

Bull Street Baptist Church Constitution and By-Laws

Proposed July 23, 2014

Approved August 10, 2014

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PREAMBLE

WHEREAS it pleased Almighty God by his Holy Spirit to unite his servants together on April 15, 1891, as Duffy Street Baptist Church for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel; and

WHEREAS the name was changed in November 1913 to Second Baptist Church and changed again in August 1927 to Bull Street Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS God in his grace has sustained and prospered this work to the present day; and

WHEREAS we, the members of Bull Street Baptist Church, recognize the need to conduct ourselves biblically and orderly so as to honor the head of the church, Jesus Christ; now therefore

We declare and establish this Constitution for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith, so that this body may be unified and governed in an orderly manner. The Constitution and By-Laws of this church derive all their authority from Holy Scripture, and each of the laws and principles thereof must be understood and applied as subordinate to the scriptures. This Constitution will preserve the liberties of each member of this church and the autonomy of this church in its relation to other churches.

These articles will supersede any former policies and practices of this church.

ARTICLE 1. NAME

The name of this church shall be known as "Bull Street Baptist Church."

ARTICLE 2. MISSION

Equipping people to know Christ and to tell of his amazing grace!

ARTICLE 3. VISION

We want to become...

a community of faith where Christ is preeminent, His Word is authoritative, and His Gospel is powerfully proclaimed, not only in word, but also in deed; a community passionate about magnifying Christ in Savannah and among the nations, committed to regularly sending out short-term and long-term missionaries and planting new churches at home and abroad; a multi-generational, multi-ethnic community of faith, centered around the person of Jesus, where everyone—young and old, rich and poor, educated and

uneducated—is growing together in the grace and knowledge of God through passionate, Christ-centered worship, through sharing life and caring for one another in small groups and through serving one another and our city with our God-given gifts and resources; a community that reflects the diversity of our city, even as we grow in reflecting the diversity of heaven; a community that values God’s creativity and seeks to cultivate His beauty in all things; a community of faith where everyone is equipped, empowered, and engaged in ministry, where everyone plays a part in the mission and everyone’s part is valued; a community where authenticity, accountability, forgiveness and love are cultivated and practiced; a community where no one is destitute because of gracious and generous sharing and no one is idle because of faithful shepherding and discipling; a community which cherishes life and stands for the marginalized, the oppressed, and the voiceless; a community used by God to impact the city and the world with the power of the Gospel.

ARTICLE 4. DOCTRINE

The Statement of Faith of Bull Street Baptist Church is The Baptist Faith and Message (2000), which was adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 14, 2000. It can be read in full at www.sbc.net, including scriptural support, or a hard copy can be obtained in the church office. A summary of The Baptist Faith and Message (2000), is as follows:

The Scriptures. The Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God’s revelation of himself. It is truth without any mixture of error and, therefore, totally true and trustworthy. It is a testimony to Christ, who is himself the focus of divine revelation. It has salvation for its end, is the center of Christian union and is the supreme standard by which all else is judged. *(Article I)*

God. There is one and only one living and true God eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **God the 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. **God the Son** in His incarnation as Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, lived in sinless obedience, was crucified as a substitute for sinners, rose from the dead and ascended to the Father as Lord of all. He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. **God the Holy Spirit**, fully divine, inspired the Scriptures; exalts Christ; convicts men of sin, righteousness and judgment; calls men to the Savior; effects regeneration; and seals the believer until the day of redemption. This triune God, infinite in holiness and all other perfections, is worthy of our highest love, reverence and obedience. *(Article II)*

Man. God made man in His own image, male and female, as the crowning work of His creation. Man has been separated from God because of sin and is under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. As image bearers of God, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love. *(Article III)*

Salvation. Salvation comes by grace alone through repentance and faith in Christ alone. God the Father sent his Son into the world. God the Son, Jesus Christ, obtained eternal redemption for the believer by His own blood. God the Holy Spirit regenerates sinners, by which they are justified, enabled in sanctification and glorified. Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with 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. *(Articles IV, V)*

