

**Preamble**

*In order to properly fulfill our purpose of "Growing the Family of God", this committee has sought to clearly identify and affirm the instructions of Holy Scripture for the effective working of Church polity. Being led, as we believe, by the Holy Spirit and the Bible, we present this update of our constitution for the approval of the Church. The intent of these articles are to strengthen our ministry and mission. Our goal has been to provide definite and clear instructions for Church polity that will still allow flexibility for growing ministry and membership within the body of Christ, while ensuring that the Church does not deviate from the Lordship of Christ or the authority of His Word.*

**Article I Name**

This body is known as Elm Spring Baptist Church, and shall be further referred to in this document as the "Church."

**Article II Purpose and Vision**

The purpose of the Church is Growing the Family of God. This purpose is founded on two key scriptures: Matthew 28:18-20 (The Great Commission) and Acts 1:8 (The Missions Mandate).

*\*See Attachment 1 for our Vision Statement.*

**Article III Doctrine**

**Section A Article/Statement of Faith**

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God, and is the basis for our belief; it is infallible and without any mixture of error. Although it is not binding, the Church accepts the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 as a general statement of our faith.

**Section B Ordinances**

1. Baptism: A person who receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by personal faith and indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord shall be baptized by the Church.
  - a. Baptism shall be by immersion.
  - b. Baptism shall be administered by the pastor or whomever the Church shall authorize.
  - c. Baptism shall be administered as an act of public worship.

2. Lord's Supper: The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the Church (or members in good standing of a Church of like faith and order), through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming.
  - a. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly.
  - b. The Pastor, Deacons, or whomever the Church shall authorize shall be responsible for administering the Lord's Supper.

## **Article IV Affiliation**

The Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. However, recognizing the benefits of cooperation with other Churches in world missions, the Church voluntarily affiliates with the Southern Baptist Convention in its national, state and local expressions.

## **Article V Membership**

### **Section A Requirements**

Any person may request membership in this Church. All such candidates shall meet the following three requirements for membership:

1. By profession of faith and baptism by immersion; or  
By transfer of Church Letter from an SBC affiliated Church; or  
By statement of faith when candidate's baptism was by immersion, with the understanding that baptism is a symbol of salvation and not a part of the salvation experience itself; or  
By restoration to fellowship upon candidate's public confession of repentance, and request for forgiveness of the sins which precipitated their removal from membership of this or any other Church of like faith and order.
2. Completion of Membership Seminar 101.
3. Oral or written agreement with the Elm Spring Baptist Church membership covenant.

*\*See Attachment 2 for a copy of the Membership Covenant.*

## Section B Process of Removal

Membership shall end in any of the following ways:

1. Death of member.
2. Transfer of Church letter to another SBC affiliated Church.
3. Removal by becoming affiliated with a Church of another denomination.
4. Request in writing (from the member who desires to end their membership).
5. Exclusion through the action of Church discipline, as according to the following:
  - a. Should a member become an offense to Christ and the Church by reason of unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of their covenant vows, the process of Church discipline explained in Matthew 18:15-20 will be followed. (In the event that a conflict arises that cannot be resolved within the Church body by the process of Church discipline, an outside mediator affiliated with the SBC will be called to help resolve the conflict.)
  - b. Should a member break fellowship with the Church as explained in 1 John 2:19 by non-attendance for a period of greater than six months, ***having been visited a minimum of 3 times by the Pastor and their Deacon, they will be considered inactive. Their name will be given to the Clerk by the Deacon Board for transfer to the inactive membership roll. At the next regularly scheduled business meeting their names will be presented to the Church by the Clerk. The Pastor and Deacons will then seek the assistance of the Church body in reclaiming the inactive member to active membership.*** Members that cannot be reclaimed to active membership ***after*** six months of being on the inactive roll, will be removed from Church membership. Exclusions would include, but are not limited to: Extended illness, residency in an extended care facility, or military service. (Members being placed on the inactive roll will lose voting privileges until they can be reclaimed to active membership.)

