

(05/21/17)

**Constitution and Bylaws
Magna View Baptist Church
Talbot, Tennessee**

I. Introduction:

We declare this church to be an autonomous, self-governing body under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We recognize Jesus as the Creator, Owner, Builder and ultimate Ruler of His Church (Matthew 16:18; Colossians 1:18). The Bible is God's absolute truth and is the binding authority through which the Holy Spirit expresses His will to Christ's church. Thus, the Bible is the final rule in regard to faith and practice. We establish this constitution as an expression of our biblical beliefs and it is designed to serve as a guideline to govern the body in an orderly manner. However, it is subordinate to the Scriptures in its authority.

II. Name

The official and legal name of this body is Magna View Baptist Church, but will operate under the name of Grace Point Baptist Church of Talbot under a D.B.A. (doing business as) designation with the state of Tennessee.

III. Purpose Statement

We believe Magna View Baptist Church exists to

1. Exalt and worship the Lord.
2. Edify the Church, the body of Christ.
3. Evangelize the lost people of our world.

IV. Mission Statement

Our mission is to follow Christ to lead people to love God, love others, and make disciples in our church, neighborhood and all nations.

V. Core Values

- **Love** – Nothing lasts without love. (1 Corinthians 13, John 13:35)
- **Faith** – Without faith it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11:6, Matthew 21:21.)
- **Worship** - We are created to worship and glorify God. (Psalm 95:6, John 4:23-24, Revelation 14:7, Romans 12:1)
- **Generosity** – We are blessed to be a blessing. (2 Corinthians 9:6-7, Luke 6:38, Proverbs 11:25)
- **Community** - God made us for communion with each other. (Romans 12:5, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 2:19-20)
- **Discipleship** – True disciples make disciples. (Matthew 4:19; 28:18-20, 2 Timothy 2:2)
- **Spiritual Growth** – The goal of the Christian life is to know God and to become like Christ. (Romans 8:28-30, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 1 Peter 1:5-8, Hebrews 6:1-2)

VI. Statement of Beliefs

The church generally subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the “Baptist Faith and Message” as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 14, 2000. In way of summary, we believe:

1. The Scriptures

We believe that the entire Bible is the inspired Word of God and that men of God “were moved by the Holy Spirit” to write the very words of Scripture. The Bible is therefore without error (inerrant) in its original manuscripts. God has supernaturally preserved the Bible, and it is the sole and final authority for faith and life, providing encouragement, guidance, comfort and instruction for training in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21)

2. 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. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

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 knowing, 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.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 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 human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary 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, fully God, fully man, 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.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53:1-12; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; Luke 1:35; 22:70; John 1:1-29; 10:30; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 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; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 19:16.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. 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 guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 12:12; ; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1, 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 8:17,39; 10:44; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

3. Humans

We believe that humans were created in the image of God by direct act of God and did not come into being as the result of evolution. Humans were created to glorify God, worship and serve Him, and have fellowship with Him. Humans fell through sin by disobeying God, thus incurring both physical and spiritual death, which alienated them from God. Humanity's nature was thus corrupted and we are utterly lost, "dead in trespasses and sins," and totally incapable of saving ourselves and coming back into right relationship with God by our own merit or effort (Genesis 1:26, 2:6,17, 3:17-24; Psalm 8:3-8; Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 3:9-19,23, 5:8; Luke 18:26-27; Ephesians 2:13).

4. Salvation

We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross provides the sole basis for forgiveness of sins and salvation, which is the free gift of God's grace. Salvation is effected by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and cannot be secured by man's works or personal merit. Salvation is only appropriated by a person placing his faith in the finished work of Christ. Repentance is a turning toward God and away from sin and is a part of but not separate from believing faith. "The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" and those who receive Jesus Christ by faith are born again, have their sins forgiven, become children of God, are a new creation in Christ, and "are sealed by the Holy spirit unto the day of redemption" being kept by the power of God

John 1:12-13, 3:1-7, 10:27-29, John 14-16; Acts 4:12, 26:20; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 1:16, 3:23-24, 6:23, 5:8, 8:14-17, 10:9-10, 13, 31-39; Ephesians 1:7, 13-14, 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:3-5

