18; 29-39; 10:9-10, 13 Rom 13:11-14; 1Cor 1:18, 30; 6:19-20; 15:10 2Co 5:17-20; Gal 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15 Eph 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Php 2:12-13; Col 1:9-22; 3:1 1Th 5:23-24; 2Tim 1:12; Titus 2:11-14 Heb 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8, 14 James 2:14-26; 1Pe 1:2-23; 1Jo 1:6-2:11 Rev 3:20; 21:1-22:5

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V. GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

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 Gods sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Gen 12:1-3; Ex 19:5-8; 1Sa 8:4-7, 19-22 Isa 5:1-7; Jer 31:31 Mat 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22, 31; 25:34 Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48 John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45, 65; 10:27-29 John 15:16; 17:6, 12, 17-18; Acts 20:32 Rom 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7, 26-36 1Co 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Eph 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11 Col 1:12-14; 2Th 2:13-14; 2Ti 1:12; 2:10, 19 Heb 11:39-12:2; 1Pe 1:2-5, 13; 2:4-10 1Jo 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2

VI. THE CHURCH

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.

This church is an autonomous body, operating through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In such a congregation, members are equally responsible. Its Scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. The New Testament speaks also of the church as the body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages.

Mat 16:15-19; 18:15-20 Acts 2:41-42, 47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23, 27 Acts 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Rom 1:7 1Co 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12 Eph 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11, 21; 5:22-32 Php 1:1; Col 1:18; 1Ti 3:1-15; 4:14

VII. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believers' faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believers' death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lords Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Mat 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mk 1:9-11; 14:22-26 Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23 Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7 Rom 6:3-5; 1Co 10:16, 21; 11:23-29; Col 2:12

VIII. THE LORD'S DAY

The first day of the week is the Lords Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, and by refraining from worldly amusements, and resting from secular employments, work of necessity and mercy only being excepted.

Ex 20:8-11; Mat 12:1-12; 28:1; Mk 2:27-28; 16:1-7 Luke 24:1-3, 33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1, 19-28 Acts 20:7; 1Co 16:1-2; Col 2:16; 3:16; Rev 1:10

IX. THE KINGDOM

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and Gods will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Gen 1:1; Isa 9:6-7; Jer 23:5-6 Mat 3:2; 4:8-10, 23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29 Mk 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32 Luke 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36 Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Rom 5:17; 8:19 1Co 15:24-28; Col 1:13; Heb 11:10, 16; 12:28 1Pe 2:4-10; 4:13; Rev 1:6, 9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22

X. 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.

Isa 2:4; 11:9; Mat 16:27; 18:8-9 Mat 19:28; 24:27, 30, 36, 44; 25:31-46; 26:64 Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40, 48; 16:19-26 Luke 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3 Acts 1:11; 17:31; Rom 14:10; 1Co 4:5 1Co 15:24-28, 35-58; 2Co 5:10; Php 3:20-21 Col 1:5; 3:4; 1Th 4:14-18; 5:1; 2Th 1:7; 2:1-17 1Ti 6:14; 2Ti 4:1, 8; Tit 2:13; Heb 9:27-28 James 5:8; 2Pe 3:7; 1Jo 2:28; 3:2Jude 14; Rev 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13

XI. EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by Gods Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual

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necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Gen 12:1-3; Ex 19:5-6; Isa 6:1-8 Mat 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19 Mat 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53 John 14:11-12; 15:7-8, 16; 17:15; 20:21 Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3 Rom 10:13-15; Eph 3:1-11; 1Th 1:8; 2Ti 4:5 Heb 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1Pe 2:4-10; Rev 22:17

XII. EDUCATION

The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian schools is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christs people. In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

De 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Neh 8:1-8; Job 28:28 Psa 19:7; 119:11; Pro 3:13; 4:1-10; 8:1-7, 11; 15:14 Ecc 7:19; Mat 5:2; 7:24; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40 1Co 1:18-31; Eph 4:11-16; Php 4:8; Col 2:3, 8-9 1Ti 1:3-7; 2Ti 2:15; 3:14-17; Heb 5:12-6:3 James 1:5; 3:17

XIII. STEWARDSHIP

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others.

According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemers cause on earth.

