

BIRCHMAN BAPTIST CHURCH

*9100 NORTH NORMAN DALE
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76116*

817-244-6590

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

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CONSTITUTION
BIRCHMAN BAPTIST CHURCH

ARTICLE I
NAME LOCATION AND PURPOSE

- A. This New Testament Church is duly incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas under the corporate name Birchman Baptist Church, Inc., the date of incorporation being May 6, 1986.
- B. The church campus and principal place of business is located at 9100 North Normandale, in the City of Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas.
- C. The Church's purpose shall be
- to preach and teach the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
 - to conduct worship services,
 - to administer the ordinances of the New Testament,
 - to improve the spiritual life of its members through Christian education,
 - to develop Christian stewards of time, talent, and material possessions, and
 - to advance the cause of missions at home and around the world
- (Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 26:17-30; Acts 2:42; Ephesians 4:4-6 & 11-13; I Corinthians 4:2; II Corinthians 8:7).*
- D. The Church is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, and the North Texas Baptist Association. The Church subscribes to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.
- E. The governing power of Birchman Baptist Church is in the hands of the members *(Matthew 23:8)*. The responsibility of the Church cannot be transferred or delegated, and Church action is final. The Church shall be governed by its Constitution and ByLaws as may be amended from time to time.
- F. The fiscal year of the Church shall begin on September 1 and end the following August 31.

ARTICLE II
ARTICLES OF FAITH

- A. We believe the Bible, composed of the Old Testament and the New Testament, is the inerrant, inspired, and all-sufficient Word of God (*II Timothy 3:16-17*), His unique and peculiar revelation to man (*John 17:17*) and, in its original manuscript, the final infallible authority in faith and conduct.
- B. We believe there is only one true and living God (*Isaiah 45:5, Isaiah 46:9*), revealed to us as the Father (*I Corinthians 8:6*), the Son (*John 10:30, John 1:14*), and the Holy Spirit (*John 15:26, John 14:26*), the same in essence and equal in every divine perfection, yet each fulfilling a distinct office.
- C. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit (*Luke 1:30-32*) and born of the virgin Mary (*Matthew 1:18*), that He is the true God and true man (*John 14:11*), and that He is the only and sufficient Savior (*John 14:6, John 4:42*) and Mediator (*I Timothy 2:5*) between God and man.
- D. We believe that man was created holy and innocent, but by the disobedience of one man sin entered the world, so death by sin passed upon all men for all have sinned (*Romans 5:12*).
- E. We believe in the vicarious death of Jesus Christ for our sins (*I Peter 2:24*), in the resurrection of His body (*Acts 5:30*), in His ascension into Heaven (*Acts 1:9, Acts 5:30*), in His personal and visible future return to the earth, and in salvation only by grace through faith in Him (*Ephesians 2:8-9*).
- F. We believe that nothing can separate true believers from the love of God, but that they will be kept by His power through faith unto salvation (*Romans 8:38-39*).
- G. We believe that the ordinances of the Church are:
 - 1. Baptism by immersion in water of a believer in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit setting forth the essential facts in redemption; death to sin and resurrection to newness of life; and
 - 2. The celebration of the Lord's Supper as a memorial of the Lord's death until He comes (*I Corinthians 11:24-26*).
- H. We believe that a New Testament church is an autonomous body of baptized believers with Christ as their head (*Ephesians 1:22-23*), associated for worship, service, and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world; thus it is the duty of all Christians, according to ability, to contribute to its support.

ARTICLE III
CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

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

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and/or use of intoxicating beverages or other abusive substances; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feelings and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

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

ARTICLE IV
STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

We believe that God has created humans in his image and in the two distinct and complementary genders of male and female. These two genders are expressed in both physical biology and roles. Any departure from the biblical standard of male and female, whether that be a rejection of biological gender or an attempt to alter biological gender, is a violation of Scripture. (Gen 1:26–27; Matt 19:4; Mark 10:6; Eph 5:21–33)

We believe that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in an exclusive, monogamous, 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. (Gen 1:26–28; 2:18–24; Prov 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 31:10–31; Eccl 9:9; Matt 19:3–9; Mark 10:6–12; 1 Cor 7:1–16; Eph 5:21–6:4; Col 3:18–21; 1 Tim 5:14; 1 Pet 3:1–7)