The Church. Following the pattern of the New Testament, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the gospel, governed by Christ through his word, seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. The ordinances of the church are believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper. The offices of the church are elders and deacons. The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ, which includes all of the redeemed of all ages, believers from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. *(Articles VI, VII, VIII, XI, XIV)*

The Social Order. Christians are under obligation to make the will of Christ supreme in their own lives and in their families, seeking to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth and brotherly love. They are to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come on earth, while awaiting the full consummation of the Kingdom at the return of Jesus Christ. *(Articles IX, X, XII, XIII, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII)*

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. *(Article X)*

ARTICLE 5. COVENANT

Whereas the statement of faith expresses what the church believes, the church covenant expresses the membership responsibilities and how the church desires to behave toward one another. The Covenant is as follows:

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, 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 the church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; and 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 Christian homes; 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 and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and to be mindful of the teachings of our Saviour. 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 6. AFFILIATIONS

Section 1. Baptist Groups

Bull Street Baptist is in voluntary cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Georgia Baptist Convention and the Savannah Baptist Association.

Section 2. Other Christian Groups

Bull Street Baptist, at the discretion of the elders, is also willing to cooperate with like-minded Christian individuals and organizations whose beliefs and practices are consistent with our mission, vision, and doctrine.

ARTICLE 7. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. General

Bull Street Baptist Church is an autonomous church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-governance in all aspects of the spiritual and temporal life of the church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who will be members of this church and what the conditions of such membership shall be.

Section 2. Members

Bull Street Baptist Church is comprised of persons who profess personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; who have received baptism by immersion as believers; who are actively following the Lord Jesus Christ in discipleship; and who affirm the mission, vision, doctrine and covenant of the church.

Section 3. Admission

Applicants for membership must complete the new members class prior to being recommended by the elders for admission and accepted by a vote of the members. All new members will at that point relinquish their membership in other churches. Bull Street will admit members in one of the following ways:

1. By Baptism
...of any person being baptized as a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord or of any person from another denomination who has not been baptized by immersion as a believer.
2. By Letter
...from another Baptist church of like faith and practice that recommends the applicant for membership.
3. By Statement
...from any person with no letter of recommendation from another Baptist church or another Christian evangelical church or with no membership elsewhere, but who meets the requirements for membership as stated above in Article 7, Section 2.

Section 4. Privileges and Responsibilities

In accordance with the duties enumerated in the covenant, it is the privilege and responsibility of every member to be actively involved in the life of the church through:

- seeking to obey all that Christ has commanded
- participating regularly in the main gatherings of the church
- upholding the church in prayer
- supporting the ministries and missions of the church financially
- serving the church according to one's gifts and abilities
- attending members meetings and voting on all matters as may be submitted to a vote.

Section 5. Congregational Voting

As a congregational church, the members will be asked to express their affirmation or rejection of recommendations through voting. The church will vote on the following matters:

- admission of members and termination of membership
- election of officers and committee members
- dismissal of officers and committee members
- annual budget and any contingency in excess of \$20,000
- building programs
- acquisition of debt
- purchase or sale of land
- changes to the Constitution and Bylaws
- any other matter presented to the membership with the approval of the elders.

No voting can take place unless a quorum is present. All votes require a two-thirds majority of all members present and voting, except for the appointment of an officer of the church (i.e., elders and deacons), which shall require 85% majority approval.

The church, desiring to promote informed and mature decision-making, grants voting privileges only to members 16 years of age and older. Members under 16 are invested with every other privilege and responsibility of membership.

Voting is to be held during members meetings. Members must be present to vote. Abstentions will not be counted as votes cast. Proxy voting is prohibited.

Section 6. Discipline

The church desires to assist its members in their efforts to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, especially during times of trial and temptation. Elders and fellow members are

available for counsel and encouragement (*Ephesians 4:1, 15-16*).

When sin is present, restoration rather than punishment shall be the goal that governs the attitude of one member toward another (*Galatians 6:1-2*).