5. The Church

We believe that the church is the body of Christ of which Jesus is the Head and whose members are those who have truly received Christ by faith. The local church is a tangible expression of the body of Christ in a particular location. Since all members of the body of Christ are united in Christ by the same Spirit, they should live in love, harmony and unity, being

intent on the same purpose and accepting those sectarian or denominational practices which are based on a sincere interpretation of the Bible, which do not relate to substantive doctrinal matters, and which do not in practice cause disunity or hinder the ministry. The purpose of the church is to make Christ known to lost men and to make disciples, and glorify God on earth Matthew 28:18-20; John 17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:20-23, 4:1-6, 4:12-16; Colossians 1:24-29

6. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Baptism - 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 believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's 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 Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper - 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.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

7. Eternal Security

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. If you have been genuinely saved, you cannot "lose" it. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives us this security.

John 10:29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25, 10:10,14; 1 Peter 1:3-5

8. Eternity

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

John 3:16; John 14:17; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18; Revelation 20:15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-9

9. Marriage and Human Sexuality

We believe marriage is the original and foundational institution of human society, established by God as a one-flesh, covenantal union between a man and a woman that is exclusive, designed for bearing and rearing children and it is to reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church. (Genesis 2:18-25; Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:1-4)

Therefore, we believe that term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as portrayed in Scripture. Only such marriages that fit into and reflect this definition of marriage may be conducted on the church property and officiated by the ministry staff of this

congregation or someone approved by the ministry staff of the church. The definition of marriage we have set for this policy is based on our commitment to God (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37-38) and to His word (2 Timothy 3:16- 17; Matt. 4:4).

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. Furthermore, we believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who are members or who serve as volunteers, should abide by this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church. All sinners are welcome to attend Bible studies, worship and fellowship activities without fear of repercussions. (Adopted 9/9/15)

VII. Relationships

We are an autonomous church and are subject to the control of no other religious body, but we recognize and sustain the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist Churches. Insofar as it is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Nolachucky Baptist Association, the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board, and the Southern Baptist Convention and their entities.

BYLAWS

I. Membership

Section 1. General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 2. Requirements

A person desiring membership in Magna View Baptist Church must:

- A. Give a clear testimony of a salvation experience by faith in Christ Jesus
- B. Make profession of that faith and have experienced baptism by immersion as a follower of Christ.
- C. Complete the Membership Matters course as taught by the Pastor, a staff member, or an Elder.
- D. Be in agreement with the church's Membership Commitment (Appendix 1) and Statement of Beliefs

Upon completion of the above requirements, a person desiring membership may be presented to the church body by the Pastor, a staff member or Elder at any regular church-wide meeting, and voted on by the church membership who are present. *(Those desiring to transfer membership from a sister Southern Baptist Church must still have completed the above requirements. Once membership requirements are completed, the previous church will be notified of membership change.)*

Section 3. Membership Standing and Review

A. Membership Standing - Members of (Magna View) shall be considered in good-standing provided they are regularly attending church-wide gatherings and participating in fulfilling the responsibilities of the Membership Commitment. Shut-In members will be considered members in good-standing. New members added to the church roll during the year will be considered members in good-standing. The participation of members will be overseen by the Pastor and Elders of the church.

B. Annual Review of Membership Roll - There will be an annual review of the church membership roll each January by the Pastor, Staff, Elders and Deacons. Members found not to be in good standing will be contacted by members of the church leadership for the purpose of reconciliation and re-engagement of the member.

Section 4. Member Voting Privileges

A. All members in good-standing, have the privilege of voting on the following matters presented to the church for vote, provided that the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting.

- the annual operating budget
- borrowing money
- the call of a Pastor

- call and affirmation of Elders and Deacons
- acceptance of an amended or restated constitution or bylaws
- acquisition or disposition of church property
- the removal or restoration of a disciplined church member
- other actions deemed major and extraordinary by the Elders

All items to be voted on by the church will be communicated to the church not less than fourteen days prior to the vote and afterwards as well. Items brought to the floor of the church during a Family Meeting will be referred to the Pastor and Elders, or the appropriate Ministry Leader or Ministry Team, and reported back to the church at a future time.

B. Verification of Membership for Voting Privileges

Only members in good standing are eligible to vote. Verification of eligibility to vote will be made as necessary by the Pastor and Elders.