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, and pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Exod 20:14; Lev 18:6–23; 20:10–21; Job 31:1; Prov 5:1–20; Matt 5:27–28; Mark 7: 10–23; Rom 1:26–27; 1 Cor 6:9–20; 7:1–5; Gal 5:19–21; Eph 5:3–5; Col 3:5; 1 Thes 4:3–5; Heb 13:4; Jude 7)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and repent of their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (John 14:6; Rom 3:23; 6:23; 1 Cor 6:11; 1 John 1:9)

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church. However, identifying particular behaviors and identities as sin does not constitute harassment or hate. (1 Cor 13:1–13; Gal 6:1; Eph 4:15, 32; James 1:19)

BYLAWS
BIRCHMAN BAPTIST CHURCH

ARTICLE I
MEMBERSHIP

A. ADMISSION TO MEMBERSHIP

1. Any person publicly professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, and declaring it as his purpose to follow Him as His disciple, may be received into fellowship with this Church, subject to baptism by immersion in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
2. Prospective members coming by profession of faith or from another denomination are urged to complete the Church's membership course. After completing the membership course, these persons may then be eligible to hold positions of leadership (teaching, etc.).
3. Members in good standing of other Baptist churches of like faith and order may be received into full membership of this Church upon receipt of a letter of transfer from the former church.
4. Admission into membership may be by personal statement, satisfactory to this Church, that the person was formerly a member in good standing in a church of like faith and order. Such persons must have previously received Jesus Christ as their personal savior and have been baptized by immersion as an act of obedience in a manner consistent with the beliefs and practices of this Church, and hold beliefs consistent with those stated in the Birchman Articles of Faith.
5. A member from whom fellowship has been withdrawn may be restored to membership upon presentation of satisfactory evidence of repentance and reformation to this Church.
6. All persons seeking membership, whether by baptism, letter, statement or restoration, shall be received upon a majority vote of the congregation at any Church meeting.
7. A person may also be admitted into the fellowship of this Church under "watchcare". Watchcare is a special form of membership for those who, for various reasons, do not wish to enter into full membership. Persons joining the Church by watchcare cannot hold any position of leadership, (teaching, etc.) and cannot vote in any Church elections or business meetings.

B. LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP – Membership may be lost in the following ways:

1. Death of the member.
2. Letter of transfer to another Baptist Church of like faith and order.
3. Withdrawal of fellowship for cause deemed proper by the Church, after appropriate attempts at biblical reconciliation. Any member of this Church who persists in unrepentant sin or violations of the Church Covenant shall be called upon by a committee selected by the Pastor or Chairman of Deacons from among the Current Deacon Body to persuade him/her to right his relationship with Christ and the Church. If the erring member does not respond, the committee shall report to the Church and recommend exclusion from membership in the Church. In all such matters, the Church shall be guided by Matthew 18:15-17. Withdrawal of fellowship by church action shall be by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the congregation at any Church meeting following seven (7) days notice that such vote will be taken.
4. Dropped from the Church roll upon personal written request to the Church Clerk.
5. Upon vote of the Church after inability to locate the member and a sufficient length of time has elapsed to justify a reasonable belief that he/she has severed his/her connection with the Church.
6. Joining a church of another faith.
7. Letters of transfer, dismissal, and dropping from the Church roll shall be by majority vote of the congregation at any Church meeting.

ARTICLE II OFFICERS AND STAFF

The Biblical offices of a New Testament Church include the offices of Pastor and Deacons. The legally constituted officers of the church are the Board of Trustees as provided in the Articles of Incorporation of Birchman Baptist Church, Inc. References to "officers" in the context of this Article of the Bylaws are not to be construed as referring to the officers identified in the Articles of Incorporation.

