

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

This Church takes as its guide the Spirit and mind of Jesus Christ as expressed in the New Testament. That we may proceed in order and dispatch, the following rules we do establish and designate as our Constitution and Bylaws and adopt as our guide for our procedure.

Article I. The Church

Section 1.01 Name

The Name of the organization shall be **BETHANY CHRISTIAN CHURCH, Eads, Tennessee**. It should be known that Bethany Christian Church is a local autonomous church. The property and government of this church shall be controlled and operated by the members of Bethany and can be altered only by a constitutional vote or amendment.

Section 1.02 Purpose

The purpose of the Church shall be as revealed in the New Testament, to win people to faith in Jesus Christ; to commit them actively to the Church; to help them grow in grace and knowledge of Christ that increasingly they may understand to do His will; to work for the unity of all Christians and with them engage in the common task of establishing the Kingdom of God.

Article II. Membership

Section 2.01 Membership Qualifications

The membership of this church shall consist of those whose names appear on the membership roll of the congregation and those who shall unite with it by baptism or by transfer of membership.

Section 2.02 Membership Voting Rights Voting members shall consist of the following:

- Members who attend on a regular basis or approximately seventy-five percent (75%) of the Sundays per year. (Shut-ins are exempt).
- Members must be on the rolls of Bethany Christian Church for a period of six (6) months before being afforded the voting privilege.

Absentee ballots will be sent to members upon request if they cannot be present at the time of the vote. All voting will be by secret ballot.

Section 2.03 Matters that Require a Vote by the Membership

Matters that must be brought before the congregation for a vote are as follows:

- Any item with a total cost of more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) at one time.

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- Election of officers of the Church, Elders, Deacons, and Trustees.
- Calling of a Minister to the Church, and the terms and conditions thereof.
- Approval of the annual budget.

All matters to come before the congregation for a vote will be advertised in the church newsletter for a period of two (2) weeks prior to the taking of the vote. An annual meeting of the congregation will be held on the second Sunday of December of each year - presided over by the Chairman of the Board.

Article III. Officers; Election; Duties; and Qualifications**Section 3.01 Officers of the Church****(a) Elders**

An Elder shall be as set forth in 1st Timothy verses 1-7, chapter 3. "Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one (1) wife', temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children' obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's Church). He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap." [N1V] An Elder shall be a man who has served in the capacity of Deacon in the Disciple of Christian Church and proved himself for two (2) years. He shall have been a member of Bethany Christian Church for a minimum of two (2) years.

(b) Deacons

A Deacon shall be as set forth in 1st Timothy verses 8-13 chapter 3. "Deacons likewise are to be men worthy of respect, sincere not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must be first tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A Deacon must be the

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husband of but one wife¹ and must manage his children² and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus." (NIV) A newly elected Deacon shall have been a member of Bethany Christian Church in good standing for a minimum of two (2) years - or as a transfer as a Deacon from another disciple of Christ Church. The Deacons shall cooperate with the Elders in promoting the growth and welfare of the Church, assist in the greeting and ushering of the worshipers, distribute the Lord's Supper, assist in financial canvasses and visitation projects and perform such other duties as may be assigned. The Church Board may declare a vacancy in the office of an Elder or a Deacon who shall fail to attend or report to three consecutive meetings without just cause. Withdrawal of residence from the area shall automatically vacate the office of a Board Member.

(c) Junior Deacons

The Junior Deacon must have a desire to become a Junior Deacon. He must be a minimum of twelve (12) years old and shall serve until his twentieth (20th) birthday. He must be a member of Bethany Christian Church, and must complete a training program presented by the Minister. The Junior Deacons function as Deacons in cooperation with the Deacons and Elders. They shall be appointed and approved by the Church Board.

(d) Associate Deacons

They must have a desire to become an Associate Deacon and must be appointed and approved by the Board. The Associate Deacon shall complete a training program as presented by the Minister.

(e) New Officers

Any new officers of the Church selected by the board will be approved at the Annual Meeting each year.

Section 3.02 Officers of the Church Board

The Officers of the Church Board shall be as follows:

- Chairman
- Vice Chairman

¹ Bethany interprets this to mean, one wife at a time. Single, divorced and remarried men who meet the other criteria are eligible to the offices of Elder and Deacon.