Gen 14:20; Lev 27:30-32; De 8:18; Mal 3:8-12 Mat 6:1-4, 19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29 Luke 12:16-21, 42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47 Acts 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Ro 6:6-22; 12:1-2 1Co 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2Co 8-9; 12:15 Php 4:10-19; 1Pe 1:18-19

XIV. COOPERATION

Christs people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine; and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christs Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christs people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Ex 17:12; 18:17; Jud 7:21; Ezr 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15 Ne 4; 8:1-5; Mat 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20 Mk 2:3; Luke 10:1; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1; 4:31-37; 13:2-3 Acts 15:1-35; 1Co 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2Co 8:1-9:15 Gal 1:6-10; Eph 4:1-16; Php 1:15-18

XV. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his own life and in human society. 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. The Christian should oppose in the spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness, and vice. He should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Ex 20:3-17; Lev 6:2-5; De 10:12; 27:17 Psalm 101:5; Mic 6:8; Zech 8:16 Mat 5:13-16, 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35 Mk 1:29-34, 2:3; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25 John 15:12; 17:15; Rom 12-14; 1Co 5:9-10; 6:1-7 1Co 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Gal 3:26-28; Eph 6:5-9 Col 3:12-17; 1Th 3:12; Phm 1:1-25; Jas 1:27; 2:8

XVI. PEACE AND WAR

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love.

Isa 2:4; Mat 5:9, 38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38 Rom 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Heb 12:14; Jas 4:1-2

XVII. RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it, church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. 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. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Gen 1:27; 2:7; Mat 6:6-7, 24; 16:26; 22:21 John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Rom 6:1-2; 13:1-7Gal 5:1, 13; Php 3:20; 1Ti 2:1-2; Jas 4:12 1Pe 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19

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ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this church shall consist of those persons whose names are now on the church roll and such persons as may be admitted by majority vote, during any regular or specially called meeting of the church.

Section 1 – Membership Attained

Membership shall be attained by:

- (a) Public profession of faith followed by baptism; or
- (b) Transfer of letter from a church of like faith and practice; or
- (c) If such a letter is not available, a statement of prior public profession of faith and baptism; or
- (d) Following exclusion or erasure from the rolls, a statement of re-commitment having already been baptized.
- (e) Baptism may be waived for sufficient reasons of health.
- (f) Baptisms shall be conducted by ordained or licensed Baptist ministers,
- (g) Persons may be admitted as Associate Members if they are professing Christians and members of another church, whether or not they have received believer's baptism. Associate Members are eligible to participate in the life of the church to the same extent as Members, except serving as an ordained deacon or pastor and voting on the adoption of amendment of the constitution.

Section 2 - Membership Terminated

Membership may be terminated by:

- (a) letter request from another church; or
- (b) death; or
- (c) resignation; or
- (d) removal from the church roll for not fulfilling one's Covenant of Membership (Article III) as recommended by the Deacon Body and decided upon by a vote of the church.

Note: We believe that salvation comes entirely by faith in Jesus through grace. We also believe that in order to carry out the purpose of the church (Article IV, Section 1) we must work together in harmony. Therefore, membership in this church requires that we enter into covenant with one another regarding our personal conduct (Article III). Failure to abide by our church covenant that becomes egregious will, after due process, result in dismissal from church membership.

ARTICLE VI PASTOR

Section 1. Call. A seminary-educated pastor, preferably a graduate of an accredited Baptist seminary, shall be called in accordance with the Quorum and Voting for Specific Circumstances rules outlined in Article X, Section 2 of these bylaws provided notice of such proposed action shall have been given at least two weeks in advance of the regular Sunday morning service and provided a written or printed notice has been mailed to each member or each family head.

Section 2. Termination of the Pastor's Services. To sever his relation with the church, the pastor shall present written notice at least four weeks before planning to terminate service. If the church asks for the pastor's resignation, he shall be given three month's severance pay and his work shall cease following an affirmative vote of dismissal at a meeting called in accordance with the Quorum and Voting for Specific Circumstances rules outlined in Article X, Section 2 of these bylaws.

Section 3. Duties. It shall be the duties of the Pastor to minister to the spiritual needs of the church and congregation. He shall conduct the public services of worship of the church. He shall be an ex-officio member

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of all committees, and all staff personnel shall be responsible to him for the performance of their duties. He shall practice a ministry of visitation appropriate to his position.

ARTICLE VII DEACONS

Section 1. Desired Qualifications. The qualifications, as well as the functions of a deacon are closely akin to those of the pastor, and there is the same high level of consecration and service demanded of both. Each deacon elected is expected to be a faithful steward of his/her time, talent, and resources. He/She is expected to be a servant of the church and a peacemaker. Candidates for this office shall have been a member of the church for a period of not less than one year.