Should any member stumble – whether through blatantly sinful behavior or through consistent neglect of responsibilities to the Lord Jesus Christ and to this church – he or she should expect to be lovingly confronted by an elder or a fellow member. Should the member remain unrepentant after being admonished by two or more witnesses and then by the wider church body, the church may take disciplinary action to exclude the unrepentant member from membership (*Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Titus 3:10-11*). Such action requires a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a regular members meeting or at a meeting called for this purpose.

Any person whose membership has been terminated by exclusion may, upon evidence of repentance, be restored to membership by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a regular members meeting or at a meeting called for this purpose (*2 Corinthians 2:6-7*).

Section 7. Termination

Membership shall be terminated in one of the following ways:

1. By automatic removal upon the death of the member
2. By the granting of a letter of recommendation to another church of like faith and practice
3. By recognition that the member has already joined another church
4. By request of the member, subject to approval by the church
5. By recognition of the member's non-resident status, with exceptions being approved by the church (e.g., health, education, military, temporary work, etc.)
6. By recognition of the member's willing non-participation in the privileges and responsibilities of membership for over one year
7. By exclusion through disciplinary action of the church

ARTICLE 8. CHURCH OFFICERS, AGENTS, COMMITTEES AND TEAMS

Section 1. Summary

The Biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. In addition, our church, under these Bylaws, recognizes the positions of trustee, treasurer, clerk and moderator as agents of the church.

Committees and teams will be created and dissolved according to the needs of the church. Committee members and team leaders must be approved by the church, whereas team members may serve with the approval of the team leader. Personnel, Finance and Buildings and Grounds committees shall not be subject to dissolution.

All officers, agents, committee members and team leaders must be members of the church prior to assuming their responsibilities. Team members may serve regardless of church membership if approved by the team leader.

Section 2. Elders

The Bible prescribes that the local church is to be led by a plurality of elders (*Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1-3*). Because the words “pastor,” “elder” and “overseer” are used synonymously in the New Testament, all pastors at BSBC shall be elders and all elders shall be pastors (*Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-3; Phil. 1:1*).

The elders shall be comprised of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 5–9. The elders who are not in the regular pay of the church shall be called “lay elders.” A majority of the active eldership shall be composed of lay elders. However, an exception may be made in extraordinary times, for a period not to exceed two calendar years, that there may be an equal ratio of staff to lay elders or staff elders may hold a simple majority over the lay elders. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church in accordance with the Word of God. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6: 1–6; Hebrews 13:17 and 1 Peter 5: 1–4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock.

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with provisions on election in the Bylaws. The term of office for an elder, other than the lead and associate pastors, is three years, at the conclusion of which he may be reaffirmed by the church for a second term. After serving two consecutive three-year terms, he may be re-elected after at least one-year absence from service.

The members should receive these men as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders (*Number 8: 19, Ephesians 4: 7-13*). Elders should see themselves as servants of the church not lording it over those entrusted to them, but being examples to the congregation (*1 Peter 5: 3*).

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members; examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions;

oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees; conduct worship services; administer the ordinances of believer's baptism by immersion and of the Lord's Supper; equip the membership for the work of the ministry; encourage sound doctrine and practice; promote growth in Christ-like maturity; admonish and correct error; oversee the process of church discipline; coordinate and promote the ministries of the church; mobilize the church for world missions; oversee the budget; and care for and provide counseling to the members. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions. Additionally, any request for the use of church facilities must meet the approval of the elders.

The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. The authority of supervision and evaluation may be delegated to a staff member.

Section 3. The Lead Pastor

The Lead pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

He shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out in Article 8, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 9, Section 3. He shall have charge of the preaching and teaching ministry of the church, administer the ordinances of believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the Bylaws.

In the absence or incapacity of the lead pastor for either a permanent or defined period of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the elders shall assume the responsibility for his duties any of which may be delegated among the elders.

Section 4. Associate and Assistant Pastors

The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the lead pastor is that of associate or assistant.

