

Constitution and Bylaws

**New Salem Baptist Church
of Lowndes County, Mississippi**

Revision: 3

Dated: February 18, 2015

Constitution and Bylaws
New Salem Baptist Church of Lowndes County, Mississippi

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Introduction

A church is a living organization in a changing world. A church, like a community or an individual, is always changing. Fundamental doctrines remain the same, but methods of teaching these doctrines and of reaching objectives must change if the outreach of the church is to be effective.

A church constitution and bylaws are essential if democratic procedures are to be followed through the years. These instruments serve as the guide for members to follow in carrying out the work of the church.

Basic principals and church policies are contained in a constitution. Bylaws, on the other hand, state the methods for expediting these principals and policies. Bylaws will usually be changed more often than the constitution. It should be emphasized, however, that both constitution and bylaws should be reviewed annually. As the program of a church changes, so must its rules of governmental procedures be brought up-to-date.

The basic advantages of a constitution and bylaws are these:

1. The first constitution and bylaws were written with the establishment of the church, March 22, 1880; but, due to many changes in the church a need for a new one was evident. Therefore, a committee composed of the Pastor, Jack R. Brown; Smith Dowdle; Mrs. Murray Dowdle; Thomas F. Groves, Jr.; Mrs. Fred Lockhart; and L. W. Cox began this revision in April, 1965. This document has been thoroughly reviewed and adopted by the church.
2. This constitution and the bylaws has been reviewed and revised by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee and adopted by the church as documented on the following "Revision Page of Constitution and Bylaws".
3. Members are furnished a written statement of their church government.
4. Democracy is preserved since predetermined rules have already been established by the members.
5. Orderly procedures are provided for guiding the transaction of church business.
6. A basis for solving problems is established before problems arise.

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Revision Page of Constitution and Bylaws

The following revisions were of the original manual type written text:

Pages 11, 11A, 11B, 13, 14, 16, 18, and 19, revised October 1, 1986.

Page 11A Revised September 20, 1989.

Revision: 0 Dated: November 5, 1997

This revision is an exact copy of the document revised on September 20, 1989.

Revision: 1 Dated July 18, 2001

This revision modified Bylaws Section 6 by adding more details to the responsibilities of the Trustees and added Section 14 creating a Facilities and Grounds committee. The church at the July 18, 2001 business meeting approved this revision.

Revision: 2 Dated September 15, 2004

This revision modified Bylaws; Section 3 (1) modifying the wording about the minimum and maximum number of deacons, Section 3 (4) by adding an active deacon to the deacon nominating committee, and modifying the duties of the deacon nominating committee and the voting procedure for the deacons recommended by the committee.

The church at the September 15, 2004 business meeting approved this revision.

Revision: 3 Dated February 18, 2015

This revision added Article V. Marriage Policy to the Constitution.

The church at the February 18, 2015 business meeting approved this revision by ballot with a 100 percent approval.

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Constitution

Preamble

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist denomination, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this constitution.

I. Name

This body shall be known as the New Salem Baptist Church of Lowndes County, Mississippi, a Southern Baptist Church cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention. This church was established March 22, 1880.

II. Articles Of Faith

1. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and religious opinions should be tried. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

2. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfection's. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence and obedience.

The eternal God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

(1) God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who

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become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

(2) God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ he was conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself the demands and necessities of human nature and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before his crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, partaking of the nature of God and of man, and in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

(3) God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the assurance of God to bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

3. Man

Man was created by the special act of God, in His own image and is the crowning work of His creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by His Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan, man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence; whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin, and as soon as they are capable of moral action become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring men into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore every man possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

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4. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, sanctification and glorification.

(1) Regeneration

Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior. Justification brings the believer into a relation of peace and favor with God.

(2) Sanctification

Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purpose, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual perfection through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

(3) Glorification

Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

5. Gods Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God according to which He regenerates, sanctifies and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is a glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those who have accepted Christ and are sanctified by His Spirit will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect, and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and

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temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

6. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights and privileges in them by His word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.