As the church is the organized expression of the ministry of Christ and divinely commissioned by Him, each deacon is expected to cooperate with the pastor and the church, be loyal and faithful to the entire church program, attend regular services of the church, and give of his/her time and ability sacrificially to all its causes.

No one should be elected to this place of honor unless he/she is willing to commit themselves to the high standard of consecration and service set forth in the scripture (I Timothy 3: 1-13).

Section 2. Number. The Deacon Body may consist of twelve active members in good standing, representing the first two hundred members of the church and two additional members for every one hundred additions to the church or major fraction thereof. These shall be rotated on a three-year basis and may be re-elected after one year. A deacon filling an unexpired term is eligible for re-election at the close of that term. No immediate family members shall serve simultaneously on the Deacon Body. Immediate family is defined as parents, spouse, and children.

Any member who is absent for an extended period of time shall be reviewed by the pastor and chairperson of the deacons, and an appropriate recommendation made to the church body. Vacancies in unexpired terms may be filled at any church business meeting during the year.

Section 3. Election. In any such election, the Nominating Committee will canvass the membership for potential deacon candidates. In June, the Nominating Committee will send to the membership in the July Newsletter, submission slips for four potential deacon candidates. These slips must be returned by the second Sunday in July. From these names, candidates will be obtained for each vacancy. In August, the Nominating Committee will present the slate of deacon candidates to the business meeting for consideration. Nominations will also be forthcoming from the floor. At the September Business meeting the final slate of deacon candidates shall be presented for election by the church membership. The church membership shall elect one person for each vacancy by secret ballot at the September Business meeting to take office October 1.

Section 4. Duties. It shall be the duties of the deacons to fill the pulpit in the absence of the pastor. It shall be the duties of the deacons to cooperate with the pastor in the work of the church, to visit membership of the church, to be zealous for the growth and spiritual advancement of the same, and to distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper. A deacon shall act as moderator of the business meetings of the church, and shall present to the church for action such matters as have been approved by the Deacon Body and require the vote of the church.

The regular monthly meeting of the Deacon Body shall be reserved for matters relating to the spiritual growth and development, and business of the church. They, along with the pastor, shall have authority to dismiss any staff member.

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The deacons shall act as advisors and counselors to the pastor with regard to the church, and any possible differences which might arise.

The deacons shall distribute and/or officiate the observance of the Lord's Supper in the absence of the pastor.

The deacons shall have charge of the worship services in the absence of the pastor or in cooperation with the pastor at his request.

The deacons shall consider any person or persons who wish to voice concern or make petition at the regularly scheduled deacons' meetings. Should the issue not be satisfactorily resolved, it shall be the duty of the Deacon Body to bring it before the church body in a business meeting.

The deacons shall establish a written policy and procedure statement for an annual review of the Church's membership to determine removal from the church roll for not fulfilling one's Covenant of Membership (Article III). The revised church roll will be presented to the church body for a vote in a business meeting.

ARTICLE VIII MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Services. These services shall be held on the Lord's Day and on other occasions as the pastor and the church determine.

Section 2. The Lord's Supper. The church shall observe the Lord's Supper. The pastor and the Deacon Body will schedule and administer the Lord's Supper.

Section 3. Business Meetings. Congregational business meetings shall be held on a regular schedule. The church may be called to meet in a special called meeting by the pastor or Deacon Body. The purpose and time shall be announced not less than two weeks in advance of the meeting date in the worship services.

Note: Regular meeting schedules will be defined in the Bylaw section of this document. All business meetings and special called meetings will be conducted in accordance with the applicable provisions of Article X (Rules of Order) of this constitution.

ARTICLE IX CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Any member having cause of complaint against another must first work to remove it as directed in Matthew 18. If this is not sufficient, the complaint shall be brought to the attention and counsel of the Deacon Body, who shall report their findings and recommend to the church such action as may seem wise and proper.

ARTICLE X RULES OF ORDER

Section 1. General Quorum and Voting

The rules contained in the current edition of Roberts Rules of Order shall govern and The Church Business Meeting by R. Dale Merrill shall serve as an aid to the understanding and application of Roberts Rules of Order in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this constitution and bylaws.

For business meetings and special called meetings (excluding Section 2 of Article X which follows) a minimum of fifteen members shall constitute a quorum. In properly called committee meetings those committee members present shall constitute a quorum.

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An affirmative vote for a motion to carry requires a majority of the members present and voting unless otherwise specified in these bylaws or in Robert Rules of Order.