A. MINISTRY STAFF AND EMPLOYEES

1. PASTOR

- a) The Pastor shall perform all of the functions and duties of the pastor of a New Testament church. He shall have the supervision of the church staff, and may delegate such responsibilities, as he may deem expedient.
- b) The Pastor shall be a man called by God into the ministry and shall meet the qualifications for a minister as recorded in the Holy Scriptures (*I Timothy 3:2-7, Titus 1:5-9*). He shall subscribe and conform to the Articles of Faith and the Church Covenant of Birchman Baptist Church.
- c) The Pastor shall be the leader, spiritual undershepherd and overseer of the Church (*I Peter 5:2, Acts 20:28*). He shall oversee all areas of doctrine, ministry and worship and shall seek and receive advice and counsel from the Deacons in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the Church. The Pastor and Deacons shall consider and formulate policies for the constant effort and progress of the Church and its programs in all things pertaining to the proclamation of the Gospel, the saving of souls, the development of Christians, and the extension and growth of the Kingdom of God.
- d) As the spiritual and temporal overseer of the Church, the Pastor is accountable to God and the Church with respect to his personal life and his duties and responsibilities as Pastor.
- e) The Pastor shall be called and elected in accordance with Article IV, Section A of these Bylaws.

2. MINISTERS

- a) In addition to the Pastor, the Ministry Staff may include ministers of education, music, and administration, and such others as may be recommended by the Pastor and the Personnel Committee. The duties and responsibilities of each minister shall be as set out in the Personnel Policy Manual. In the event of any conflict between the Personnel Policy Manual and the Constitution and Bylaws, the Constitution and Bylaws will control.
- b) The Ministry Staff members shall be elected in accordance with Article IV, Section of these Bylaws.

- c) All ministerial staff members shall subscribe to and conform to the Articles of Faith and the Church Covenant of Birchman Baptist Church.

3. CHURCH EMPLOYEES

- a) Church employees may be selected by the Pastor or by other ministry staff to whom he may delegate this function. Every staff member shall ultimately be responsible to the Pastor in carrying out his/her duties. The Pastor may consult the Personnel Committee in resolving any personnel problems.
- b) The duties and responsibilities of each shall be as set out in the Personnel Policy Manual. In the event of any conflict between the Personnel Policy Manual and the Constitution and Bylaws, the Constitution and Bylaws will control.

B. CHURCH CLERK:

1. The duties of the Church Clerk shall be to keep a correct and current record of all proceedings of the regular and special meetings of the Church in the book provided for that purpose.
2. The Church Clerk shall sign letters of transfer or dismissal of members, and cooperate with the Church office in keeping a correct roll of the church membership and in keeping the legal records and papers belonging to the Church.
3. The position of Church Clerk shall ordinarily be filled by the Pastor's secretary; however, upon the incapacity of that person to so act, another person may be selected by the Pastor with the concurrence of the Personnel Committee.

C. TRUSTEES:

1. The Trustees shall consist of five (5) resident members of the Church, elected in accordance with Article IV, Section C of these Bylaws. Trustees shall hold title to the property of the Church on behalf of and for the benefit of the Church, and shall be empowered to execute deeds, deeds of trust, mortgages, liens, notes or other pecuniary obligations, and to transfer, assign and convey all Church property, or any part thereof, only upon officially recorded instruction of the Church in business meeting. Any three of the five Trustees may execute documents requiring the signature of the Trustees. All powers and duties of the Trustees shall be conformable with the Charter of the Church and the laws of the State of Texas.
2. Trustees shall serve for a term of three years, unless removed or having resigned, such terms being staggered such that not all terms shall expire concurrently. Each term shall commence on the first day of the fiscal year following election and end on the last day of the third fiscal year.

D. CHURCH TREASURER:

1. The Treasurer shall serve in accordance with Article IV, Section D of these Bylaws.
2. The Treasurer shall sign all Church checks except when he/she is not available and circumstances require expediency. In such circumstances an authorized person other than the Treasurer may sign checks. The Treasurer shall review the nature and amount of disbursements made in this manner.