This church is an autonomous body, operating through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In such a congregation members are equally responsible. Its Scriptural officers are pastors and deacons.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages.

7. Baptism

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead.

Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

8. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

9. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for the regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, and by refraining from worldly amusements, and resting from secular employment, work of necessity and mercy only being expected.

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10. The Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment of Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

11. 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.

12. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

13. Education

The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is coordinate with the causes of mission and general benevolence and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian schools is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the Authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

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14. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these are entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

15. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His word as revealed in the New Testament.

16. The Christian and the Social Order

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his own life and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. The Christian should oppose in the spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness and vice. He should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the aged, the helpless and the sick. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

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17. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love.

18. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

III. Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our, 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, 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 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 throughout all nations.

We engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to educate our children religiously; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

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To walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; 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, mindful of the rules of our Saviour, 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.

IV. Character

1. Polity

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support such organizations as may be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

2. Doctrine

This church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of the Baptist churches as indicated in the Articles of Faith herewith.

V. Marriage Policy

1. Marriage

This Church believes in the sanctity of the marital union as described in Scripture: We believe that the Bible clearly teaches marriage is between one man and one woman in holy matrimony. We believe God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Proverbs 5:15-20; 12:4; 14:1; 18:22; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16;

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Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

2. Facilities and Staff

This church sanctions only with Biblical standards; due to our belief in the biblical teaching about marriage, same-sex couples will not be married in any owned church properties or facilities. Neither will any ordained minister or ordained man of New Salem Baptist church perform any same-sex marriages or civil unions whether on or off church owned properties.

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Bylaws

I. Membership

Section 1. General.

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

The membership of this church shall be all whose names are duly inscribed on the Church Rolls as maintained by the church clerk.

Section 2. Candidacy-Membership.

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church. After a new member is accepted into the church, those coming by profession of faith shall be encouraged to attend a new member's class and those coming by letter shall be encouraged to attend the new member's class.

All candidates for membership shall be presented to the church in the following ways:

- (1) By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
- (2) By promise of a letter from a Baptist church of like faith and order.
- (3) By statement: Any person who has at some time been a member of a Baptist church, and who has been baptized according to the New Testament, but whose membership lapsed or was lost, may, upon statement of the facts and the affirmation of his personal faith in loyalty to Jesus Christ, as Savior and Lord, be received to membership by vote of the congregation at any of its public services.
- (4) By restoration: Any person whose membership has been terminated may be restored to full fellowship by the vote of the church upon evidence of his repentance and reformation. Before voting to restore such a member, the church may, if it so desires, refer such a matter to the Pastor and deacons and report back to the church with recommendations thereon.

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- (5) Special Cases: Special cases such as receiving members from other denominations, in absentia (those confined to their bed by sickness) and others shall be referred to the pastor and deacons for recommendation to the church.

Section 3. Discipline.

Should any unhappy differences arise between members, the aggrieved member shall follow in a tender spirit the rules given by our Lord in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew.

- (1) Should any case of gross breach of covenant, or of public scandal occur the deacons shall endeavor to remove the offense, and if such efforts fail, shall report the case to the church.
- (2) If the church votes to entertain a complaint (which must be made in writing), it shall appoint a reasonable time and place of hearing and notify the person in question thereof furnishing him with a copy of the charges.
- (3) At such hearing, the accused member may call to his aid any church member as counsel. If he shall not present himself at the time appointed, or give satisfactory reasons for his neglect to do so, the church may proceed in his absence.
- (4) All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance, but should an adverse decision be reached, the church may proceed to admonish or declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.
- (5) In case of grave difficulty the church will be ready, if requested to ask the advice of a mutual conciliator.

Section 4. Termination of Membership.

Membership shall be terminated by death; exclusive by action of this church; dismissal to another Baptist church; erasure upon becoming affiliated with a church of another faith and denomination; and in such other ways as this church may determine.