Section 2. Quorum and Voting for Specific Circumstances

For calling or dismissing the senior pastor, sale or purchase of real property, assumption of a large non-budgeted financial expenditure (defined as an amount in excess of \$10,000) or changing the constitution, the fifteen-member quorum requirement of Article X, Section 1 shall be increased to thirty (30) members. Also, the majority vote requirement of Article X, Section 1 shall be increased to a two-thirds majority affirmative vote of the members present and voting required for a motion to carry.

Section 3. Special Quorum Provision

In the event that a quorum cannot be obtained after two successive attempts, having abided by all applicable provisions of Articles VIII (Meetings) and X (Rules of Order), then on the third attempt, the members who attend the meeting will constitute a quorum.

Note: The definition of “members” whenever used in Article X, Sections 1, 2 or 3 is defined in Article V (Membership) of this constitution.

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BYLAWS

The BYLAWS shall include the following articles: Church Officers, Officers of Church Organizations, and Church Committees. Changes to these articles shall be decided at a special called meeting in accordance with the General Quorum and Voting rules outlined in Article X Section 1 of the Constitution.

ARTICLE I CHURCH OFFICERS

The officers of the church shall include church staff, trustees, and elected church officers. Church staff and trustees shall continue to serve at the pleasure of the church. All other officers are elected annually by the church in accordance with these bylaws. The duties required of these officers shall be outlined in the church's policies and procedures. It shall be the responsibility of each officer to submit, when appropriate, a budget to the Work Committee for consideration so that it may be incorporated into the church's budget. It shall be the responsibility of each officer to submit, when appropriate, policy and procedure statements for consideration and approval by the Church Council for their designated tasks.

A. CHURCH STAFF

Within the budget adopted by the church, and in consultation with the Church Council, Deacon Body and the appropriate committees, the pastor shall select and, as approved by the church, employ staff to carry out the ministries of the church. All church staff members shall serve under the direction of the pastor, including both their duties and their tenure.

B. TRUSTEES

Section 1. Number, Election, and Tenure. This body shall be composed of five or more members elected by the church at a business meeting, and subject to the confirmation of the court. They shall serve at the pleasure and direction of the church.

Section 2. Duties. As provided by law, they shall be the legal tenants of all church property, subject to the instructions of the church, and shall take all necessary measures for its insurance and protection to be reviewed annually. Trustees shall refer to the church's policy and procedures for specific duties.

C. ELECTED OFFICERS

These officers shall be elected annually by the church at the September business meeting.

Section 1. Clerk. The clerk shall keep accurate minutes of each business meeting of the church and submit a copy to the church secretary. The clerk shall also see that the election of each new trustee is confirmed by the court.

Section 2. Treasurer. The treasurer shall be the custodian of all church funds. The treasurer shall keep a correct record of all receipts and deposit same in the bank in the name of Linden Heights Baptist Church of Staunton.

Section 3. Financial Secretary. The financial secretary shall weekly prepare a record of contributions for deposit in the name of Linden Heights Baptist Church of Staunton. The financial secretary is responsible for maintaining records of all contributions to be reported annually.

Section 4. Church Librarian. The church librarian shall oversee the church's library collection.

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ARTICLE II OFFICERS OF CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

All organizations of the church and all officers being elected by the church are subject to the will of the church. The pastor is an ex-officio member of all organizations. It shall be the responsibility of the head of each church organization to submit, when appropriate, a budget to the Work Committee for consideration so that it may be incorporated into the church's budget. It shall be the responsibility of the head of each church organization to submit, when appropriate, policy and procedure statements for consideration and approval by the Church Council for their designated tasks.

A. SUNDAY SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Section 1. Election. The Sunday school director and teachers shall be elected annually by the church at the September business meeting to take office on October 1. The elected director shall serve a three-year term and may be re-elected after one year. The director shall become a member of the Church Council.

Section 2. Purpose and Duties. The director shall serve as the general administrative leader of the church Sunday school ministry. The director is responsible for coordinating the work of all church Sunday school classes to include planning, organizing, enlisting, and equipping teachers. The director shall make reports of the activities of the Sunday school to the church at the monthly business meeting. Any major change in the organizational set up of the Sunday school shall be approved by the church before it is put into operation.

B. SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Section 1. Election. The Sunday school assistant director shall be elected annually by the church at the September business meeting to take office on October 1. The elected assistant director shall serve a three-year term and may be re-elected after one year.

Section 2. Purpose and Duties. It shall be the duty of the Sunday school assistant director to fill in for the director in his/her absence and to assist the director in all matters as requested.

C. VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL DIRECTOR

The children's church director shall serve as VBS director. In the event of a vacancy in this position, the pastor along with the Nominating Committee shall appoint a VBS director.

D. BAPTIST WOMEN ON MISSIONS COORDINATOR

Section 1. Election. The coordinator of the Baptist Women on Missions, who has been chosen by the society, shall be affirmed by the church at the September Business meeting, and become a member of the Church Council. The coordinator shall serve a three-year term and may be re-elected after one year. The coordinator assumes her duties on October 1. All other officers of the Baptist Women on Missions shall be elected annually by the organization.

Section 2. Purpose and Duties. The Baptist Women on Missions encourages people to grow in faith by learning about missions, praying for missions, supporting missions, and doing missions. The Baptist Women on Missions goal is to equip and inspire the entire church to be on a mission in our local community, regionally and internationally.

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E. BROTHERHOOD PRESIDENT

Section 1. Election. The president of the Brotherhood, who has been chosen by the society, shall be affirmed by the church at the September Business meeting, and become a member of the Church Council. The president shall serve a three-year term and may be re-elected after one year. The president assumes his duties on October 1st. All other Brotherhood officers shall be elected annually by the society.

Section 2. Purpose and Duties. The Brotherhood is open to all men of the church. We engage in Christian fellowship through works of service both within the church and in the community.

ARTICLE III CHURCH COUNCIL

Section 1. Membership. The Church Council shall consist of the pastor, chairperson of the Deacon Body, active head of each church organization, and chairpersons of the Work, Worship, and Witness committees. The pastor shall serve as moderator for the church council meetings. In the event of a pastoral vacancy, the chairperson of the Pastor Search Committee shall be a member of the Church Council and the chairperson of the Deacon Body shall serve as moderator.

Section 2. Propose and Duties. The primary functions of the council shall be to recommend to the congregation suggested church goals and objectives, review and coordinate recommendations by church officers, organizations and committees, recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to church goals and objectives, and evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.

Note: All matters agreed upon by the council, calling for action not already authorized, shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval. Church members directed to the council for advice or planning retain the right to petition the congregation during scheduled business meetings without regard to the council's decision. In the event of an emergency that endangers personnel and/or property, the council upon recommendation from the Work Committee and in accordance with established policy and procedure statements can approve emergency spending of existing funds and subsequently report their actions at the next scheduled business meeting.

ARTICLE IV STANDING CHURCH COMMITTEES

Section 1. The following shall be the standing committees of the church. Each committee member elected at-large will serve on a three-year rotational basis and may be re-elected after one year. Committee members assume their duties on October 1. A committee member filling an un-expired term is eligible for re-election at the close of that term.

Section 2. After the annual September election process has been completed, the Nominating Committee shall name the chairpersons for all standing committees for the upcoming year. It shall be the responsibility of all committee chairpersons to submit, when appropriate, a budget to the Work Committee for their consideration so that it may be incorporated into the church budget. It shall be the responsibility of all committee chairpersons to submit, when appropriate, policy and procedure statements for consideration and approval by the Church Council for their designated tasks.

Section 3. These committees shall meet on the same evening as the Church Council. The chairperson for each committee, or their designee, shall become a member of the Church Council. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of these committees.

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A. WORK COMMITTEE

1. Purpose. The Work Committee has responsibility for overall stewardship of the properties, personnel, and finances of Linden Heights Baptist Church
2. Duties:
 - (a) Formulate the budget and administer the financial program of the church.
 - (b) Provide human resource service for staff and congregation.
 - (c) Maintain church properties.
 - (d) Provide plans for capital improvements
 - (e) Manage all Work matters referred to the committee by the Church Council.

B. WORSHIP COMMITTEE

1. Purpose. The Worship Committee has the responsibility for worship, decorations, and hospitality.
2. Duties:
 - (a) Provide for the ministry of hospitality through worship and such Sunday morning activities as greeting and ushering.
 - (b) Lead in the preparation of the worship space including such activities as set up for the Lord's Supper and baptism, ordination, and decoration of church space for specials days such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter.
 - (c) Maintain the audio-visual capabilities for the church.
 - (d) Assist the pastor in promoting stewardship.
 - (e) Manage all Worship matters referred to the committee by the Church Council.