C. Voting Methodology

Member votes will be received by verbal affirmation. When necessary visible votes shall be cast by raised hand and or written ballot. Absentee votes will not be received on the above matters. In most matters a simple majority affirmation will carry the vote. In the following cases a 2/3 majority vote is required to affirm the action: Call of a Pastor, Removal of Member from Roll, Acquisition/ Disposition of Land, Changes to the Constitution.

A quorum, for the purpose of voting, is defined as no less than 25% of the average Sunday morning Bible Study attendance for the current year.

Section 5. Discipline and Restoration of Church Members

It will be the desire of our church to minister to and assist troubled members or members who have fallen into persistent sinful behavior. The pastor, staff, and Elders are available for counsel and guidance, and other assistance where possible.

Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare and witness of the church in the community, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastor and Elders to resolve the problem. All such proceedings shall be characterized by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. But finding that the welfare of the church would be best served by the bringing the member under discipline, as described and outlined in Appendix 2, "Discipline and Restoration of Church Members."

The discipline of church members shall be overseen by the Pastor and Elders, and will follow the guidelines outlined in the Scriptures such as Matthew 18:15-20, and Galatians 6:1-2, and the guidelines set forth in Appendix 2 of this document. The goal of discipline is always redemption and restoration of the erring church member, rather than punishment. The action of removing a member through discipline shall be taken by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a Family (Business) Meeting, in which the action has been announced to the church beforehand.

Any person whose membership has been terminated as a result of church discipline, may, upon repentance and restoration, request to be restored to church membership, which shall be granted by consensus of the church.

Appendix 2, "Discipline and Restoration of Church Members" provides detailed guidelines for the process of discipline and restoration.

II. Leadership

Section 1. Membership

We believe that the Bible teaches that, under the lordship of Jesus Christ, the membership of the church is the final human authority on matters related to the church. The membership is responsible to carry out the various ministries of the church, to elect and support the leadership offices of the church, and be the final authority on matters of church discipline when presented by the Pastor and Elders. Leadership for our church is drawn from the membership, therefore Biblical membership is essential for the health of the church. (See section on Church Membership)

Section 2. Elders

Our biblical conviction is that The New Testament teaches the church is to be led by a plurality of biblically qualified men called Elders, Overseers, or Pastors who are charged to lead, teach, protect, care for, manage, and shepherd the flock as its overseers. Their oversight includes, but is not limited to, teaching, protecting, leading, disciplining, equipping and caring for the corporate church body and her individual members as well as oversight of all ministry and operations of the church. The Elders are also responsible for being obedient to the Scripture in the doctrine of the church, providing direction of the church and recommending to the church new Elders, staff members and Deacons.

A. Qualifications of Elders

The minimum qualifications for Elders shall not be less than those listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1: 6-9. In addition to the minimum qualifications given in the Scriptures, Elders must be male, at least 25 years of age, members of Magna View for at least 3 years, fully subscribe to the Statement of Faith in our Constitution, and are actively involved in the ministry of the church.

B. Function of Elders

The oversight of the church's ministry and operations shall be vested in the Elder body. The Elders are expected to

1. Generally:

- a. Serve as examples of godliness, 1 Peter 5:3
- b. Administer church affairs well, 1 Timothy 5:17a.
- c. Shepherd (pastor) the flock, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2
- d. Equip the saints for ministry, Ephesians 4:11-13
- e. Be able to teach, 1 Timothy 3:2; 5:17b
- f. Pray for the members and ministries of the church, Acts 6:4, James 5:14

2. Specifically:

a. Administration - The Elders serve with the Pastor to provide the overall direction and program of the church and its related ministries. The Elders will serve as spiritual shepherds of the church with the Pastor.

b. Membership - The Elders will serve with the Pastor to oversee the membership roll of the church. This includes the maintenance of accurate membership records which are to be reviewed each year by the Pastor and Elders and reported to the church at the annual Family Meeting. (See I. Membership, Section 3. Membership Standing and Review)

c. Church Discipline and Restoration - All disciplinary and restorative action within the membership of the church shall be overseen by the Pastor and Elders (See I. Membership, Section 5. Discipline and Restoration of Church Members)

d. Church Objectives - The Elders will serve with the Pastor to formulate annual ministry objectives for the church to pursue each year. These objectives will be presented as a challenge to the congregation at a Family Meeting.

e. Church Ministry Teams - The Elders will serve with the Pastor to form ministry teams covering various areas of church life. Ministry team members shall be selected from among the congregation by the Elders and an Elder providing oversight for each team. Ministry Teams may be continued or discontinued at any time by the Elders, unless otherwise designated by the Bylaws.

f. Church Ministry Evaluation - Each year the Elders will serve with the Pastor and appropriate Ministry Team leaders to evaluate all church ministries in relation to their effectiveness and harmony with the Purpose Statement, Mission Statement and Core Values of the church.