Should a member become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, the church may terminate his membership, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such members to repentance and amendment.

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II. Church Officers

The officers of this church shall be as follows:

Section 1. Pastor

- (1) A Pastor Search Committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor and their recommendations will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by any method (such as ballot) chosen by the church. An affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members present voting will be considered sufficient to call a pastor. After the pastor has received the vote necessary for a call, then a vote for unanimous support shall be extended to him.

An explanation of each candidate's case, which is brought before the church for a trial sermon, shall be made by the Pastor Search Committee to the church.

- (2) In addition to making recommendations concerning the calling of a pastor, the pastor search committee shall also have the responsibility of filling the pulpit with supply preachers or recommending an interim pastor until a pastor is called.
- (3) The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated. In case of termination by either the pastor or church as much notice should be given as possible. The minimum amount of notice given by either should not be less than two weeks.

The termination of the pastor by the church shall be at a special business meeting.

- (4) The pastor shall have in charge the welfare and oversight of the church. He shall preside at all meetings of the church except as hereinafter provided.
- (5) The pastor's salary and expenses associated with the pastor's duties shall be reviewed annually before the new budget is submitted to the church, or as often as the church sees necessary. He shall have two weeks paid vacation annually and a sufficient amount of free time to spend with his family, being relieved of all church responsibilities except those of an emergency nature. No more than two weeks per year may be taken for revival services by the pastor unless granted by special permission of the church. (The pastor shall pay his own supply while away on revival engagements.)
- (6) The church shall pay a supply for the pastor during illness and regular salary while he is on sick leave.

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Section 2. Church Staff.

This church shall call or employ such staff members, as the church shall need. The primary responsibility of such staff members shall be to serve with the pastor in the spiritual ministry and life of the church.

The sexton, caretaker of the grounds and nursery workers shall be recommended to the church by pastor and deacons and employed by church action. The performance and outlining of these employees duties shall be determined by the pastor assisted by the deacons. In case these employees fail to perform their duties properly, it shall be the pastor and deacons duty to recommend to the church that they be relieved of their duties.

Section 3. Deacons.

(1) (1) Number. The Church would be best served by a minimum of seven (7) deacons and up to a maximum number based on the qualified men who feel lead to serve.

(2) Qualifications. The office of deacon is an office for service to Christ through the church. To be nominated each man should fulfill the requirements recorded in the New Testament in Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3. It is not a position to honor someone, but rather an opportunity for special service for the man who has proven himself worthy. To qualify for service as a deacon in New Salem Baptist Church a man:

1. Will feel and know within his own heart that he is a sinner saved by grace and will have accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.
2. Will be a man proven to be faithful in his support of the total church program (Sunday worship services, Sunday School, Church Training, Prayer Meeting), and its endeavors to reach the lost.
3. Will be willing as a servant to serve, to join with the pastor in providing leadership that will result in a spirit of growth, love among the brethren, and compassion for souls.
4. Will agree to support the church program as adopted by the majority regardless of his personal opinion.
5. Will be a tither.
6. Will have been a member of New Salem Baptist Church for at least one year prior to installation and/or ordination.

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7. Will agree to attend all regular and called meetings of the deacons unless providentially hindered.
 8. Will commit himself to actively participate in any deacon led program adopted by the church.
 9. Will be at least 21 years of age or more as of the date of installation and/or ordination.
 10. Will abstain from the use of alcohol as a beverage and the illegal use of drugs and dangerous substances.
 11. Will order his family life in keeping with Timothy 3:8-13.
 12. Will agree to resign the office if during his service as an active deacon he becomes disqualified by reasons of any of the items above.
- (3) Term of Service. Deacons shall serve on a rotation basis for a term of three years. Each year the term of office of one third of the number of deacons shall expire and election shall be held to fill the vacancies. After serving a term of three years, a deacon shall be eligible for reelection only after the lapse of one year.
- (4) Election. A nominating committee shall be formed to bring before the church the names of qualified men to serve as deacons. The committee shall be composed of the pastor of the church, the chairman of the deacons, one current deacon elected by the deacons, the Sunday School director, the Training Union director, the Woman's Missionary Union director and the Brotherhood director. This shall be a standing committee.