C. WITNESS COMMITTEE

1. Purpose. The Witness Committee has the responsibility for evangelistic outreach and care ministries of the church.
2. Duties:
 - (a) Provide for the overall promotion of evangelistic efforts of the Church.
 - (b) Maintain the website.
 - (c) Administer the kitchen and fellowship meals of the congregation including bereavement meals.
 - (d) Provide oversight and support for all nursery, pre-school, and infant care activities of the church.
 - (e) Provide oversight and support for the pantry activities of the church.
 - (f) Manage all Witness matters referred to the committee by the Church Council.

D. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- a) Purpose. The committee shall consist of the active chairpersons for the Work, Worship, and Witness Committees and deacons in their last year of active service. These individuals will be identified and elected at the October Business Meeting to serve for the upcoming year.
- b) Duties. The committee shall nominate church candidates for all elected officers and standing committees at the September Business meeting, but any member of the church may make nominations from the floor (excluding nominations for deacon candidates). After the election process has been completed, the committee shall name the chairpersons for all standing committees for the upcoming year. Members of the same family shall not serve simultaneously in any given year as a chairperson. Immediate family members

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shall include parents, spouses, and children. During the church year, the committee shall make nominations for vacancies as they occur.

- c) Initial Meeting. The pastor will convene the initial meeting of the committee, at which time a committee chairperson will be elected.

ARTICLE V PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE

In the event the Church is without a pastor, the deacons and the Church Council will be responsible for leading the Church through a series of steps in the interim period between settled pastors. These responsibilities will include: the consideration of calling an interim pastor, developing a memorandum of understanding with the staff members for the interim period, recruiting visiting preachers to fill the pulpit, and helping the congregation form a Pastor Search Committee to call a new pastor and working with the Church to install and settle the permanent Pastor.

Section 1. Interim Pastor.

- A. Call. In consultation with Baptist General Association of Virginia resource persons, the deacons will consider and make a recommendation of an interim pastor to the Church. This recommendation will be presented to the Church for approval at a regularly scheduled business meeting within sixty days of the pastoral position becoming vacant.
- B. Role of the Interim. This person will, in consultation with the Deacon Body, conduct surveys and meetings among the congregation on such matters as heritage, mission, leadership and connections in order for the congregation to prepare a pastor profile to use in the search process for a new permanent pastor. The interim will not be eligible to become the new permanent pastor.

Section 2. Staff Leadership. The deacons will consult with Church Staff Members and form an agreement with them concerning their responsibilities during the interim period. The agreement will be affirmed by the deacons and put in writing by the Chair of Deacons and presented to the Church for approval at a regular business meeting within sixty days of the pastoral position becoming vacant.

Section 3. Visiting Pastors. During the time without an interim or permanent pastor, the deacons will be responsible for recruiting Church Staff Members to preach or for recruiting visiting pastors to fill the pulpit.

Section 4. Pastor Search Committee. The Pastor Search Committee will use the profiles of the Church to evaluate resumes and to guide interviews of desired candidates with preference given to a graduate of a reputable seminary.

- A. Composition. The Pastor Search Committee shall consist of seven Members, one of whom shall be the person who is the Chair of Deacons when the committee is formed. Candidates for the remaining six positions will be presented by the Deacon Body to the Church at a regular business meeting for approval.
- B. Election of Officers. The Chair of Deacons will convene the Pastor Search Committee. The Committee will then elect its officers: a Chair, a Vice-Chair and a Recorder. The Chair of Deacons shall not serve as Chair of the Pastor Search Committee.
- C. Confidentiality. The Pastor Search Committee's deliberations shall be confidential and it shall decide its own operating procedures.

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- D. Duties. The Pastor Search Committee will represent the Church in the search for a pastor.
- E. Term of Office. The Pastor Search Committee will have responsibility for planning with the Church Council an installation service for the new Pastor and will continue to serve for six months after the call has been accepted to complete moving and settling arrangements for the Pastor.
- F. Reports. A progress report on the search process shall be presented to the Church monthly at a regular business meeting. Such reports shall not disclose the name of any candidate being considered by the Pastor Search Committee, except for the person recommended for call by the Church.

Section 4 – Pastor Call. Upon completion of its prayerful deliberations, the Pastor Search Committee will present a candidate to the Church for election as pastor in accordance with the Quorum and Voting for Specific Circumstances rules outlined in Article X, Section 2 of these bylaws provided notice of such proposed action shall have been given at least two weeks in advance of the regular Sunday morning service and provided a written or printed notice that has been mailed to each member or each family head. Only one candidate may be considered by the Church at one time.

Bylaw Review Committee
Doug Hall (Ch)
Rev. Luke Smith (Ex-officio)
Vince Barrett
Carol Humphreys
Glenda Ridgely
Art Spedden