An associate or assistant pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out in Article 8, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 9, Section 3.

He shall assist the lead pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the Bylaws, or which may be necessary for the well-being of the church.

Section 5. Support Staff

The elders may hire the necessary support staff to assist with pastoral ministry or administration. The elders shall define the responsibilities for all support staff positions.

Section 6. Deacons

The office of deacon is that of a servant, meeting the practical needs of the church in ways that free the elders to fulfill their responsibilities. A deacon must meet the qualifications for the office as described in Acts 6:1-7 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

The church will recognize men who are gifted and willing to serve in this calling in accordance with the procedures for appointing officers outlined in Article 9, Section 4. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to his church and set apart as deacons. The number of deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and the qualifications of the men in the church. A deacon may serve for two consecutive three-year terms, and should not continue to serve as a deacon without a one-year absence of service unless agreed to by the deacons.

Deacons will serve under the authority of the elders, being organized in the most fitting way to accomplish the various ministries of the church. The deacons shall select from among themselves a leader to organize and coordinate their ministry efforts.

Particular responsibilities of the deacons shall include:

- benevolence ministries of the church
- practical service to the church body
- accommodations for the services of the church
- other specific tasks as needs arise in the church.

Section 7. Trustees

Trustees shall hold in trust the church property. Upon specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property, and to otherwise protect the church through appropriate legal

means. At least two trustees shall sign on behalf of the church. The trustees shall be comprised of the lay elders and the treasurer.

The names of the trustees must be filed for the coming year with the Clerk of the Superior Court of Chatham County after the October members meeting and before November 1 of each year. This procedure shall be done in the proper legal form.

Section 8. Treasurer

The church shall elect a treasurer as its financial officer; provided that if the church fails to have a duly elected treasurer as a result of the termination, resignation, death or incapacitation of a duly elected treasurer, the church shall elect a new treasurer as soon as reasonably practicable. The treasurer shall not be an active elder or paid staff member but shall be a member of the church in good standing. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to (i) support the elders in overseeing the financial and accounting activities of the church; (ii) manage the (a) receipt of all monies of the church, including ensuring that funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate, (b) preservation of monies in accordance with church policy (including, for the avoidance of doubt, the financial policy of the church) and donor requests; (c) payment of monies upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed according to the budget; and (d) accounting of all receipts and disbursements of church monies in books and records belonging to the church; (iii) maintain adequate controls to ensure that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled in accordance with the church's financial policy; and (iv) present regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each regularly scheduled members' meeting; provided that the responsibility set forth in this clause (iv) may be delegated to the chair of the Finance Committee or another Finance Committee member as the treasurer may designate in his or her reasonable discretion. The treasurer shall render to the elders, whenever they may require it, an account of all activities as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church. The treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the finance committee.

All financial records of the church are property of the church and shall be kept by the church for as long as deemed necessary.

All checks must have two signatures from any of the lay elders or the church treasurer. The church shall establish a petty cash account to be maintained in accordance with the church's financial policy.

Section 9. Assistant Treasurers

The church shall elect annually two assistant treasurers who shall serve under the direction of the treasurer.

Section 10. Clerk

The church shall elect annually a clerk who shall be responsible for keeping an accurate record of all official actions of the church. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a record of baptisms and a register of names of members with dates of admission, dismissal, death or exclusion. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these By-Laws. The clerk shall be responsible for preparing the annual church profile and for sending copies to the association. An administrative staff person may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records are church property and shall be kept in the church office.

Section 11. Moderator

The lead pastor shall serve as moderator at members meetings. If the lead pastor is absent or if he chooses not to serve or, if there is a conflict of interest, any one of the other elders may serve as acting moderator.

Section 12. Committees

In order to make recommendations to the elders in matters of personnel, finance, and buildings and grounds, the following shall serve as standing committees:

1. Personnel Committee

This committee is responsible for all of the administrative requirements related to employee compensation and benefits. It shall consist of six members with two rotating off each year, plus an elder serving as an ex officio member.