E. DEACONS

1. PURPOSE: Deacons shall faithfully discharge their responsibilities as servant-leaders of the Church, and shall meet the qualifications as set forth in Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-13, remembering always the great responsibility of promoting doctrinal purity under the Articles of Faith of the Church and spiritual harmony within the Church Body. They shall assist the Pastor in the administration of the ordinances and in the overall ministry of the Church.
2. TERM: Deacons shall be elected in accordance with Article IV, Section E of these Bylaws and shall ordinarily serve for a term of three years, unless removed or having resigned, such terms being staggered such that not all terms shall expire concurrently. Each term shall begin on the first day of the fiscal year following election and end on the last day of the third fiscal year. An individual is not eligible to serve on the Current Deacon Body for one full year following a term for which he was elected.
3. VACANCY: If a vacancy occurs, such as by resignation or removal, a Deacon may be elected to serve the remainder of the incomplete term.
4. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEACONS:
 - a) Within the context of the Holy Scriptures and particularly as set out in the New Testament, the Deacons are to be servant-leaders of the Church.
 - b) The Deacons shall offer advice and counsel to the pastor, and through him to the ministry staff, and the pastor and staff shall seek such advice and counsel, in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the Church. The Deacons shall consider and formulate policies with the Pastor for the constant effort and progress of the Church and its programs in all things pertaining to the proclamation of the Gospel, the saving of souls, the development of Christians, and the growth and extension of the Kingdom of God.
 - c) By proper organization and method among themselves, the Deacons shall establish and maintain personal, fraternal, and inspiring relations with the membership of the Church. They are 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 persons who are in such need.

- d) The Deacons, in counsel with the Pastor and in cooperation with the Church Body, shall maintain discipline within the Church Body as directed by the Holy Spirit in accordance with New Testament teachings (*Matthew 18:15-17, I Thessalonians 5:14*).
- e) The Current Deacon Body shall serve as a body for review of principal items which need Church approval.
 - (1) By way of illustration but not limitation, such items normally submitted to the Deacons for consultation or review shall include Annual Budgets and Budget amendments and revisions; establishment of new areas of ministry; capital expenditures outside the Budget; the acquisition or divestiture of property; a Plan of Merger, Consolidation or Dissolution and any amendments thereafter; any matter related to disassociation of the Church from existing Baptist Conventions, Fellowships or Associations; any merger, consolidation or affiliation with any other Baptist Convention, Fellowship or Association; or other matters which may materially affect the Church or current or prospective ministries of the Church.
 - (2) When an item is brought before the current deacon body and a majority vote does not concur with a recommendation or proposal, the matter shall be returned to its author or proponent for reconsideration based on the comments or objections made by the Current Deacon Body. Following reconsideration, if the author or proponent wishes to pursue the proposal, he shall again present the original or revised recommendation to the Current Deacon Body for its advice and counsel. If a majority of the Current Deacon Body still does not concur with the original or revised recommendation, the written or oral comments of the Current Deacon Body shall be presented to the Church at the time the recommendation or proposal is submitted for the Church's consideration.
- f) In the event of the inability or incapacity of the Pastor, the Current Deacon Body shall serve as the general pulpit supply committee.
- g) The Pastor and/or The Chairman of the Deacon Body, in counsel together when possible, may appoint from the Church body any ad hoc or special committees, provided that the duties of such committees are not already vested in other committees of the Church.

5. MEMBERSHIP:

- a) The membership of the Current Deacon Body shall consist of duly elected and ordained men who have been members of Birchman Baptist Church not less than one year.
- b) The number of current Deacons shall be determined by the Church but shall be not less than 24.

- c) The Reserve Deacon roll shall consist of those men who have been ordained as deacons but are not serving on the Current Deacon Body. Reserve Deacons may attend deacons' meetings but may not vote on any matters before the Body.
6. OFFICERS:
- a) The officers of the Deacon Body shall consist of a Chairman, Vice Chairman and other officers deemed necessary by the Deacon Body. These officers shall be elected annually by the Current Deacon Body from its members to serve for a term of one year. An individual may be eligible to serve two consecutive terms in any office.
 - b) The election of officers shall proceed as follows:
 - (1) A nominating committee composed of not less than three nor more than five Deacons shall be elected by secret ballot.
 - (2) The nominating committee will submit a slate of candidates for election by a majority vote of the Deacon Body at a regularly scheduled or called meeting.
7. DISQUALIFICATION: A Deacon who no longer meets the scriptural requirements, or who is absent from four consecutive Deacon meetings unless providentially hindered, shall be disqualified upon the recommendation of the Pastor and current Deacon officers and by the majority vote of Deacons attending a regular or called Deacons' meeting.
8. MEETINGS:
- a) Regular monthly meetings of the Deacon Body shall be held at times set by the Deacon Chairman; other special meetings may be called by the Deacon Chairman but only with advance notice to every member of the Deacon Body.
 - b) The Pastor shall be notified of all regular and called meetings of the Deacon Body and shall be eligible to attend all meetings. A majority of the Current Deacon Body shall constitute a quorum.