## Article VI Pastor / Staff / Deacons

### Section A Pastor

1. Qualifications: The qualifications shall be those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. This Church interprets “the husband of one wife” to exclude any divorced men.
2. Responsibilities: These generally fall into the following areas: Preaching, teaching, pastoral counseling, administration, planning and guiding the Church to grow and fulfill Its purpose.

\* See Attachment 3 for Pastor’s Covenant.

3. Call:
  - a. Pastor shall be chosen and called whenever a vacancy occurs.
  - b. A Pastor's Selection Committee shall be appointed by the Church to seek out a suitable Pastor, and its recommendation shall serve as a nomination.
  - c. The Pastor Selection Committee shall recommend only one candidate at a time.
  - d. The Pastor's election shall take place at a specially called business meeting.
  - e. An affirmative vote of  $\frac{3}{4}$  of members present is necessary. Voting shall be by ballot.
4. Terms of Service:
  - a. Pastor may resign by giving at least 2 weeks' notice to the Church. The notice shall be given to the Church during a specially called business meeting.
  - b. If the Church desires to remove the Pastor, they shall:
    - i. Terminate his duties at a specially called business meeting.
    - ii. Provide him with 2 weeks compensation.
    - iii. Allow 30 days to relocate.

## **Section B Staff**

The Church shall employ or call staff as it shall need.

1. Pastoral staff members other than that of the Pastor shall be recommended for employment by the Church Council or a special committee.
2. Non-pastoral staff shall be employed by the Church Council or a special committee.
3. A written job description and mutual contract/agreement will be prepared when the need for Church staff is determined.

## **Section C Deacons**

1. Qualifications: The qualifications shall be those listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. This Church interprets "the husband of one wife" to exclude any divorced men.
2. Responsibilities:
  - a. Assist the Pastor concerning the growth and health of the Church.
  - b. Assist the Pastor in ministering to the members of the Church through the Deacon Family Ministry.
  - c. Seek to solve any fellowship problem within the Church.
  - d. Assist the Pastor in administering the Church ordinances.
  - e. In the absence of the Pastor, the chairman of the Deacons shall serve as an advisory member to all organizations, departments, and committees of the Church.
3. Call:
  - a. The Church shall call the number of Deacons it deems necessary.
  - b. Nominations for Deacon candidates shall be given by the Church during a regularly scheduled business meeting.

- c. The process of approving and ordaining Deacon candidates shall be conducted by the Deacon body.
4. Terms of Service:
  - a. Deacons can serve as long as they remain qualified.
  - b. In the event a Deacon becomes disqualified, he shall be removed from service by the Deacon body.
  - c. Deacons who have resigned from active duty can still serve at the request of the Pastor or Deacon chairman.

## **Article VII Officers**

### **Section A Moderator**

1. The Moderator shall be the Pastor.
2. In the absence of the Pastor, the chairman of Deacons shall preside.
3. In the absence of the latter, the Church Clerk shall preside.
4. In the absence of all three, the meeting shall be rescheduled.

### **Section B Clerk**

1. The Clerk shall be elected and be responsible for keeping an accurate record of all business meeting transactions of the Church and preparing the annual report to the association.
2. The Clerk shall keep a register of the names and addresses of Church members with dates of membership and removal.
3. An official record of Church business shall be kept on Church premises.

### **Section C Treasurer**

1. The Treasurer shall be elected and be responsible to receive, record, and disperse all monies or things of value given or paid to the Church.
2. The Treasurer, along with the Financial Secretary, shall count all monies on the Church premises immediately following the service.
3. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to present a financial statement at each regular business meeting.
4. The Treasurer's report shall be audited annually by a Certified Public Accountant.

### **Section D Financial Secretary**

1. The Financial Secretary shall be elected and be responsible for keeping a record of all monies received.

2. A separate account shall be kept for each contributor and their offerings.
3. The Financial Secretary shall prepare an annual record of giving by members, and provide an annual record of giving by non-members upon request.
4. The Financial Secretary shall assist the Treasurer in counting all monies.

## **Section E Trustees**

1. At least three Trustees shall be elected by the Church to hold in trust the property of the Church. Each Trustee shall serve a term of three years. The Church shall elect annually as many Trustees as are needed.
2. The Trustees shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without a specific vote of the Church authorizing each transaction.
3. It shall be the function of the Trustees to sign any and all legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or lease of Church property, or any other legal documents requiring the signature of the Trustees for the Church.