² Bethany interprets this to mean, if the Elder or Deacon has children. Having children is not a prerequisite to the office of Elder or Deacon.

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- Secretary
- Treasurer

Each two (2) years the Chairman of the Board shall appoint a Nominating Committee of five (5) members. Such committee shall after careful study, present nominations to serve as Board Officers. The Chairman shall call for the other nominations from the Board members from the floor. Officers are then voted upon and approved by a majority vote at the Board Meeting. After approval of the Board, the slate of officers shall be presented to the congregation by the Chairman of the Board to be voted upon at the annual meeting for their approval. Nominations may be taken from the floor of the congregation.

Section 3.03 Duties of the Officers

- (a) Chairman of the Board shall fulfill the usual duties of such an office, call and preside at all regular and special meetings of the Board and congregation.
- (b) Vice Chairman shall fulfill the usual duties of such an office and shall work actively with the functional departments as assigned by the Chairman of the Board.
- (c) Secretary shall keep all minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Board and those of the congregation and perform such other duties as may be assigned.
- (d) Treasurer shall distribute all funds of the church according to the authority assigned by the Board, serve as a member of the Finance Department, and make regular reports at each regular meeting of the Board and to the congregation as directed by the Board, including but not limited to a summary annual report of finances.

Article IV. The Church Board**Section 4.01 Duties of the Church Board**

The Church Board shall perform its duties according to the authority granted in this Constitution as designated to it by the congregation. Its specific duties shall be to formulate and carry out general policies of the Church subject to the will of the congregation, to transact the business of the Church, and to administer the programs of the Church through the designated Departments.

Section 4.02 Membership of the Church Board

The membership of the Bethany Christian Church Board shall consist of the following:

- Elders
- Deacons
- Department Heads

The Minister, Associate Minister, and other Staff Members are included as nonvoting

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members. The Board meetings are open to any member of Bethany Christian Church who may wish to attend, without voting privileges.

Article V. The Ministers

Section 5.01 Minister

The Minister of the congregation is to perform the duties which pertain to the calling.

Section 5.02 Associate Minister

The Associate Minister shall assist the Minister in the work of the Church. He shall carry out responsibilities delegated to him by the Minister. In the absence of the Minister he shall assume the responsibility of the Minister.

Section 5.03 Choosing The Minister or Associate Minister

The Minister and/or Associate Minister shall be chosen by the congregation of the Church as herein provided:

- (a) A representative Committee of seven (7) members consisting of two (2) Elders, two (2) Deacons and three (3) members of the congregation nominated by the Chairman of the Board and elected by the Board, shall serve as the Pulpit Committee and shall be responsible for recommending a prospect to the Board, using The Church Seeks A Minister, by Thomas E. Wood published by the Department of Ministry and Worship, Division of Homeland Ministries as a guideline.
- (b) The Board shall consider the recommendation of the Pulpit Committee, and if approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members present, shall recommend the prospect to the congregation. It will be the policy of the congregation to consider only one prospect at a time.
- (c) The recommendation of the Board must be accepted by at least two-third ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority of the members of the congregation present and voting in a regular or special business meeting of the congregation before a call can be extended.
- (d) The term shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated by either party upon sixty (60) days written notice. A written agreement setting forth salary to be paid, and other conditions of the call shall be made in duplicate, one copy for the Minister and/or Associate Minister and one for the Church.

Article VI. The Trustees

Section 6.01 Selection

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A nominating committee of five (5) shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Board to select four (4) members of the Board to constitute the Board of Trustees, to be submitted to the Church Board and to the congregation for the approval of each of these bodies.

Section 6.02 Responsibilities

This Board of Trustees is entrusted with the Church Securities, legal and insurance matters, papers, records, and all such matters pertaining to the business affairs of the Church and to that office. It shall provide for loans, Church indebtedness etc. according to the Church Charter.

Section 6.03 Duties

The Board of Trustees of the Church, and the Treasurer shall constitute the Finance Department of the congregation. It shall be their duty to review all budgets and coordinate the final annual budget to be submitted to the Board for approval.

Article VII. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended at any Sunday morning preaching and Communion Service of the congregation by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the members present and voting, provided that a written notice has been published in the Church Newsletter to the members of the proposed amendment at least two (2) weeks before voting.