**ARTICLE III
COMMITTEES**

A. GENERAL:

1. All Church committee members shall be elected according to the procedures set out in Article IV Section F of these Bylaws. Members so elected shall serve three year terms, unless removed or having resigned, such terms being staggered such that not all terms shall expire concurrently. Each term shall begin on the first day of the fiscal year following election and end on the last day of the third fiscal year.
2. The following committees shall be permanent Standing Committees of the Church: Budget and Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, and Nominating Committee. Other Standing Committees that are considered to be necessary for the ongoing ministry of the Church shall be designated by the Nominating Committee. From time to time, to meet short term needs of the Church, ad hoc or special committees may be appointed by the Deacon Chairman or Pastor in accordance with Article II, Section E, Part 4 (g) of these Bylaws.

B. DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. The permanent Standing Committees shall have the general duties and responsibilities defined herein. Duties and responsibilities of other committees (except those appointed as provided for in Article III, Section A (2) of these Bylaws) shall be defined by the Nominating Committee and set out in the Church Committee Handbook maintained by the Nominating Committee and the Pastor or his designated staff member..
2. The Nominating Committee, in consultation with the Pastor or assigned staff member, shall recruit and nominate members of Committees, Church Trustees, and, in consultation with the Deacon Chairman, shall initiate the Deacon nominating process as set out in Article IV, Section E, Part 1 of these Bylaws. The Nominating Committee shall develop and maintain a Church Committee Handbook setting out the job description and staffing needs of each Committee of the Church.
3. The Finance and Budget Committee shall be responsible for overall expenditures of the Church.
 - a) The Committee, working with the Pastor and ministerial staff shall:
 - (1) develop the annual Church budget and shall present the proposed budget to the Deacons for prior review and to the Church for approval, and
 - (2) monitor church income, contributions, and expenditures, whether designated or undesignated, to ensure compliance with the budget and with established financial standards; and shall report such income, contributions, and expenditures to the Church monthly.

- b) The Committee may recommend that the Church make unbudgeted expenditures. Such unbudgeted expenditures up to \$1,000.00 shall require the approval of the Current Deacon Body. Expenditures in excess of \$1,000.00 shall be presented to the Church for approval, after review by the Current Deacon Body.
 - c) The Finance Committee shall develop and maintain a Financial Policy Manual setting out procedures and guidelines for the handling of Church funds. In the event of any conflict between the Financial Policy Manual and the Church Bylaws, the provisions of the Bylaws shall prevail.
4. The Personnel Committee shall work with the Pastor in recommending nominees to the Church for ministry staff positions, and with the Pastor or assigned staff member to provide oversight of personnel administration for church employees and staff members; and shall develop and maintain a Personnel Policy Manual which shall specify job descriptions, functions, staffing needs and personnel policies.

ARTICLE IV
ELECTIONS AND TERMINATIONS

- A. PASTOR: The Pastor of this Church shall be called by a vote of the Church upon the recommendation of a duly elected Pastor Search Committee. He shall serve during the pleasure of the Church but shall have the privilege of giving up the pastorate at any time deemed by him to be in the best interest of himself or the Church. The Pastor Search Committee shall be selected in the following manner:
1. The Current Deacon Body shall select not less than three nor more than five active Deacons to assist the Nominating Committee in leading the Church to elect a Pastor Search Committee.
 2. The Nominating Committee and assisting Deacons shall provide the opportunity for Church members to nominate prospective members for the Pastor Search Committee. Any Church member may nominate as many nominees as he/she may choose; however, no person may nominate any individual more than once. Nominations must be in writing and signed by the person making the nomination(s). The period for submitting nominations shall be not less than two weeks nor more than four weeks.
 3. At the end of the period designated for accepting nominations, the Nominating Committee and assisting Deacons shall compile the list of those having been nominated, beginning with the nominee having received the highest number of nominations and listed in descending order. Beginning at the top of the list, the Nominating Committee shall contact the nominees to determine (a) their willingness to serve, and (b) their exhibiting a Godly lifestyle and being actively involved in the life of the Church. The first twenty-six nominees receiving the highest number of nominations and having been qualified according to the foregoing shall comprise the ballot list for submittal to the Church.
 - a) Each member of the Church eligible to vote shall have the privilege of casting a ballot for thirteen of the twenty-six names on the ballot. Each member casting a ballot shall vote for not more than thirteen of the nominees on the ballot. Ballots not conforming to this bylaw shall not be counted.
 - b) The Nominating Committee together with the assisting Deacons shall act as tellers to count the ballots.
 - c) The thirteen persons receiving the highest number of votes shall constitute the Pastor Search Committee of the Church. The Search Committee shall select one of its own members as Chairman. The committee may elect other officers as deemed necessary.
 - d) When the Search Committee is ready to make its recommendation of a prospective Pastor, the Church shall be notified not less than one week in advance that the Search Committee will present its recommendation at a regular Sunday morning service. In making its recommendation only one name at a time shall be considered.