C. Selection of Elders

The Pastor, Elders and congregation will work together to select men to serve as Elders. The Pastor and Elders shall determine when and how many Elders are to be added to the Elder body. They will then seek recommendations and input from the congregation; the Pastor and Elders may also make recommendations. The Pastor and Elders will review the recommendations, and select qualified candidates for interview to determine their willingness and readiness to serve as an Elder. Out of the interview process, the Pastor and Elders will prayerfully determine those men they believe are called and qualified and present them to the church for acknowledgement as Elders in Training. Once the men have been acknowledged, they will undergo a period of six-months of training, testing and examination with the Pastor and Elder body. Once the men have completed the six-month period, the Elders will present them to the church for vote and installation as Elders. Elders will participate in ongoing training to continuously equip them for leadership. A person may not serve as both an Elder and a Deacon simultaneously.

D. Term of Elder Service

At the present time the Elder term of service will be permanent, until the Elder chooses to resign, or a situation arises where an Elder is dismissed by church discipline. In the future, the Pastor and Elders may recommend a change to a rotation system of Elders to the church. To resign from the Elder body, an Elder must notify the church in person or in writing. A vacancy on the Elder body because of death, resignation, removal or any other cause shall be filled only in the manners prescribed in these bylaws.

Section 3. Pastor, Staff and Employees

A. Pastor

1. General

By virtue of his office the Pastor is an Elder of the church and will meet the qualifications and fulfill the functions of an Elder. In relation to the other Elders, the Pastor is the "first among

equals,” but his authority will be the same as other Elders in regard to decision-making. He will be the primary teacher and vision-caster for the church. He will also be responsible to make sure that applicants for membership are provided an opportunity for Membership Matters class or training. He is accountable to God and the entire church body, but he is particularly accountable to the Elders, staff and Deacons in regard to his integrity, his walk with Christ and ministry.

2. Calling to the office

A Pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least two weeks public notice has been given. The Elders will appoint a Pulpit Team to seek out a suitable pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. The Team shall bring to the consideration of the Church only one name at a time. Election shall be by show of hands or by written ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members present being necessary for a choice. The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or by majority vote of church. He shall preside at meetings of the church. The Pastor shall give at least two weeks notice at the time of resignation before terminating his responsibility as pastor. Should the pastor be terminated from his position, he will be given two-weeks notice and be provided the reason for his termination.

B. Ministry Staff and Employees

The church shall call and employ such staff members and employees as the church has need. The Elders, Pastor and Personnel Team shall determine the need for staff and employee positions, work together to develop a job description including qualifications, expectations and responsibilities. A job description shall be written when the need for staff and employees is determined. Ministry staff members and employees other than the pastor shall be recommended to the church by the Personnel Team and employed by church action through a vote of hand raising or written ballot. The church will be given two weeks notice before the election of the Personnel Team’s recommendation. The term of service of a staff member or employee shall be permanent until such time as the staff member or employee resigns, or the church determines to make a change. At least two weeks notice at the time of dismissal or resignation shall be given.

Section 4. Deacons

The role of the Deacon is primarily defined by the meaning of the word. The word literally means “one who waits tables,” “servant,” and “minister.” Deacons fulfill an important role in service to the body, allowing the Pastor and Elders to devote attention to the ministry of prayer and the word (Acts 6:1-7). Deacons are to serve the church by working with the the Pastor and Elders to discover and meet the physical needs of the church.

A. Deacon Qualifications

The minimum qualifications for Deacons shall not be less than those listed in Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13. In addition to the minimum qualifications given in the Scriptures, Deacons must be at least 25 years of age, members of the church for at least 1 year, fully subscribe to the Statement of Faith in our Constitution, and are actively involved in the ministry of the church.

