



**Zion**

Baptist Church

**“Igniting a Passion for Christ”**

**CONSTITUTION  
AND BYLAWS**

**OF**

**Mt. Zion Missionary  
Baptist Church**

(Last Update: October 18, 2015)



# CONSTITUTION

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## PREAMBLE

For the purpose of preserving and making articulate the principles of our Faith, and to the end that this body of believing Christians may be governed in an orderly manner, consistent with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist Churches. For the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of the church, and in order to set forth the relationship of this body to other Baptist bodies. We do adopt and establish this Constitution, this the twenty fourth day of September, 2008.

## ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Washington County, 284 Mt. Zion Church Road, Jonesborough, TN.

## ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The Mt. Zion Baptist Church is organized to advance and promote the worship of God through the reading and studying of the Holy Bible as the revealed word of God, the teaching and preaching of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and conducting regular services of worship for the spiritual training, development and benefit of each member. For the purpose of winning souls to Jesus Christ this church shall be missionary in spirit, extending the Gospel through our organized religious channels to the entire world. It shall promote and maintain the teachings and doctrines of Southern Baptists. It shall exist to provide regular opportunities for public worship, to sustain the ordinances, doctrines and ethics set forth in the New Testament for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to channel its offerings to the support of the objects of the Kingdom of God.

In order to effectively carry forward the objects and purposes set forth above, the church shall have full power and authority to purchase, lease or acquire by gift, devise or bequest and to hold, mortgage, provide, convey and dispose of all kinds of property, both real and personal, provided that the title of said property shall be vested in the church trustees as hereinafter set forth.

## ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

**SECTION 1** - the membership of this church shall be composed of persons without regard to race who have given evidence of regeneration by the Spirit of God, who have been given baptism by immersion, and who have subscribed to the church covenant, articles of faith, and the constitution of this church, and who have been received into membership by a vote of the members of the church present and voting.

**SECTION 2** - A member of another Southern Baptist Church who has been baptized by immersion may be received by a majority vote of the members of the church present and voting, upon promise of letter from the other church. The person who applies for membership in this manner will be in a watch-

care relationship until letter is received. The church secretary shall notify such person of receipt of the letter of transfer. If a letter cannot be obtained for some reason, then they may be received into the fellowship of the church upon statement to the membership and by a majority vote of the members of the church present and voting.

**SECTION 3** - Applications for membership under circumstances other than those described in Sections 1 or 2 above will be considered by the church in regular business meetings. A majority vote of the members of the church present and voting is required.

**SECTION 4** - A letter of transfer to unite with another Southern Baptist Church may be issued upon request from another Southern Baptist Church to which the member has applied for membership, providing such a member is in good standing. Such letters of transfer shall be granted when passed upon by the church in any worship service and their names removed from the church roll. Letters of transfer of membership will not be issued to churches other than Southern Baptist Churches.

**SECTION 5** - The church, after due notice and opportunity for hearing, and every possible kindly effort to make such action unnecessary; may, upon majority vote of members of the church present and voting, terminate the membership of active members in this body for reasons it (the church) considers sufficient to warrant such action. Such members may be restored to fellowship of the church upon confession of his error to the church and by giving satisfactory evidence or repentance.

**SECTION 6** - Receipt of written notification that a person has joined himself with a church of another denomination will be considered sufficient cause to remove the name of such from the roll of this church. A letter shall be sent to the other church advising that the person's name has been removed from our roll.

**SECTION 7** - Letters of transfer of membership from this church will not be given to individuals to carry with them upon departure from the area or membership.

**SECTION 8** - Actions indicated in Sections 1 or 2 may be taken at any regular service of the church provided the individual is present.

## **ARTICLE IV MEETINGS**

**SECTION 1** - This church shall hold regular meetings for worship, teaching, training, and fellowship.

**SECTION 2** - This church shall hold regular business meetings for the disposition of all business matters not otherwise provided for, to hear reports from the various church organizations, and to other matters essential to the spiritual welfare and prosperity of the church.

**SECTION 3** - Other meetings of the church as a whole or of authorized groups within the church may be set according to the needs of the church.