- e) After the Search Committee has made its recommendation, a written ballot shall be taken of the Church members present and eligible to vote, and a call of the Pastor shall require a 75% vote in favor. If the recommendation does not receive a 75% vote, the Search Committee shall repeat the same procedure in arriving at subsequent recommendations until the Church has called a Pastor.
- f) Should the first Search Committee resign, or should the Church deem it necessary to elect a new Committee due to the failure of the first committee to obtain a Pastor, a new Search Committee shall be elected in the same manner as the first. The new committee shall proceed according to these Bylaws until its purpose has been fulfilled or until the committee has been replaced.
- g) In no event shall a nomination for Pastor be considered except through a duly constituted Search Committee.
- h) Should it become necessary, in the best interest of the Church, to obtain an interim pastor on recommendation of the Current Deacon Body, the Search Committee shall also recommend a candidate to the Church. An interim pastor shall not be a candidate for Pastor.

B. **MINISTERS:** Candidates for Ministry Staff positions, other than that of Pastor, shall be recommended to the Church by the Pastor and Personnel Committee, with advice and counsel of the Current Deacon Body. Recommendations of these candidates will be presented to the Church at a regular Sunday morning service following notice at least one week in advance in the Church publications. Members of the Church shall vote by written ballot, with approval requiring 75% of those voting.

C. **TRUSTEES:** The Trustees shall consist of five resident members of the Church, nominated by the Church Nominating Committee and elected for terms of three years by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any business meeting of the Church. A three-year term shall commence on the first day of the fiscal year following elections and shall end on the last day of the third fiscal year. An individual is not eligible for re-election for one full year following a term for which he was elected. A Trustee may be removed from office before the end of the three-year term upon recommendation of the Current Deacon Body and majority vote of the Church.

D. **CHURCH TREASURER:** The role and position of the Treasurer is to be carried out by the Church Comptroller.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the incumbent Church Treasurer at the date of the adoption of these Bylaws may remain in office until such time as he becomes incapacitated or resigns.

E. DEACONS: The Deacons shall be elected in the following manner:

1. Method of Nomination:

a) Each year the Church Nominating Committee, in consultation with the Deacon Chairman, shall appoint a Deacon Screening Committee composed of current Deacons. The Deacon Screening Committee shall receive nominations from the Church, and, in counsel with the Pastor, shall interview candidates and report back to the Church Nominating Committee those who are qualified for election. Those candidates' names shall be submitted by the Nominating Committee to the Church for election according to the following procedures.

(1) The number of places to be filled shall be recommended by the Current Deacon Body to the Church Nominating Committee, including the number necessary to replace those deacons whose terms are expiring, plus replacements for any who may have left office prior to their term expiring. In the event the Church has decided to increase or reduce the total number of deacons serving the Church, the number of places may be adjusted accordingly. In all events, the Church Nominating Committee shall attempt to keep the current Deacon roll such that one-third of the active deacon terms expire each year. To this end, replacements for those leaving office prior to expiration of their term may be elected to serve only for the remaining time of the unexpired term. If less than 12 months remains in the unexpired term, that position may, at the option of the Nominating Committee, be left vacant until the end of the term.

(2) The number of nominees submitted for election by the Church shall ordinarily be up to twice the number of places to be filled.

(3) Nominees may be Reserve Deacons, or men to be newly ordained upon election.