It is the duties of this committee to:

1. Determine the number of men to be nominated for the new year. The number of candidates shall be equal to the number whose terms have expired and can be up to one half (1/2) the number of current Deacons serving.
2. Formulate a list of qualified men.
3. Contact the above-nominated men. The contact process will provide each man with a self-evaluation questionnaire designed to provide such nominees with an opportunity to examine their qualifications for deacon service within a period of time which will be fixed by the committee.

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4. With extreme confidentiality, the committee will review the returned questionnaires, insure that all scriptural qualifications have been met, and any questions raised by any committee member of prospective nominees are satisfied.
 5. Schedule interviews with the prospective nominees to examine orally the qualifications of each nominee, and undertake to resolve any questions or problems, which may have been raised during the interviews, or in the responses contained in the self-evaluation questionnaires.
 6. Nominees who, in the confidential judgment of the committee are deemed qualified for active service as deacon, on the basis of the self-evaluation questionnaires and interviews, will be presented to the church membership the first Sunday in November. The Church membership will then vote to affirm the selections.
 7. Arrange for the examination by the Deacon body of those who are to be ordained.
 8. Arrange for the Ordination/installation of new deacons on the first Sunday in January.
- (5) Duties. In accordance with the meaning of the word and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church.
1. They are to be zealous to guard the unity of the spirit within the bonds of peace.
 2. They shall serve as a council of advice and conference with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the church. With the pastor they are to consider and formulate plans for the constant effort and progress of the church and in all things pertaining to the saving of souls, the development of Christians and the extension and growth of the kingdom of God.
 3. By proper organization and method among themselves, they are to establish and maintain personal fraternal relations with, and inspiring oversight of, all the membership of the church. Especially are they to seek to know the physical needs and the moral and spiritual struggles of the brethren and sisters; and to serve the whole church in relieving, encouraging, and developing all who are in need.
 4. In counsel with the pastor, and by such methods as the Holy Spirit may direct in accordance with the New Testament teachings, they are to have oversight of the discipline of the church, in administering they are to be guided always by the principles set forth in Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14. The deacons shall be free to call upon any member of the church to aid in disciplinary action.

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(6) **Methods of Procedure**

1. The whole body of deacons shall be organized as a unit for the consideration of all-larger problems and general policies, and shall meet monthly at a time to be designated. They may organize themselves into such committees as their wisdom may direct for efficiency in service.
2. They shall appropriate the membership of the church among themselves, to conduct a spiritual program that reaches every member, both active and inactive, both resident and non-resident.
3. Each deacon shall freely confer with the pastor about all matters and cases of discipline, which in his judgment would be most wisely and spiritually handled in private.

Section 4: Clerk

The clerk of the church shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The church shall keep a register of names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall record the names of all officers, members of committees and delegates upon their election or appointment in his record book. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file church bulletins, written official reports and other forms of communication felt to be of importance. The clerk shall consider it a part of his responsibility to promote loyalty and efficiency in church life.

Section 5. Treasurer

The church shall elect annually a church treasurer. The term of office shall be from January first to December thirty-first. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers all money, or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. Payment of bills for local work and expenses shall be made promptly by check, and all funds received for denominational or other causes shall be remitted at least monthly by check. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular monthly meeting an itemized report of receipts and disbursements for the preceding month and this report shall be read to the church in its regular monthly business meeting. Within thirty days after the end of each fiscal year, the treasurer shall render to the deacons and to the church an annual report showing total amount of receipts, and an itemized statement of all disbursements. Prior to the rendition of this annual report, upon its completion by the treasurer, the report shall be audited by the trustees and stewardship committee and their signature placed at the end of the report before it shall be accepted by the church. All books, records and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be considered the property of the church. The

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books shall be open to inspection at all times by any member of the church, except another individual's record of giving.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year, and its acceptance and approval by the church, the same shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve it as part of the permanent records of the church. The treasurer shall consider it a part of his responsibility to promote in every way scriptural giving on the part of the entire membership of the church.