2. Finance Committee

This committee is responsible for the development of the annual budget and for the management of the disbursement of funds based on the approved budget and available funds, as well as for the management of the endowment fund, assuming the responsibilities of and replacing the Endowment Committee. It shall consist of six members with two rotating off each year, plus an elder and the treasurer serving as ex officio members.

3. Buildings and Grounds Committee

This committee is responsible for the overall presentation of the church properties, the necessary maintenance of church properties and vehicles, as well as the strategic planning for future needs. It shall consist of six members with two rotating off each year, plus an elder serving as an ex officio member.

Section 13. Ministry Teams

Ministry teams exist to organize and mobilize the congregation to do the ministry of the church. These teams are created as needed (Article 8, Section 1) and ministry team leaders are elected as outlined in Article 9, Section 5 below. It is the responsibility of the team leader to recruit and build the appropriate team in order to accomplish the stated ministry of the team.

ARTICLE 9. ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS, AGENTS, COMMITTEES AND TEAM LEADERS

Section 1. General

The church bears responsibility unto her head, Jesus Christ, for guarding the integrity of her leadership. Both the election and dismissal of elders and deacons should therefore be undertaken with the utmost care by the church. Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of either process. All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members.

The election process shall express a spirit of mutual trust, openness and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. No officer should be elected or dismissed without due consideration for the biblical qualifications of his office and whether or not those qualifications have been met or violated.

Section 2. Election of Elders

Nominations for the office of elder shall be solicited from the membership by the elders. Any man nominated to serve as an elder must have been a member of the church for no less than one year at the time of nomination.

After due consideration of the church's nominees and careful examination of those to be formally recommended, the elders shall present candidates to the church no less than four weeks prior to the vote at a regular members meeting or at a meeting called for this purpose. Any member with reason to believe that a candidate is unqualified should express such concern to the elders. Any member intending to speak in opposition to a

candidate should express his objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant members meeting. The moderator shall declare elected all candidates receiving an 85% majority of all votes cast.

The persons elected shall assume their respective responsibilities upon election unless another date has been specifically designated and pending their ordination. In the event of a need and with the approval of the elders, an elder may request from the congregation an unscheduled break of no more than one year. This break would not take the place of the sabbatical year, see Article 8, Section 2, Paragraph 4. Their term of office may be terminated by their request through resignation to the elders or by the church's request in accordance with the procedures for dismissal outlined in Section 6 below.

Section 3. Calling of the Lead Pastor & Associate Pastors

In filling the position of lead pastor or associate pastor, the elders shall recommend to the church a search committee comprised of at least two elders and no less than three at-large members, to be approved by a two-thirds majority of all members present and voting.

No one shall be considered a candidate for pastor apart from: (1) a thorough assessment of the candidate's qualifications and gifting for the position; (2) full assurance of the candidate's wholehearted assent to the mission, vision, doctrine and covenant of the church; (3) unanimous agreement of the search committee; and (4) full consensus of the elders. Before being asked to express its judgment, the church must be given adequate opportunity to meet the pastoral candidate and to assess his gifting for the position.

Notice of the recommendation of a man to be called as a pastor and admitted into membership must be given no less than two weeks prior to the vote at a regular members meeting or at a meeting called for this purpose. The moderator shall declare elected a candidate receiving an 85% majority of all votes cast.

A pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or by the church's request in accordance with the procedures for dismissal outlined in Section 6 below. A pastor shall give at least two weeks' notice at the time of resignation before discontinuing his responsibilities.

Section 4. Election of Deacons

Nominations for the office of deacon shall be solicited from the membership by the elders. Any person nominated to serve as a deacon must have been a member of the church for no less than one year at the time of nomination.

After due consideration of the church's nominees and careful examination of those to be formally recommended, the elders shall present candidates to the church no less than four weeks prior to the vote at a regular members meeting or at a meeting called for this purpose. Any member with reason to believe that a candidate is unqualified should express such concern to the elders. Any member intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express his objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant members meeting. The moderator shall declare elected all candidates receiving an 85% majority of all votes cast.