B. Function of Deacons

Whereas the Bible charges Elders with the tasks of teaching and leading the church, Deacons' role is more service-oriented. That is, they are to care for the physical and temporal needs of the church. By handling such matters, Deacons free up the Pastor and Elders to focus on shepherding the spiritual needs of the congregation. The Deacons will be responsible for the following areas:

- **Benevolence** - In keeping with their initial role presented in Acts 6:1-7, Deacons will be responsible to meet physical needs of the church and community which may include administering benevolence funds or other assistance to those in need.
- **Facilities** - The Deacons will be responsible to care for the physical properties of the church including the grounds and buildings. The Deacons will work with Pastor, Elders and Personnel Team to secure and oversee the services of appropriate personnel to repair and maintain the church properties.
- **Ushers and Security** - Deacons will be responsible to recruit and equip qualified ushers, including those who are willing to serve as Security Ushers. Deacons will develop job responsibilities for Ushers and ensure that Ushers are equipped and prepared to serve the church, primarily during the Sunday worship services.

C. Deacon Selection

The Pastor, Elders, Deacons and congregation will work together to select men to serve as Deacons. The Pastor, Elders and Deacons shall determine when and how many Deacons are to be added to the Deacon body. They will then seek recommendations and input from the congregation; the Pastor, Elders and Deacons may also make recommendations. The Pastor, Elders and Deacons will review the recommendations, and select qualified candidates for interview to determine their willingness and readiness to serve as a Deacon. Out of the interview process, the Pastor, Elders and Deacons will prayerfully determine those men they believe are called and qualified and present them to the church for acknowledgement as Deacons in training. Once the men have been acknowledged, they will undergo a period of six-months of training, testing and examination with the Pastor and Deacon body. Once the men have completed the six-month period, the Pastor will present them to the church for vote and installation as Deacons. Deacons will participate in ongoing training to continuously equip them for service. A person may not serve as both a Deacon and an Elder simultaneously.

D. Term of Deacon Service

At the present time the Deacon term of service will be permanent, until the Deacon chooses to resign, or a situation arises where a Deacon is dismissed by church discipline. In the future, the Pastor and Elders may recommend a change to a rotation system of Deacon service to the church. To resign from being a Deacon, a Deacon must notify the church in person or in writing. A vacancy on the Deacon body because of death, resignation, removal or any other cause shall be filled only in the manners prescribed in these Bylaws.

Section 4. Officers of the Church

A. Moderator

The Moderator will be responsible for making preparation for and presiding over the Family Meetings of the church. By virtue of his office the Pastor shall be the moderator of the church. The Pastor and Elders will select an Elder to serve as an Assistant Moderator; in the case of an absence of the Pastor for a Family Meeting the Assistant Moderator will preside.

B. Clerk

The church Clerk will be appointed by the Pastor and Elders and will be responsible to keep in a suitable book, a record of all the actions of the church in Family Meetings. The Clerk will work with the Pastor, Elders and Church Secretary to keep an accurate roll of church membership, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. The Clerk will work with the Church Secretary to issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary as indicated in these Bylaws. All church records are church property and should be filed in the office.

C. Treasurer

The church Treasurer will be responsible to receive, preserve, and pay out upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money, or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to render to the church at each regular Family Meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month or current year. The Treasurer's report shall be reviewed annually by the Pastor, Elders and Stewardship Team or public accountant.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year, and its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered to the church Clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the church.

D. Trustees

The Trustees shall serve as legal representatives of the church. Three Trustees, nominated by the Elders and elected by the church, will hold in trust the church property. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the Trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of Trustees are required. Trustees shall serve three year terms with one person rotating off and one new person being added each year. A person must be off the team for a minimum of one year before being able to serve another three year term.

Section 5. Ministry Teams

It is our biblical belief that the spiritual leadership of the church is to equip the membership of the church to do the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-14). To enable the church to do the ministry, Ministry Teams are established and staffed according to the spiritual gifts of the membership. The Elders will oversee the development, staffing and equipping of the various Ministry Teams. Most Ministry Teams are fluid and adaptive to the needs of the congregation and the community. Most Teams are created and disbanded according to need, but the Stewardship Team and the Personnel Team will be standing Ministry Teams and remain permanent:

A. Stewardship Team

The purpose of the Stewardship Team is to develop and recommend an overall stewardship plan for the church, develop an annual operating budget and promote faithful financial stewardship throughout the year. The Stewardship Team will work with the Treasurer and other appropriate persons to develop an annual operating budget to be presented to the church in the December Family Meeting. The Team will consist of the Treasurer, who will serve as the Team Leader, the Assistant Treasurer, and three at large members chosen from the church membership. The three at large members will serve three year terms with one person rotating off and one new person being added each year. A person must be off the team for a minimum of one year before being able to serve another three year term.