*\*See attachment 4 for Trustee Policy and Procedures.*

## **Section F Church Council**

1. The Church Council shall assist the Pastoral staff as the ***elected leadership*** of the Church. Their primary function shall be to lead the Church in accomplishing its stated purpose and vision.
2. The Church Council shall approve programs and plans recommended by Church ministries and shall coordinate all Church activities.
3. The Church Council shall appoint a nominating committee at the beginning of each Church year. The Nominating committee shall consist of at least four members. It shall bring to the April business meeting the names of those who are recommended to serve as officers. It shall bring to the July business meeting the names of those who are recommended to serve as Ministry Leaders.
4. The Church Council shall approve or appoint all future ministries or special committees as the need arises.
5. ~~The Church Council shall consist of the Pastoral Staff, Chairman of Deacons (Fellowship Director), Evangelism Director, Discipleship Director, Worship Director, Prayer Director, Missions Director, Youth Director, Children's Director, Nursery Director, Hospitality Director, three at large members (at large members will serve a three year term with one new member elected each year), Chairman of Trustees, Church Clerk, Treasurer, and any other ministry head as the need arises.~~

**Amendment 1 (Passed November 20, 2016)**-The voting members of the Church Council shall consist of the Pastoral Staff, Chairman of Deacons (Fellowship Director), Evangelism Director, Discipleship Director, Worship Director, Prayer Director, Missions Director,

Stewardship Director, three at-large members (at-large members will serve a three-year term with one new member elected each year), a representative of the Trustees, Church Clerk, Treasurer, Calendar Coordinator, and any other ministry leader who chooses to participate. Any member of the church may attend any open meeting of the Church Council.

6. The Church Council shall serve as the Personnel Committee.

*\*See Attachment 5 for Policy and Procedures for the Personnel Committee.*

## **Article VIII Meetings**

### **Section A Business Meetings**

1. The quorum consists of those active members who attend the business meeting, provided it is a regularly scheduled business meeting, or a specially called business meeting.
2. Roberts Rules of Order, Revised, will be used for parliamentary procedure.
3. Business meetings shall be held as often as the Church deems necessary.
4. A one week notice (with announcements at two regularly scheduled services) must be given for a specially called business meeting.

### **Section B Worship Services**

1. The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday for the worship of Almighty God, and at any other time it chooses.

## **Article IX Amendments**

Changes to this Constitution shall be made available in writing to all active members and shall be approved by a 75% minimum vote of active members present.

### **Section A**

1. Changes to Articles I through IV require a minimum of six months review. Proposed changes shall be open for discussion at each successive regularly scheduled business meeting during the six-month review before a vote is taken.
2. Changes to all other articles require a minimum of three months review. Proposed changes shall be open for discussion at each successive regularly scheduled business meeting during the three-month review before a vote is taken.

***Committee Members***

*Terry Hedglin, Deacon*

*Cathy Snow, Clerk*

*Pam Causey*

*Debbie Briscoe*

*Robin Dale, Pastor*

**Attachment 1**

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**OUR VISION**

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*"Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth..."* Matthew 6:10

**A GROWING CHURCH**

*"...make disciples..."* Matthew 28:19

Elm Spring Baptist Church plans to make no less than \_\_\_\_\_ new disciples by the year \_\_\_\_\_!

We plan to help begin \_\_\_\_\_ new Church plants by \_\_\_\_\_!

How will this be done?

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**A GOING CHURCH**

*"...and you shall be witness to me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*  
Acts 1:8

Elm Spring is involved in missions at every level!

- Jerusalem 10 mile circumference around the Church Campus WCBA
- Judea The state of Missouri MBC
- Samaria The North American Continent NAMB
- Ends of the Earth The World IMB

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### WHO ARE WE TRYING TO REACH?

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*"...I have become all things to all men that I might by all means save some." 1 Cor. 9:22*

We are called to reach Lost and Lonely people.

1. We are not trying to reach Christians who are faithfully attending a good Church.
2. We are trying to reach those who don't have a personal **relationship** with Jesus.
3. We are trying to reach those who are out of **fellowship** with Jesus.