## **ARTICLE V OFFICERS**

The officers of this church shall be a pastor and other vocational leadership as needed: deacons, trustees, church secretary, treasurer, and such other officers as shall be required to do the work of the church in any of its departments or organizations. All of these shall be elected by the church and shall be members in good standing. The pastor may not be a member until after his call.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **ELECTIONS AND DUTIES OF CHURCH OFFICERS**

#### **A. PASTOR**

**SECTION 1 - CALL** - Whenever a vacancy occurs, a pastor shall be called by the church to serve full-time until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the pastor or the church. In either case, at least sixty days notice shall be given of termination of the relationship, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon, with both pastor and church seeking to follow the will of God through the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The call of the pastor shall take place at a meeting especially set for that purpose of which at least one week's notice has been given the membership. The election shall be upon the recommendation of a pulpit committee, recommended by the deacons and approved by the church, to seek out and nominate as pastor a minister of the Gospel whose Christian character and qualification fit him for the office. The committee shall bring only one name at a time for the consideration of the church and no nominations shall be made except by the committee. Election shall be by ballot or by standing vote with an affirmative vote of two-thirds of those present and voting necessary to extend a call. Should the minister recommended by the committee fail to receive a two-thirds vote, the committee will be instructed to seek out another minister and the meeting at which the vote was taken shall be adjourned without debate.

**SECTION 2 - DUTIES** - The pastor shall be charged with the welfare of the church; he shall be ex-officio member of all organizations, departments and committees; he may call a special meeting of the deacons or of any committee according to procedures which are set forth in the by-laws; he shall conduct religious services on stated and on special occasions, administer the ordinances, and minister to the spiritual needs of the members of the church and the community; he shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church and shall, in cooperation with the deacons, provide for the pulpit supply when he is absent, and shall arrange, with the concurrence of the deacons, for ministers to assist in revival meetings and workers to assist in other special services required by the church. It shall be his special responsibility to win the lost to Christ, to minister to the special needs of the members of his congregation, and through prayer and study to render effective preaching and pastoral ministries.

## **B. DEACONS**

There shall be a minimum of seven deacons until the resident membership reaches 175; then one deacon should be added per each additional 25 resident members. New deacons shall be selected from those members who have proven themselves to have scriptural qualifications according to I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Upon the adoption of this constitution, the existing deacons of this church shall decide on a method of determining who shall rotate to inactive status annually, the number required to make up full strength should be elected prior to rotation. As required, the chairman of the deacons shall appoint a deacon nominating committee from the active deacons. The membership of this committee shall be announced in the church bulletin and from the pulpit one month prior to the election. Members of the church are encouraged to submit names of prospective deacons to the committee. The deacon nominating committee shall submit to the deacons a list of the proposed nominees. The deacons and the pastor shall have the responsibility of selecting from this list or from other members of the church that are deemed to be morally and spiritually qualified. The candidate/candidates that are selected and approved by the deacons shall be submitted to the church for vote. The candidate must receive two-thirds vote to be elected. Deacons retiring from active participation by rotation shall retain their title of deacon and may be called upon for service by the church at any time but shall be ineligible for re-election to their active diaconate until at least one year has elapsed following their retirement from this service.

The deacons shall elect, annually, a Chairman of the deacons from the active deacons. Deacons shall at all times regard themselves as servants of the church. With the pastor, and as the Holy Spirit may direct, they are to be considered and make recommendations to the church in all matters pertaining to its work and progress, including supervision of the discipline of the church and establishment and maintenance of spiritual fraternal relations with all members of the church. They shall assist the pastor in the observance of the ordinances; have general supervision of the upkeep, repair, and use of property (with proper respect for the responsibilities of the church trustees), and supervise the financial program of the church. They shall arrange for regular meeting and such committees as are necessary to the discharge of their duties. The pastor, or the chairman of the deacons, may call the deacons into special sessions whenever need for such arises.

## **C. TRUSTEES**

At all times there shall be five trustees who are to hold title to all church property for the benefit of those members of the church who adhere and submit to the regular order of the church and who follow the established usage, customs, doctrines, practices and organizations of the church, together with its connections with other denominational bodies whether a majority or a minority of the membership. The trustees shall execute all contracts, deeds, mortgages or other instruments when authorized to do so by the church in business meetings. The trustees shall serve an indefinite term and until their successors are duly elected by the church in business meetings. Upon the death, resignation, or inability to serve of any of the trustees, a successor shall be elected by the church.