2. Method of Election:

a) The Nominating Committee shall publish in the Church publications for two consecutive weeks the list of candidates.

b) At a Sunday morning service following the publication of the list of candidates, the Nominating Committee shall present to the congregation the list of candidates for election. The number of nominees equal to the number of places to be filled, receiving the most votes shall be declared elected for the term designated.

c) The election shall take place each year prior to the end of the fiscal year.

d) The candidates so elected shall serve, unless removed by resignation or disqualification, for a regular term of three years or for the remainder of a term that has been vacated. A Deacon is not eligible to serve on the current Deacon Body for one full year following a term for which he was elected.

F. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. All Church committee members shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by majority vote of the Church, unless otherwise specifically provided for in these Bylaws. Nominations may also be made from the floor.
2. The permanent Standing Committees shall each be composed of not less than five (5) members elected for three-year rotating terms. The Nominating Committee shall determine the number of members for other Standing Committees. No committee member shall serve on the same Standing Committee more than three consecutive years; nor on more than one Standing Committee at the same time. A committee member may serve on one Standing Committee and one ad hoc committee, or on two ad hoc committees, concurrently. Nominating Committee members whose terms expire shall not serve on any Standing Committee for one full year following such expiration.

G. MESSENGERS

1. The Church may elect messengers to attend associational and state and national conventions in accordance with the rules and regulations of the respective association or convention. Such messengers must be members of Birchman Baptist Church in good standing.
2. Members desiring to attend such meetings shall notify the Church in writing as early as possible prior to the meeting. If there are more individuals desiring to attend than the Church is authorized to send, the Church shall elect messengers from the list presented. Individuals receiving the most votes shall be designated messengers. Those not so designated shall be designated alternates, in order of the number of votes received, up to the number allowed.
3. The Pastor shall by reason of his office be one of the designated messengers.

H. TERMINATIONS

1. The Pastor may be terminated with cause upon recommendation of the Current Deacon Body to and a majority vote of those members of the Church present and voting, after ten (10) days notification to the Church that a vote is to be taken.
2. Any staff member other than the Pastor, may be terminated with cause upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee or the Pastor in consultation together.
4. The following reasons, without limitation, shall constitute just cause for termination:
 - a) Repeated and continuing indications of neglect, inefficiency, immaturity or incompetence in the performance of duties;
 - b) Repeated failure to comply with official directives and established regulations of the Church;
 - c) Immorality, use of illegal drugs or drunkenness;

- d) Conviction of any felony or other crime involving moral turpitude;
- e) Necessary reduction of staff due to changes in the plan or organization;
- f) Continuing failure to pay debts;
- g) Misuse of leave policy as defined in the Personnel Policy Manual;
- h) Failure to subscribe to and/or conform to the Articles of Faith and Covenant of Birchman Baptist Church .

ARTICLE V
BUSINESS MEETINGS

- A. Regular Business Meetings of the Church shall be scheduled by the Pastor and Deacons not less frequently than quarterly. The meetings shall ordinarily be held on the same day of each month unless a special meeting is called according to procedures herein. The Pastor or Deacon Chairman shall preside at business meetings. In order to encourage participation in all business meetings, no other adult activities shall be scheduled concurrently. In special cases the Pastor or Deacon Chairman may postpone the regularly scheduled business meeting up to two weeks.
- B. The agenda for regular meetings shall include a current financial report and other matters necessary to the effective operation of the Church. Notice of extraordinary matters not normally included in the agenda for regular business meetings shall be published in the Church paper and the specific proposals and relevant documents made available to members not less than seven (7) days in advance unless specifically provided otherwise in these By-Laws.
- C. Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor or Deacon Chairman to consider matters of special nature and significance. Notice of matters to be so considered shall be published in the Church paper and the documents made available to members not less than ten (10) days in advance of the special called meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. Determination of such urgency shall require the concurrence of the Pastor, Deacon Chairman and Deacon Vice Chairman.
- D. A quorum at any business meeting shall consist of those members present and eligible to vote, provided that it is a regularly scheduled meeting or one that has been properly called.. A majority vote is required for an action to be approved unless specifically provided otherwise in these Bylaws.
- E. Robert's Rules of Order, current edition, shall be the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church. It shall be the responsibility of the Church Trustees to see that a copy is kept available in the Church library.