B. Personnel Team

The purpose of the Personnel Team determine the staffing needs of the church, develop ministry and job positions and descriptions to meet those needs, work with the Stewardship Team to develop salary packages, and work with the Pastor and Elders to oversee the job performance of staff and employees. The Personnel Team will also serve as liaisons between staff members, employees and the church, work with the Pastor and Elders to do annual reviews of all staff and employee positions, and make annual salary modifications recommendations to the Stewardship Team for the annual budget. The Personnel Team will consist of three members serving three year terms with one person rotating off and one new person being added each year. A person must be off the team for a minimum of one year before being able to serve another three year term.

C. Other Ministry Teams and Volunteer Ministry Positions

All other Ministry Teams and volunteer ministry positions will be developed and overseen by the Elders. Job descriptions for each Team and position will be maintained in the Ministry Team Guidebook.

III. Amendments

Changes in this Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any regular Family Meeting of the church, provided such amendments shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment be furnished to each member present. Amendments or changes to the Constitution shall be by two—thirds vote of all members of the church present entitled to vote; amendments to the Bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.

Appendix 1

A Commitment to Church Membership

The church is the gathering of God's people, mutually committed to God and to one another, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Becoming a member of this church means making the following commitments:

1. Share In the RESPONSIBILITY of the Church

By praying for the health of the church – Colossians 1:9-12

By sharing the gospel with others - Acts 1:8, Romans 10:13-15

By receiving those whom the Lord brings to be a member of the church family – Romans 15:7

By giving tithes and offerings cheerfully – Malachi 3:10, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

2. Serve the MINISTRY of the Church

By discovering and using my spiritual gifts and talents - 1 Peter 4:10

By serving alongside other members - 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

By being willing to be equipped by the leadership of the church to serve – Eph 4:11-12

By being a disciple who makes disciples - 2 Timothy 2:2

3. Protect the UNITY of the Church

By acting in love towards one another - Rom 14:19, Matthew 5-7, 1 John 3

By serving one another - John 13:1-17

By refusing to gossip - Ephesians 4:29

By restoring damaged relationships with others - Matthew 18:15-18

By following the spiritual leaders – Hebrews 13:17

4. Support the WITNESS of the Church

By growing spiritually through the practice of spiritual disciplines (Bible study, prayer, Scripture memorization, etc.) - 1 Timothy 4:7, Joshua 1:8, Matthew 6:5-21

By participating in worship, Bible Study, group gatherings, and fellowship – Heb 10:25

By making myself accountable to the spiritual leadership of the church - Eccl 4:9-12, Galatians 6:1-5, James 5:16

By following Jesus Christ – Matthew 4:19

Appendix 2

Discipline and Restoration

On occasion a church member may wander away from the fellowship of other believers and/or become ensnared in sin either through ignorance or willful disobedience. It then becomes necessary for the church, and particularly its leaders, to actively seek the repentance and restoration of that Christian. As shepherds of the flock, the pastor and elders love the sheep and are also held accountable by God for their spiritual welfare, including that of the wandering sheep. As in Jesus' parable in Luke 15:3-8, it is a time of joy, both in heaven and within the church, when the wandering Christian truly repents.

One means by which the church seeks to lovingly restore wandering and sinning believers is the process of church discipline. In Matthew 18, the Lord explains to His disciples how to respond when a fellow believer sins. The principles He sets forth must guide the body of Christ as she seeks to implement discipline in the church today.

The Purpose of Discipline

The purpose of church discipline is the spiritual restoration of fallen members and the consequent strengthening of the church and glorifying of the Lord. When a sinning believer is corrected and he turns from his sin and is forgiven, he is won back to fellowship with the body and with its head, Jesus Christ.

The goal of church discipline is not to throw people out of the church or punish sinful members. The purpose is to restore a sinning believer to holiness and bring him/her back into a healthy relationship with the church.

In Matthew 18:15, Jesus says, *“And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.”* The Greek word translated “won” was originally used of accumulating wealth in the sense of monetary commodities. Here it refers to the gaining back of something of value that is lost, namely, an erring brother or sister. When a brother or sister strays, a valuable treasure is lost, and the church should not be content until he or she is restored. The body of Christ is in the business of recovery (Galatians. 6:1), and such is the purpose of church discipline.