It shall be the treasurer's duty to keep a record of those using the budget offering envelopes. Those should be especially kept for the purpose of income tax records. Any individual who buys an item for the church should make sure that he gives a receipt of his purchase to the treasurer.

Section 6. Trustees

The New Salem Baptist Church shall have three trustees. The trustees, one-third of whom shall be elected annually to serve for three years, and until their successors shall be appointed, will hold trust the property of the church. They shall have legal title to all church property, but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. The trustees serve as legal representatives in all transactions related to the church.
2. They hold legal title to the church property and they sign all documents related to the sale, mortgaging, or rental of church property after a vote of approval by the church in regular business session authorizing any action.
3. The trustees shall meet once a quarter or as often as necessary.
4. Maintain an inventory of all church property, mortgage loans and insurance on church property. These documents shall be stored in a bank safe deposit box and copies of them on file in the church office.
5. Make recommendations for maintaining adequate insurance coverage for all church property.

III. Church Council

- (1) The church council, upon being established by authorization of the church, shall seek to correlate and coordinate the activities and organizations of the church, yet with advisory powers only.
- (2) The council, unless otherwise determined by vote of the church, shall be composed of Pastor, Church Staff, Chairman of the Deacons, Sunday School Director, Church Training Director, Woman's Missionary Union Director, Brotherhood Director, Bus Ministry Director, Chairman of the nominating, Stewardship and Social committees.
- (3) The council shall meet, on call of pastor or any time deemed necessary.

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- (4) The primary functions of the council shall consist of the following:
1. To recommend to the congregation suggested objectives and church goals.
 2. To review and coordinate program plans recommended by church officers, organizations and committees.
 3. To recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar time and other resources according to program priorities.
 4. To evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.
- (5) All matters agreed upon by the council, calling for action not already provided for, shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

IV. Church Committees

Section 1. General.

All church committee members shall be selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church unless otherwise indicated in the descriptions below. The pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member of all committees except the Pastor Search Committee.

Section 2. Nominating Committee.

The nominating committee shall be composed of three members plus the newly elected Sunday school director and church training director.

Section 3. Stewardship Committee.

This committee shall be composed of three members. The church treasurer is to serve as chairman of this committee. Its duties will be to supervise all financial matters in the church.

Section 4. Counting Committee.

The term of office will be concurrent with the church treasurer. This committee shall be composed of at least eight members. The responsibility of this committee is to assist the treasurer by counting and depositing all funds received by the church.

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Section 5. Social Committee.

This committee shall be composed of the social hostess as chairman and six other members. Its function shall be to serve and aid with church wide recreational and social activities.

Section 6. Nursery Committee.

This committee is elected by the church and is responsible for coordinating all the activities of the Nursery Department and Nursery work of the church. This committee is also responsible for equipment and supplies for the Nursery department.

Section 7. Church Ushers.

Every church usher shall be selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church. There shall be a minimum of six active ushers selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church. The ushers shall be led by a usher chairman also selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church. The ushers are to greet people as they enter and leave the church, seat people at the proper time, provide bulletins and/or other materials at the time of seating. The ushers will be attentive to the needs of the congregation and the pastor.

Section 8. Baptism Committee.

This committee shall consist of two men and two women, preferably married couples, one of whom is chairman. It shall be the duty of this committee to make all necessary arrangements for the ordinance of baptism and to render such assistance to the pastor and to the candidate as may be necessary.

Section 9. Lord's Supper Committee.