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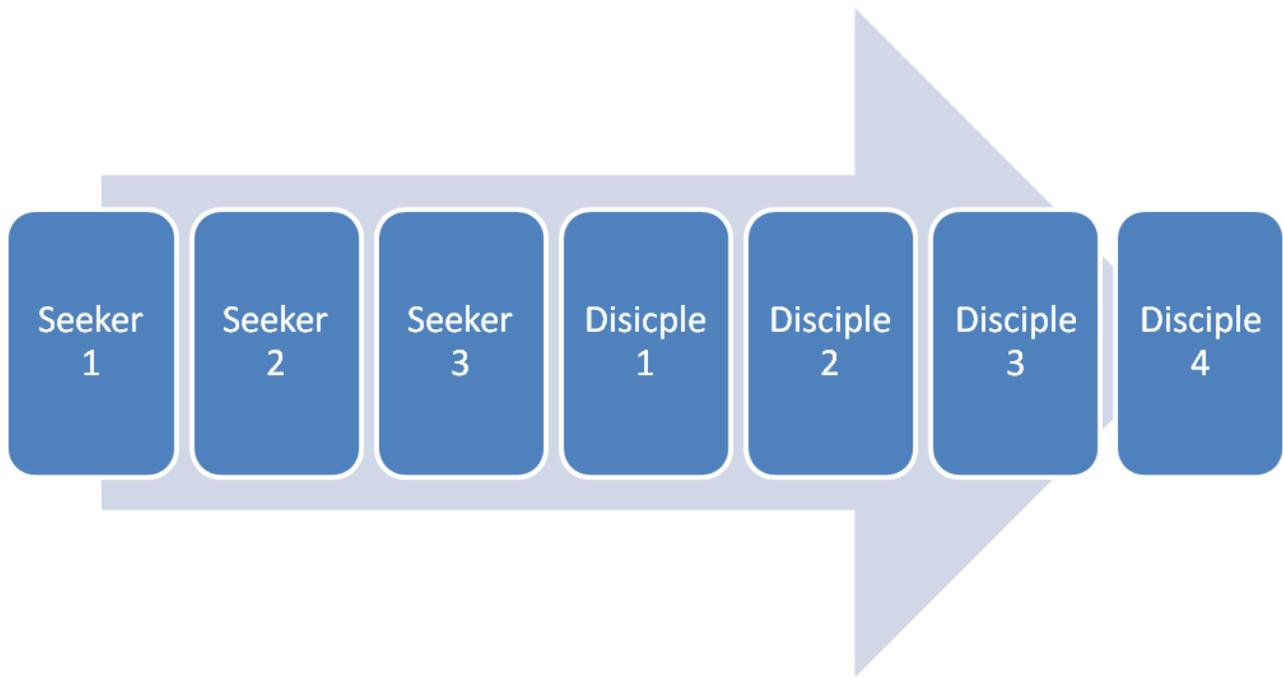
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### THE SEVEN STAGES OF OUR DISCIPLE MAKING PROCESS

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**Seeker 1** is open to \_\_\_\_\_ conversation. The ministries we use to reach out to this group are relationship based. They are then encouraged to attend a special activity or home study group.

**Seeker 2** is open to \_\_\_\_\_ with Church members. The ministries we use to reach out to this group is *Seeker Studies*. These people are then encouraged to begin attending worship services.

**Seeker 3** is open to \_\_\_\_\_ worship services. The ministry we use to reach this group is our Sunday morning service. These people are then encouraged to attend the *Membership Seminar*.

**Disciple 1** is committed to \_\_\_\_\_ at Elm Spring. As members of the Elm Spring family, they are involved in our fellowship activities. They are encouraged by members and leaders to take the next step of discipleship by attending a *Maturity 201 Series*.

**Disciple 2** is committed to the \_\_\_\_\_ necessary for spiritual maturity. They join a small group (discipleship group), and begin to discover the fruits of growing in Christ. They are encouraged to take the next step of discipleship by attending a *Ministry 301 Series*.