**ARTICLE VI
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

- A. CHURCH ORDINANCES: The Church shall celebrate and perform the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as provided in the Articles of Faith (Article II of the Birchman Constitution).
1. BAPTISM:
 - a) The Church, by a vote of the members present, shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.
 - b) The ordinance of baptism is administered on authority of and in the presence of the Church, and ordinarily shall be administered by the Pastor or an ordained staff member unless otherwise authorized by the Church (*Acts 2:41*).
 2. LORD'S SUPPER:
 - a) The Church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least once each quarter, utilizing the two symbolic elements of bread and the fruit of the vine. Those who are present and have professed Jesus Christ as Savior, and who have followed Him in baptism may partake of the Lord's Supper. Participants are urged to examine themselves for worthiness to receive the Lord's Supper in accordance with I Corinthians 11:27-29.
 - b) The Lord's Supper shall ordinarily be administered by the Pastor, assisted by the Deacons, at any service of the Church. In the absence of the Pastor or at his request, another ordained minister or the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Deacons may preside.
- B. CHURCH MEETINGS AND ORGANIZATIONS
1. WORSHIP SERVICES:
 - a) The Church shall provide services for worship, preaching, instruction and evangelism at regular meetings for members, guests and visitors each week at such times as are agreed on by the Church. The Pastor or his designee shall ordinarily conduct or direct the services. In an extended absence (generally six weeks or longer), or the inability or incapacity of the Pastor, the Deacon Body shall provide for pulpit supply.
 - b) Revival services and other Church meetings appropriate to the advancement of the Church's objectives shall be scheduled from time to time in accord with the Church calendar.
 2. SUNDAY SCHOOL: The Church shall maintain a Bible-centered Sunday School ("Bible Study") for all age groups (*II Timothy 2:15*) each Sunday under the general supervision of the Pastor. The Pastor may appoint a staff member to oversee the administration and proper conduct of the Sunday School.

3. **DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING:** The Church shall maintain a training program, generally conducted on Sunday and Wednesday evenings, and commonly known as "Discipleship Training". Discipleship Training shall be under the general supervision of the Pastor, who may appoint a staff member to be responsible for the administration and proper conduct of the program.

C. LICENSING AND ORDAINING

1. Any member of this Church who, by his Godly life, zeal, and aptness to preach, gives evidence that he is called of God to the work of the ministry and meets the Scriptural qualifications as interpreted by this Church may, by a majority vote of the Church, be licensed by the Church to the gospel ministry.
2. Ordination to the gospel ministry shall be carried out by the Church
 - a) when a church of like faith and order calls a man who is a member of this Church as pastor or other staff member and requests this Church to ordain him; or
 - b) when this Church finds that a man on its staff should be ordained to carry out his ministry for the Church.
 - c) When such request or need arises, the Pastor shall convene a council of ordained ministers and deacons to examine the candidate thoroughly. His life, doctrine, and call shall be examined according to applicable Scriptures and usual Baptist doctrine and practice. In the absence of the Pastor, the Deacon Chairman or an ordained staff member shall convene this council. Upon recommendation of the examining council, and majority vote of the Church, the ordination shall proceed.
3. Ordination of new deacons shall take place as soon as practical after their election by the Church. The Pastor shall convene an ordination council composed of ordained ministers and ordained deacons. This council shall examine deacon candidates according to appropriate Scriptures and counsel them regarding the duties and responsibilities of deacons. In the absence of the Pastor, the Deacon Chairman shall convene this council. Upon recommendation of the council the ordination shall be scheduled at a regular or called meeting of the Church.

D. MISSION ACTIVITIES

1. The Church shall provide, as available, funds and personnel, including volunteers and/or staff, for direct outreach in and beyond the immediate vicinity of the Church. These activities may include, without limitation, Church building construction, youth missions, mission emphases in foreign countries, and extended mission work by individuals in the United States and in foreign countries.
2. The Church may maintain mission residences for use of missionaries when they are on leave from their mission assignments. Former members of Birchman Baptist Church shall be given priority in reserving the use of the residences.

ARTICLE VII
AMENDMENT OR REPEAL

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended or repealed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of eligible members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the Church. Motion to amend or repeal must have been read at a previous meeting of the Church and published in the Church paper not less than seven (7) days in advance of voting.