While all sinful behavior is detrimental to the individual and to the church, in matters of church discipline, the following actions and attitudes provide parameters for which church discipline will be practiced.

- Violations of God's moral commandments and known sexual immorality (1 Cor. 5:10-11; 6:9-10; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-5).
- Persistent non-attendance or participation in church gatherings and activities (Heb 10:24-26)
- Unresolved relational sins, such as gossip, slander, and abusive speech (Matt. 18:15-20; Eph. 4:25-31; Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 3:8).

- Divisiveness in the church (Rom. 16:17-18; Titus 3:10; 3 John 9-10).
- False teaching on major doctrines (Gal. 1:8-9; 1 Tim. 1:20; 6:3-5; 2 John 9-11).
- Conduct that damages the witness of Christ and His church in the community (2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:8).

The Process of Discipline

In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus sets forth the four step process of church discipline:

Step One (Matt. 18:15). The process of church discipline begins on an individual level. Jesus said, *“And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private”* (v. 15a). Here, an individual believer is to go to a sinning brother/sister privately and confront him in a spirit of humility and gentleness. This confrontation involves clearly exposing the sin so that he/she is aware of it and calling him/her to repentance. In the context of church discipline, the Pastor or an Elder of the church will privately confront the sinning member. If the member repents in response to the private confrontation, he/she is forgiven and will begin a restoration process (v. 15b).

Step Two (Matt. 18:16). If the sinning member refuses to listen to the one who has rebuked him/her privately, the next step in the discipline process is to take one or two more believers along to confront him/her again (v. 16a). The purpose of taking other believers is so that *“by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed”* (v. 16b). In other words, the witnesses are present not only to confirm that the sin was committed but, in addition, to confirm that the sinning member was properly rebuked and that he has or has not repented.

The presence of additional witnesses is as much a protection for the one being approached as it is for the one approaching. The witnesses need to confirm whether there is a heart of repentance or one of indifference or rejection. Such a report provides the basis for further action because the situation has been verified beyond the report of one individual. If a change of heart does occur, the brother is forgiven and restored, and the matter is dropped.

Step Three (Matt. 18:17a). If the sinning member refuses to listen and respond to the confrontation of the witnesses after a period of time, those witnesses are then to tell it to the church (v. 17a). This is most appropriately done by bringing the matter to the attention of the church through a Family Meeting and requesting prayer for the erring member.

How long should the Pastor and Elders continue to call the member to repentance before telling the church? The Pastor and Elders of the church avoid carrying out the third or fourth stage of church discipline until they are absolutely certain that the erring member has truly sinned, or is continuing to sin, and that he/she has refused to repent when appropriately confronted. When an appropriate time has passed, the member’s sin and refusal to repent are made known publicly during a Family Meeting. This crucial and potent procedure often draws the sinner to repentance and obedience. If repentance does take place, the sinning believer is forgiven and a restoration process begins.

Step Four (Matt. 18:17b). The fourth and final step in the process of church discipline is

exclusion from membership. If a sinning member refuses to listen even to the church, he/she is to be excluded from the fellowship. Jesus said, “let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector” (v. 17b). The term “Gentile” was primarily used of non-Jews who held to their traditional paganism and had no part in the covenant, worship, or social life of the Jews. On the other hand, a “tax-collector” was an outcast from the Jews by choice, having become a traitor to his own people. Jesus’ use of these terms doesn’t mean that the church is to treat these people badly. It simply means that when a professing member refuses to repent, the church is to remove him from membership and treat him as one who is outside of the church, and not in a right relationship with Christ. (1 Corinthians 5:11-12)

As far as the welfare of the church is concerned, the purpose of putting the brother out is to protect the purity of the fellowship (1 Cor. 5:6), to warn the assembly of the seriousness of sin (1 Tim. 5:20), and to give a testimony of righteousness to a watching world. But as far as the welfare of the brother himself is concerned, the purpose of the exclusion is not to punish, but to awaken, and it must therefore be done in humble love and never in a spirit of self-righteous superiority (2 Thess. 3:15).