**Disciple 3** is committed to \_\_\_\_\_ God and others. They join a ministry team and begin to exercise their spiritual gifts, natural talents, and abilities to minister to the body of Christ. They are encouraged to take the next step of discipleship by attending a *Mission 401 Series*.

**Disciple 4** is committed to \_\_\_\_\_ others in the discipleship process. They join a leadership team (Deacons, Church Council, etc.) and become *Pastor's Partners*.

**Our Purpose statement is "Growing the Family of God".**

**Attachment 2**

*Elm Spring Baptist Church Membership Covenant*

*Having received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, and having been baptized, and being in agreement with Elm Spring's statements, strategy and structure; I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the ESBC Family. In doing so,*

*I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:*

**I. I will protect the unity of my Church:**

- ...by acting in love toward other members.
- ...by refusing to gossip.
- ...by following the leaders.

*Rom 15:19, 15:5, 1 Pet 1:22, Eph 4:29, Heb 13:17*

**II. I will share the responsibility of my church:**

- ...by praying for its growth.
- ...by inviting the lost and backslidden to attend.
- ...by warmly welcoming those who visit.

*1 Thess 1:2, Luke 14:23, Rom 15:7*

**III. I will serve the ministry of my Church:**

- ...by discovering my gifts and talents.
- ...by being equipped to serve by my pastors.
- ...by developing a servant's heart.

*1 Pet 4:10, Eph 4:11-12, Phil 2:3-4, 7*

**IV. I will support the testimony of my Church:**

- ...by attending faithfully.
- ...by living a godly life.
- ...by giving regularly.

*Heb 10:25, Phil 1:27, 1 Cor 16:2, Lev 27:30*

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**Member**

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**Pastor**

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**Date**

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**Clerk**

## ESBC Pastor – Church Covenant

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### THE CHURCH’S EXPECTATIONS OF ITS PASTOR

- ❖ Competency in ministry through administrative and organizational leadership, well prepared sermons, regular visitation where there is need, pastoral care in crisis situations, and, the improvement of pastoral skills through continued study.
- ❖ Availability by making it known when and where he can be contacted during the week and when he is away from the Church field.
- ❖ Leadership in worship services, evangelistic outreach efforts, the development of a Christian education program, and the administrative work of the Church in cooperation with the Church Council.
- ❖ Loyalty to Baptist beliefs as found in the Scriptures, attendance at denominational meetings and support of the Cooperative Program.
- ❖ Participation in civic and community affairs and cooperation with the comparable interdenominational endeavors in the area.

### THE PASTOR’S OBLIGATION TO HIS CHURCH

- ❖ To fulfill the duties of the office of Pastor in serving the Church rather than the Church’s ruler who always knows what is best.
- ❖ To seek to meet the spiritual needs of his people through Biblical preaching and teaching and to refrain from proclaiming his own opinions as the Word of God.
- ❖ To manage his money with integrity so as not to bring reproach upon the Church.
- ❖ To meet the reasonable expectations of the congregation for him as its Pastor while at the same time living his own life as he believes God would have him to do.

- ❖ To accept the Church as an imperfect organization composed of imperfect people who must be loved and forgiven, to work with the elected leaders of the Church, and to try to be the Pastor of all the people of the Church.
- ❖ To acknowledge that constructive criticism from the congregation can be helpful and to be open enough to accept it and profit by it.
- ❖ To recognize the need for help from outside the Church when his role as Pastor is endangered and to avoid actions that would harm the Church.
- ❖ To maintain a neat appearance of the parsonage and the yard at all times.

## **THE PASTOR'S EXPECTATIONS OF HIS CHURCH**

- ❖ To trust in him as a person of integrity dedicated to the work of God's kingdom and as a competent professional person who can manage the use of his time wisely.
- ❖ Support for him as leader by faithful stewardship in coming, giving and serving in the Church along with recognition when his work is well done.
- ❖ Consultation with him about Church affairs before decisions are made so that the Church can benefit from his training and experience and so that the work of the Church can be coordinated.
- ❖ Concern for him and his family by proper upkeep of the parsonage.
- ❖ Authority for him to approve or disapprove the coming of other ministers and religious groups to the Church.