## **D. Church Secretary**

The church secretary shall be selected by the pastor and the deacons. The church shall vote on the position, requiring a two thirds majority. It shall be his or her responsibility to attend or be represented at all church business meetings, to keep an accurate record of all business transactions, to prepare the annual association letter and to see that it is properly transmitted to the association clerk. He or she shall issue letters of dismissal or transfer and requests for letters of transfer of membership as authorized by the church, and preserve all papers

and valuable records and letters that belong to the church. It shall be the duty of the church secretary to see that an accurate role of the church membership is kept, the dates and methods of admissions and dismissals, change in name, correct mailing addresses and other important information about each member. The Church Secretary will receive the church offering envelopes, special offering envelopes, receipts and other evidence of money received, and a Summary of Receipts from the counting committee. These source documents should add up to the bank deposit. The church secretary will post these records to the individual accounts, and complete and mail a yearly contributions record to each contributor. The Church Secretary is responsible for approving all disbursements; ensuring money is available in the budget or by obtaining approval of the Finance committee. When he or she is satisfied that invoices and other obligations are in order for payment, he or she will write, sign and issue the checks for payment. The checks and all their supporting data (invoices and receipts purchases ordered) will be filed for future reference. The church secretary shall post the record of all disbursements in an electronic accounting software program or equivalent system. At the end of each month, he or she shall reconcile the bank statements and prepare the statement of receipts and disbursements and the balance sheet for presentation to the church. The financial books shall be audited at least once a year, by the Treasurer or as arranged by the church. The Church Secretary is also responsible for daily operations of the Church offices and available for assistance to the pastor and staff for secretarial duties.

## **E. TREASURER**

The church shall elect a treasurer annually. One who has served previously in this position will be eligible for re-election. The treasurer shall upon invitation or request meet with the deacons, and shall lead the Finance Committee. The Treasurer is responsible for counting offerings, preparing the deposit tickets and depositing the offering in the bank account. Copies of the deposit tickets will be given to the Church Secretary. The Treasurer is responsible for management of the church funds, including the checking account, building fund and Certificates of Deposit or Money Market accounts. The Treasurer will make recommendations to the church for the best management of church funds and obtain approval from the Pastor and Deacons before execution of transferring funds. The Treasurer will be responsible for the initial budget development and tracking of the budget after it is approved.

## **ARTICLE VII CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

**SECTION 1** - The government of this church shall be congregational in nature and shall be vested in the membership.

**SECTION 2** - Church business meetings: A church business meeting shall be held quarterly and at such other times as maybe necessary. Any regular business meeting may be postponed until a specified date at the majority vote of the members present and voting. In addition to stated business meetings, a business meeting of the church may be called at any time by the pastor, chairman of the deacons, or upon the request of any five members of the church who are regular in attendance. Such meetings must be announced publicly in at least two services of the church prior to the established time of the called meeting or by written notice to each

resident member. Only specific business shall be addressed in the specially-called business meeting.

**SECTION 3 - Moderator:** the pastor shall preside over business meetings as moderator. In his absence the chairman of the deacons shall preside as vice-moderator. In the absence of the moderator and the vice-moderator the pastor shall designate another deacon to preside.

**SECTION 4 - Quorum:** a quorum shall consist of not less than 10% of the resident members.

**SECTION 5 - Voting:** a member must be present in order to vote in any business meeting. The majority rules unless otherwise specified in this constitution.

**SECTION 6 - Minutes:** the church secretary shall keep minutes of each business meeting and shall record the approximate number present, whether a quorum was present and what actions were taken by the church.

## **ARTICLE VIII AFFILIATION**

**SECTION 1 -** This church is a free, autonomous, independent body, congregational in nature. It has sole authority to determine for itself, in the manner set forth in this constitution, the use of its property and all church policies. It is free of any outside control, authority or power, whether governmental or otherwise.

**SECTION 2 - Association:** the church recognizes the value of mutual helpfulness in voluntary association of churches. We recognize that association and cooperation between such churches will influence the missionary, educational and benevolent interest of each other. The church will allow work in mutual cooperation with other Baptist groups.

**SECTION 3 - Affiliation:** upon the adoption of this constitution this church shall be deemed to have affiliated itself with the Holston Baptist Association.

**SECTION 4 - Cooperation:** upon adoption of this constitution this church shall be deemed to be in friendly cooperation with the aims and purposes of the Tennessee Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention as set forth in the constitution of these autonomous bodies. We shall participate in their deliberative assemblies through duly elected messengers. We shall, as we are able, support the missionary, educational and benevolent efforts of each. In cooperation with the SBC we have adopted and affirm the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, as a witness to the world, and as instruments of doctrinal accountability. We are not embarrassed to state before the world that these are doctrines we hold precious and as essential to the Baptist tradition of faith and practice of which we affirm.