This committee shall work closely with the pastor and deacons to prepare the elements to be used in the serving of the Lord's Supper and caring for the necessary service equipment used periodically in the observance of the ordinance. This committee shall consist of a chairman and one member.

Section 10. Flower Committee.

The flower committee shall be responsible for providing, arranging, and disposing of floral arrangements in the church auditorium and in other parts of the church facilities as needed. The committee shall consist of at least a chairman and two other members. Some organizations such as the WMU or Ladies Sunday School class may supervise this function. Flowers will only be sent to church members in case of death.

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Section 11. Church Library Committee.

This committee shall consist of a chairman and at least three other members. The responsibilities of this committee shall be to work with the librarian to promote and strengthen the book ministry of the library, to see that resources are made available to the library as needed and to assist in book selection.

Section 12. History Committee.

This committee shall consist of the church clerk, and other interested individuals.

Section 13. Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

This committee shall meet at least once annually, and shall review the bylaws and make recommendations to the church when adjustments are needed. This committee shall consist of three members.

Section 14. Facilities and Grounds Committee

The principle function of this committee is to assist the church in the care of all properties and buildings; to study and recommend the use of space and furnishings as they relate to all programs and activities; to study the need for and recommend acquiring property and space. This committee shall consist of five members.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Preparation of an annual budget proposal to be presented to the Stewardship Committee for the financial resources needed to accomplish its assigned responsibilities.
2. Recommend to the Pastor and Deacons the employment of any maintenance/janitorial personnel or contractors as needed to properly maintain the church property.
3. Train and supervise any maintenance/janitorial personnel or contractors.
4. Perform and/or supervise all volunteer maintenance activities.
5. Work with all church committees, staff and ministries to provide adequate space, furnishings and equipment for all activities of the church.
6. Work with all church committees, staff and ministries as needed to develop and recommend to the church policies and procedures regarding the use of space, equipment and property.
7. In the event of an emergency this committee shall have the authority to approve any repairs as needed to protect the church property from further damage.
8. Presentation of committee report at the monthly business meetings.

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V. Educational Ministries

Section 1. General

All organizations of the church shall be under church control. All officers being elected by the church will be persons proven faithful and will consider it their responsibility to support the total program of the church. It is understood that the pastor is ex-officio head of all organizations named, and his leadership is to be recognized in them all.

Section 2. Sunday School

There shall be a Sunday School, divided into departments and classes for all ages, administered by the Sunday school director, for the study and instruction of God's Word, and conducted each Sunday morning preceding the morning worship service.

The tasks of the Sunday School shall be to teach the biblical revelation; reach all prospects for the church; lead church members to witness daily; lead all church members to worship daily; lead all church members to minister daily; provide organization and leadership for special projects of the church; and, to provide and interpret any information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Section 3. Church Training

There shall be a Church Training, divided into departments for all ages, administered by the Church Training Director and conducted each Sunday evening preceding the evening worship service.

The tasks of the Church Training shall be to interpret systematic theology, Christian history, Christian ethics, and church polity and organizations; to train church members to perform the functions of their church; to give orientation to new church members; to discover, recruit, and give general training to potential leaders for the church and the denomination; to provide organization and leadership for special projects of the church; to provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Section 4. Woman's Missionary Union

There shall be a Woman's Missionary Union with such officers and such forms of organization, including standard auxiliaries and services as its wisdom shall direct under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the teaching of the New Testament subject to the approval of the church. The tasks of the Woman's Missionary Union shall be to teach missions; lead persons to engage in mission action and to do personal witnessing; support missions; to provide organization and leadership for special mission projects of the church; and to provide and interpret information

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regarding the work of the church and denomination. These tasks shall be administered by the Director of Woman's Missionary Union who is approved by the church.