The persons elected shall assume their respective responsibilities upon election unless another date has been specifically designated. Their terms of office may be terminated by their request through resignation to the elders or by the church's request in accordance with the procedures for dismissal outlined in Section 6 below.

Section 5. Election of Agents, Committees, and Team Leaders

Nominations for agents, committees, and team leaders shall be solicited from the membership by the elders. After due consideration of the church's nominees, the elders shall present candidates to the church at a regularly scheduled members' meeting. The moderator shall declare elected all candidates receiving a two-thirds majority of all votes cast.

Section 6. Dismissal of Officers

Any two church members, including elders or deacons, with reason to believe that an elder or a deacon has compromised his office should express their concern to the elders, and, if need be, to the membership. Appropriate rebuke and restoration should be sought in accordance with the instructions of 1 Timothy 5:17-21. An elder or deacon may be dismissed from his office by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at a regular members meeting or at a meeting called for this purpose. If circumstances warrant dismissing the elder or deacon not only from his office but also from membership in the church, a vote specifying such action must be taken in accordance with the guidelines for discipline outlined in Article 7, Section 6.

ARTICLE 10. CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Services

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day. Additional services and discipleship ministries may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

Section 2. Members Meetings

Regular members meetings shall be held on a Wednesday in the months of January, April, July and October. In every meeting together, members shall act in a spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration, which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 3. Special Called Members Meetings

A called members meeting may be held to consider special matters of a significant nature. At least a one- week's notice shall be given to the members through an announcement at worship services and in writing prior to such a meeting.

ARTICLE 11. INDEMNIFICATION

Section 1. Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defense against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted: (a) in good faith; (b) with the care that an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances; and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church; and (d) the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 2. Permissive Indemnification

By recommendation of the elders and with approval of the church by simple majority of all votes cast, the church may also indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and was not unlawful.

Section 3. Procedure

If a majority of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of pastors seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

ARTICLE 12. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace with one another and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the church

(Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8), members shall resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically-based principles without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall also encourage the use of biblically-based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or unbelieving and whether individuals or corporate entities.

ARTICLE 13. DEFINITIONS

Ex officio "By virtue of office or position." A person, as an ex officio member of a committee or organization, shall have the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of an elected member, including the right to vote on motions, unless otherwise stipulated in the Constitution and By-Laws of the governing body, or unless there is a conflict of interest. His presence or absence does not dictate a quorum.

Quorum The quorum shall consist of a minimum of fifty members, six of whom shall be officers of the church.

Marriage The word "marriage" means a legal union between only one man and one woman as husband and wife and the word "spouse" refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or a wife.

Parliamentary Rules Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (latest edition), shall be the guidelines for parliamentary rules of procedure for all members meetings of the church.

Fiscal Year The fiscal year of the church shall run concurrently with the calendar year.

Church Year The church year begins on September 1 and ends on August 31.

Indemnification To guard against or secure against anticipated loss; to provide preparation and protection from potential future damage or liability.

ARTICLE 14. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution and By-Laws may be made at any members meeting of the church where the quorum requirements are met. Such changes shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting and copies of the proposed amendments furnished the membership at least ten days prior to the meeting in which the amendments shall be considered. Approval of amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws shall be by two-thirds majority of all members of the church present and voting.

Amendment 1. Bull Street Baptist Church shall permit the carrying of weapons (restricted to handguns as defined in O.C.G.A. 16-11-125.1) by Members of the church who are in possession of the proper Weapons Carry License (as provided for in O.C.G.A. 16-11-129) in the place of worship that is Bull Street Baptist Church. All efforts should be made to keep said weapon concealed while on Church property.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dean Failor, Assoc. Pastor
Calvin Fowler, Lead Pastor
Tommy Hill, Deacon
Pat Talley, Deacon
Glenn Warner, Assoc. Pastor

Revision History

April 26, 2017

Re: Membership Termination, Election of Agents, Meeting Schedule

ARTICLE 7. MEMBERSHIP

Section 7. Termination

3. ~~By recognition that the member has already joined another church of differing faith and practice.~~ [By recognition that the member has already joined another church.]