Adapted from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 16–23* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1988); John MacArthur, *The Master’s Plan for the Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991); and Stuart Scott and George Crawford, “Restoring the Wandering Sheep,” (unpublished paper). <https://www.gty.org/resources/distinctives/dd02/church-discipline>

The Restoring A Repentant Church Member

We have seen in Matthew 18 how the Lord instructs His disciples in regard to disciplining and forgiving those who sin, having discussed the whole matter of reproof and rebuking sin, and seeking those sinning members in order to bring them back to a right relationship with God. The next area to be considered is restoration of the repentant member to both fellowship with the body and ministry within the church.

Though we sometimes must carry out discipline, we must also be ready to forgive, and we must complete the process and seek a repentant member's restoration. Galatians 6:1-2 provides a broad guideline for the restoration process.

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Gal 6:1-2 (NKJV)

This passage speaks to the situation of a fellow Christian who has committed or fallen into a pattern of sinful behavior in his/her life. The word “Brethren” indicates a family relationship with the church, for our context, a church member. “You who are spiritual” would refer to those in spiritual leadership positions in the church, again, for our context, this would be the Pastor and Elders. It is the responsibility of the Pastor and Elders to oversee the restoration process of the repentant member.

The Process of Restoration

The word "restore" is a very common word in the New Testament (Gk. katartizo). It simply means "to repair something in the sense of bringing it back to its former condition." It is used of reconciling two arguing factions, of setting bones that are broken, of putting a dislocated limb back into its proper place, and of mending broken nets. The word is very common for knitting something together or restoring it to its original condition. The goal of the process is to restore a repentant member to

1. A right relationship with God
2. A right relationship with themselves through self-forgiveness
3. A right relationship with an offended party where possible.
4. A right relationship with the church body
5. A return to ministry within the body where possible.

Step One

Galatians 6:1 indicates that those who are spiritual are to take the initiative in beginning the process, therefore the Pastor and Elders have the responsibility to reach out to the repentant member. An initial meeting will be called to discuss the process with the member and secure his/her commitment to the process, discuss the purposes of the process, establish goals of restoration, and discuss the selection of a Restoration Team who will meet regularly with the member. The Pastor and Elders may serve as the Restoration Team unless there is a conflict of interest.

Step Two

The Restoration Team will meet regularly (weekly if schedules allow) with the member. During these meetings there will be times of sharing testimony, accountability questioning, prayer, Bible Study and further study in helpful and agreed upon areas (helpful books related to the specific situation of the member may be read and discussed with the Restoration Team). The content of these meeting will be held in confidence by the Restoration Team and the member.

The regular meetings will continue for as long as deemed necessary by the Restoration Team, but should not be ended prior to a period of 8-12 months for full restoration.

Should there be a need for professional spiritual counseling, the Restoration Team will work with the member to secure such services. The member should assume all financial responsibilities for such counseling services.

Step Three

Once the Restoration Team has determined that the member ...

- Has been restored to a growing relationship with God
- Has given evidence of self forgiveness and personal spiritual growth
- Has, as well as possible made restoration with an offended party
- Has demonstrated continued commitment to the church body

... a report will be made to the Pastor and Elders (if they have not served as the Restoration

Team). The member will be interviewed by the Pastor and Elders and there will be a determination as to whether the process will continue or if the member is ready for full restoration.

Step Four

If the Pastor and Elders determine that the member is ready for full restoration, he/she will be brought before the church at a Family Meeting. If public confession of sin and repentance has not already occurred, it should be made by the member at the Family Meeting. The member will share a testimony of the life change that has occurred during the restoration process, and the Restoration Team will give a report and recommend full restoration by the church. The church will be asked to affirm the member and the recommendation of the Restoration Team. Only after affirmation by the church will the member be restored to ministry where possible.

Because every situation will be unique, it will be the responsibility of the Pastor and Elders to oversee and adjust the restoration process as necessary.

It must be reiterated by the Pastor and Elders to the member, the Restoration Team, and when appropriate to the church, that the purpose of this process is not punishment of the member, or retribution for the sin that has been committed. The purpose of the process is the restoration of the repentant member to a healthy relationship with God first and foremost, and to the church body and possibly to ministry. It is important that the Pastor, Elders, Restoration Team and church act in love, grace and humility to the repentant member, heeding the warning of Galatians 6:1-2, *"...restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."*

Adapted from "Restoring a Sinning Brother"

<https://www.gty.org/resources/print/study-guide-chapter/1291>