Section 5. Brotherhood

There shall be a Brotherhood, made up of its standard organizations, including Royal Ambassador, as its wisdom shall direct under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the teaching of the New Testament subject to the approval of the church. This program shall be administered by the Brotherhood Director who shall be elected by the church. The tasks are to teach missions to men and boys; to lead men, young men, and boys to participate in mission activities; to provide organization and leadership for special projects of the church; and to provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Section 6. Music Ministry

There shall be a Music Ministry administered by a music director. Such officers and organizations shall be included as in his wisdom directed by the Holy Spirit seems wise and subject to the approval of the church. The music tasks shall be to teach music to choir members, choir directors, song leaders, instrumentalists, congregation; to train persons to lead, sing, and play music; to lead persons to participate in hymn singing and to understand hymnody; to assist the church in its functions of worship, proclamation, education, and ministry; and to provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

VI. Meetings

Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning and evening, and each Wednesday evening, or other set times, for preaching, instruction, evangelism and for the worship of Almighty God, such meetings being open for the entire membership of the church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor.

Section 2. The Church Business Meeting.

- (1) Regular business meetings shall be held monthly on a Wednesday evening designated by the church. However, special business meetings may be called at any time thought necessary by the pastor and deacons.
- (2) Notice of special business meetings must be given on two consecutive Sundays, stating object of business, time, date, and place.
- (3) All members of the church shall have equal voice and vote in the business meeting and are urged to attend and to participate.

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- (4) A quorum shall be considered the number of members present at the meeting.
- (5) For ordinary business, a majority vote shall be considered a majority of the members voting. However, for special and important matters of business, a designated majority may be specified.
- (6) Voting may be done either by visible or oral methods (raising hands, yes or no, etc.) or by secret ballot. The nature of the business and the desire of the meeting shall determine the method.
- (7) All meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.
- (8) All meetings shall be conducted in a Christian manner for the purpose of bringing honor to Christ's name. Any time a business meeting ceases to be conducted in a Christian manner it shall be dismissed with prayer and resumed at another time.
- (9) The pastor is to be considered the moderator when present, but the chairman of deacons or someone else may serve in his absence. It shall be the duty of the moderator to maintain order in the business meeting, and so to direct the course of the proceedings as best to secure the objective desired. The moderator is to direct the meeting and shall be respected as to his position. Before anyone speaks, he should obtain permission from the moderator to speak. Only one person at a time shall be allowed to speak unless permitted by the moderator. The moderator shall state all motions made, put them to vote and announce the results. He decides points of order, and appoints committees, when directed by the body.
- (10) Robert's Rules of Order shall be used as a guide for parliamentary procedures.

VII. Church Finances

- (1) The stewardship committee, in consultation with the pastor, deacons and responsible leaders of various organizations, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval at the beginning of each fiscal year an inclusive budget. This budget will indicate the amounts needed by items and sought for all local expenses and purposes. In like manner, all expenses for denominational expenses or other causes shall be shown
- (2) All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the treasurer and be properly recorded in the books of the church. The treasurer shall be assisted by the counting committee in counting and depositing all receipts. The expenses of all organizations, as approved by the church, shall be paid from the amount in the general fund of the church.

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- (3) Special offering may be sought by the church or by any of its organizations only after approval of the church and after recommendations of the stewardship committee. This does not preclude individuals making special offerings at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.
- (4) It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the church and its causes with regular proportionate gifts and tithes.
- (5) At any time the church feels the necessity, some type of financial program, such as the Forward Program of church finances, may be adopted.

VIII. Amendments

Any proposed change in the Constitution or Bylaws must be laid before the church in writing at a business meeting not less than one month before the time of the proposed action, and read from the pulpit on the Lord's Day next succeeding such proposal. Passage of a constitution change will require a 2/3 vote of the members present and voting at any business meeting of the church. Passage of a Bylaw change will require a majority vote of the members present and voting at any business meeting.

This Constitution and Bylaws shall be reviewed and may be revised upon the recommendation of the constitution and bylaws committee and upon the approval of the church. It shall be reviewed annually at the beginning of the new church year.