ARTICLE 9. ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS, AGENTS, COMMITTEES AND TEAM LEADERS

Section 5. Election of Agents, Committees, and Team Leaders

Nominations for agents, committees, and team leaders shall be solicited from the membership by the elders. After due consideration of the church's nominees, the elders shall present candidates to the church ~~in the July members meeting~~ [at a regularly scheduled members' meeting]. The moderator shall declare elected all candidates receiving a two-thirds majority of all votes cast.

ARTICLE 10. CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 2. Members Meetings

Regular members meetings shall be held on ~~the~~ [a] Wednesday ~~following the third Sunday~~ [in the months of] January, April, July, and October. In every meeting together,

members shall act in a spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration, which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

December 13, 2017

Re: Addition of Conceal Carry, Amendment 1

Bull Street Baptist Church shall permit the carrying of weapons [restricted to handguns as defined in O.C.G.A. 16-11-125.1] by members of the church who are ~~currently~~ in possession of the proper Weapons Carry License [as provided for in O.C.G.A. 16-11-129] in the place of worship that is Bull Street Baptist Church. All efforts should be made to keep said weapon concealed while on Church property.

April 28, 2021

Re: Membership Termination

ARTICLE 7. MEMBERSHIP

Section 7. Termination

4. By ~~written~~ request of the member, subject to approval by the church
 5. By recognition of the member's non-resident status ~~of over one year~~, with exceptions being approved by the church (e.g., health, education, military, temporary work, etc.)
-

October 27, 2021

Re: Assistant Pastor Addition & Elder Sabbatical

ARTICLE 8. CHURCH OFFICERS, AGENTS, COMMITTEES AND TEAMS

Section 4. Associate [and Assistant] Pastors

The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the lead pastor is that of associate [or assistant].

An associate [or assistant] pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

Re: Elder Sabbatical

ARTICLE 9. ELECTION OF CHURCH OFFICERS, AGENTS, COMMITTEES AND TEAM LEADERS

Section 2. Election of Elders

The persons elected shall assume their respective responsibilities upon election unless another date has been specifically designated and pending their ordination. [In the event of a need and with the approval of the elders, an elder may request from the congregation an unscheduled break of no more than one year. This break would not take the place of the sabbatical year, see Article 8, Section 2, Paragraph 4]. Their term of office may be terminated by their request through resignation to the elders or by the church's request in accordance with the procedures for dismissal outlined in Section 6 below.

February 1, 2023

Re: Deacon Term

ARTICLE 8. CHURCH OFFICERS, AGENTS, COMMITTEES AND TEAMS

Section 6. Deacons

The church will recognize men who are gifted and willing to serve in this calling in accordance with the procedures for appointing officers outlined in Article 9, Section 4. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to his church and set apart as deacons. The number of deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and the qualifications of the men in the church. A deacon may serve for two consecutive three-year terms, and [should not continue to] ~~cannot be re-elected to serve again~~ as a deacon without a one-year absence of service [unless agreed to by the deacons.]

December 11, 2024

Re: Language Regarding Elders (Staff vs. Lay Elder)

Article 8, Section 2 reads:

Section 2. Elders

The Bible prescribes that the local church is to be led by a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). Because the words "pastor," "elder" and "overseer" are used synonymously in the New Testament, all pastors at BSBC shall be elders and all elders shall be pastors (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-3; Phil. 1:1). The elders shall be

comprised of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 5–9. The elders who are not in the regular pay of the church shall be called “lay elders.” A majority of the active eldership shall be composed of lay elders ~~and no elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.~~ **However, an exception may be made in extraordinary times, for a period not to exceed two calendar years, that there may be an equal ratio of staff to lay elders or staff elders may hold a simple majority over the lay elders.** No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.