**SECTION 5 - Discontinuance of Affiliation and/or Cooperation:** the calling of a church business meeting for the purpose of voting on withdrawal from affiliation with the Holston Baptist Association and/or discontinuance of cooperation with the Tennessee Baptist Convention and/or Southern Baptist Convention will require that written notice be sent to each resident member of the church, stating the purpose and time of said business meeting. To be valid, action to withdraw must be carried by vote of three-fourths of the members present and voting; in which case transferal of property shall be effected in accordance with the will of the three-fourths majority. In the event of serious rupture in the fellowship at this point, and the necessity of such action as above set forth, it is expected that the various factions of the church sit down in Christian love and in the spirit of prayer and seek to effectuate reconciliation or an agreeable basis of division, each being mindful of the beatitude which states, "blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God."

## **ARTICLE IX ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS**

**SECTION 1 -** This constitution shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when two-thirds of the members present at the business meeting shall vote in favor of same. This vote shall be taken not less than thirty days after formal presentation of the constitution to the church. Notice of such meeting in which the vote is to be taken shall be given one week in advance. The adoption of this constitution automatically repeals any previous constitution or other governing document in conflict herewith.

**SECTION 2 -** This constitution may be amended, altered or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular business meeting of the church; provided however that such an amendment, alteration or repeal shall be given to the church secretary in writing and the proposed change shall be presented to the church at least thirty days prior to the time the vote is taken.

# **BYLAWS**

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## **ARTICLE X CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

**SECTION 1 -** The church year shall begin September 1 and end August 31. The financial year shall run concurrently with the calendar year.

**SECTION 2 -** The regular business meetings shall observe the following order of business:

- (1) The reading of the minutes (Church Secretary)
- (2) Reports of officers (i.e. Sunday School, , Treasurer, , etc.)
- (3) Committee reports (Nominating, youth, cemetery, finance, etc.)

(4) Unfinished business

(5) New Business

(6) Adjournment

NOTE: The reading of the minutes and reports (items 1, 2, and 3) may be dispensed with provided printed copies have been distributed on the Sunday before the business meeting. In this case the church may vote without requiring the reading of these minutes and reports.

**SECTION 3** - The church business meeting shall be guided by Robert's Parliamentary Law , except in cases especially provided for in this constitution.

## **ARTICLE XI MEETING**

The church shall hold regular services of worship on Sundays and Wednesday evenings unless otherwise agreed upon by the church. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once each quarter at a time approved by the church.

## **ARTICLE XII OTHER CHURCH OFFICERS**

**SECTION 1-** All church officers subject to annual election shall be elected during the month agreed upon by the church each year. The term of office shall expire on August 31.

**SECTION 2** - In addition to those named in the body of the constitution other officers of the church shall be: the Superintendent of the Sunday School, the Music Director, and such other officers as may be necessary and desirable. All officers of the church and its organizations, unless otherwise specified, shall be elected for a term of one year, and upon the recommendation of the Nominating Committee. Members of the church may offer substitute nominations for any position for which the Nominating Committee makes a recommendation.

**SECTION 3** - A teacher is defined as a person teaching the Word of God in the Sunday School and other departments and organizations of the church. Therefore the teacher must be knowledgeable of the Word of God and in good standing with the church.

## **ARTICLE XIII DUTIES OF CHURCH OFFICERS**

**SECTION 1 - Sunday School Director:** the supervisor of the Sunday School shall have general supervision of the entire school, and shall administer its affairs in cooperation with and according to, the plans and methods of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, subject to the approval of the church. He or she shall acquaint themselves with the best methods of religious education and endeavor to adopt them in this school. It shall be their duty to counsel weekly or monthly with their teachers and officers through teachers and officers meetings, giving advice and receiving suggestions from their co-workers. He or she shall see that a full and accurate report is made of the work of the Sunday School in the regular business meetings of the church.

**SECTION 2 - Music Director:** the music director shall be responsible for providing worshipful music at all services. The music director is to train and direct the choir(s) and is to cooperate with the pastor and other church leaders in the selection of suitable music, and the devising of appropriate musical programs for all occasions where such services are needed.

**SECTION 3 – Youth/Children’s Director:** The Youth/Children’s Director shall be responsible for the youth budget and delegation of duties to ensure that all ages of children are included in activities that promote Christian growth and fellowship.