## **THE CHURCH'S OBLIGATION TO ITS PASTOR**

- ❖ To respect the office of Pastor and to support his ministry for as long as he holds that office to which the Church has called him.
- ❖ To guarantee freedom of the pulpit so that the Pastor can preach his convictions in his own manner and style as the Spirit of God leads him.

- ❖ To provide for the Pastor's support to the best of the Church's ability and to review annually the Pastor's compensation as an evidence of the Church's care and concern for the welfare of the Pastor and his family.
- ❖ To recognize that because the Pastor is human he makes mistakes and needs forgiveness like everyone else and that because of the limitation of time he cannot do all that he should do and fulfill everybody's expectations.
- ❖ To confer with the pastor about any accusation made against him instead of discussing it in secret, and to refrain from passing judgment upon him until he has had the opportunity to defend himself.
- ❖ To counsel with the Pastor when there is conflict involving him and to give him time to relocate if he needs to move.
- ❖ To have an annual, written evaluation of his service as Pastor done in June of each year.

## **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

The following steps shall be taken when there is a conflict between the Pastor and one of the Church's members (In all conflicts, everyone involved shall follow in a tender spirit the rules of Church discipline given by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-20.)

1. A meeting between the Pastor and the individual .
2. A meeting between the Pastor, individual and a member of Church Council.
3. A meeting between the Pastor, individual, the Church Council and Deacons.
4. Consultation and agreement for action within 30 days with the Church Council and Deacons.
5. Continued unresolved conflict shall be brought before the Church body during a solemn assembly in which the meeting is closed to all non-active Church members.
6. Conflict that is unresolved to the Church's satisfaction will result in immediate termination of the Pastor from his duties, and the removal of his membership from the Church.

## **Attachment 4**

### **Policy and Procedures for Trustees**

03/21/07

1. Hold legal title to Church property, and serve as legal representatives in all transactions related to the Church.
2. Responsible for the maintenance and repair of Church property and equipment. Individuals hired should not be trustees or immediate family members of trustees, unless approved by the Church.
3. Hire, train and supervise the janitors and/or maintenance personnel.
4. Approve and oversee the use of Church facilities for purposes other than the regular Church activities. To insure a member is present to oversee the use of the facilities by non-Church entities.
5. Set amount required for deposit and/or use of Church facilities by non-members.
6. Chairman (or designated representative) will serve on Church Council to assist in coordinating the use of Church facilities for the Church calendar.
7. Make a quarterly inspection of Church property for any necessary upkeep or repairs. Design (and keep updated) an inspection checklist. Inspection should be communicated to Church at the next Business meeting following the inspection.
8. Select and maintain adequate insurance for the property and grounds of the Church.
9. Present annually an itemized budget for the trustee ministry, (including the salary, benefits and supply of the Church janitors and/or maintenance personnel).
10. Limit non-emergency expenditures that exceed the current budget to \$300.00 per occurrence (unless otherwise approved by the Church), and report such expenses at the next business meeting.

**Policy 1 (passed 2/5/2017)-Elm Spring Baptist Church Facility Use Policy**

Elm Spring's property and facilities may be used only for purposes consistent with the Church's doctrinal beliefs as reflected in the Bible and the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, including its Statement on Marriage and Sexuality. Property and facility use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with Elm Spring's religious teachings as reflected in the Bible and the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, including its Statement on Marriage and Sexuality. The Church Council of Elm Spring Baptist Church shall be the final decision-making authority regarding whether any proposed facility/property use is in conformity to the Church's doctrinal beliefs.

**Policy 2 (passed 5/7/2017)-Elm Spring Baptist Church Marriage Policy**

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man and a woman, Elm Spring Baptist Church will only recognize marriages between one man and one woman. Man and woman shall be defined as a biological man from birth and a biological woman from birth. Further, the ministers and staff of Elm Spring Baptist Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman, and the facilities and property of Elm Spring Baptist Church shall only host weddings between one man and one woman. Any officiant of a wedding hosted by Elm Spring Baptist Church must be approved by the Senior Pastor. Each pastor reserves the right to officiate only those wedding ceremonies that are consistent with the Church's doctrinal statements on faith and their own personal convictions on Biblical interpretation regarding the issues of divorce and remarriage and religious compatibility.