**SECTION 4 – VBS Director:** The VBS Director shall be responsible for planning and execution of a yearly VBS program. They will be responsible for program content and personnel to teach and lead all activities.

## **ARTICLE XIV COMMITTEES**

**SECTION 1 - Standing Committees:** the church will elect such standing committees as may be deemed necessary to carry out the various phases of the program of the church efficiently and effectively. In any event the church shall have at all times the following standing committees: nominating, finance, maintenance, music, benevolence, ushers and any other committee deemed necessary for the proper function of the church.

**SECTION 2 - Temporary Committees:** the church upon recommendation of the deacons may elect at any time committees to perform temporary functions.

## **ARTICLE XV ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS**

**SECTION 1-** These bylaws shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when a two

thirds majority vote of the members present at the business meeting shall vote in favor of same. This vote shall be taken not less than thirty days after formal presentation of the bylaws to the church.

**SECTION 2** - These bylaws may be amended, altered or repealed by a majority vote of two-thirds of the members present at any regular business meeting of the church. Notice and approval of such amendment, alteration or repeal must be given in writing at the preceding regular business meeting of the church.

## **ARTICLE XVI VALIDATE**

**SECTION 1**- The adoption by the church of this constitution and bylaws shall repeal all previously adopted rules in conflict herewith. No actions taken by this church prior to this date shall be invalidated by the adoption of this constitution and bylaws.

**SECTION 2** - A copy of this constitution and bylaws shall be kept by the Church Secretary at all times among his/her records and another copy shall be kept in the church office; all amendments to and revisions thereof shall be prepared by the Church Secretary and attached to copies of the constitution and bylaws and made available to the church members, upon request.

## **ADDENDUM NUMBER ONE CHURCH 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, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

WE engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

WE also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of and use of, intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

WE further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior

to secure it without delay.

WE moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## **ADDENDUM NUMBER TWO ARTICLES OF FAITH**

The articles of faith subscribed to by this church are identical to those published by the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in the tract "The Baptist Faith and Message," a statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000. A copy of this tract will be made available to each member of this church upon request.

## **ADDENDUM NUMBER THREE BELIEFS ON CULTURAL ISSUES**

**SECTION 1 - Marriage and Sexuality**(a) We believe that the term “marriage” has only one, legitimate meaning, and that is marriage sanctioned by God, which joins one man and one woman in a single, covenantal union, as delineated by Scripture. Marriage ceremonies performed in any facility owned, leased or rented by this church will be only those ceremonies sanctioned by God, joining one man with one woman as their gender was determined at birth. Whenever there is a conflict between the church’s position and any new legal standard for marriage, the church’s statement of faith, doctrines and biblical positions will govern. (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:22-23; Mark 10:6-9; I Cor. 7:1-9)

(b) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage as defined in (a) above. We believe that any other type of sexual activity, identity or expression that lies outside of this definition of marriage, including those that are becoming more accepted in the culture and the courts, are sinful perversions of and contradictory to God’s natural design and purpose for sexual activity. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9-10; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)

### **SECTION 2 - Family Relationships**

(a) We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)

(b) We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a wonderful gift and heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate training and discipline. (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; 1 Pet. 3:1-7)

**SECTION 3 - Divorce and remarriage.** We believe that God disapproves of and forbids divorce except on the grounds of adultery and when an unbelieving spouse deserts a believer. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon member. (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Mark 10:11-12; Rom. 7:1-3; I Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6; I Cor. 7:10-16)

**SECTION 4 - Abortion.** We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion is murder and constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:13-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:36, 44)

**SECTION 5 - Euthanasia.** We believe that an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, facilitates premature death, is assuming a decision that is to be reserved for God. We do not believe that discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome is euthanasia. (Ex. 20:13; 23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28)

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

**SECTION 7 - Lawsuits Within the Church.** We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits within the Church. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32)

**SECTION 8 - Protection of Children.** We believe that children are a heritage from the Lord and must be absolutely protected within the church from any form of abuse or molestation. The church has zero tolerance for any person, whether paid staff, volunteer, member, or visitor, who abuses or molests a child. (Ps. 127:3-5; Matt. 18:6; Matt. 19:14; Mark 10:14)

## **ADDENDUM NUMBER FOUR BIBLE TRANSLATION**

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible in the original manuscripts, and we believe that God has supernaturally preserved every one of His inspired words for us today. Although there are many different and good English translations of the Bible, we believe that a formal equivalent are the closest to the original and what the constitution and bylaws are established.