

Constitution and By-Laws

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Constitution and By-Laws

Whereas, we, the members of the Friendship Baptist Church, Clanton, Alabama, doing business as (dba) ***Peach City Fellowship Church***, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, believe God has directed us to establish and maintain this church for the perpetuation of the faith once delivered to the saints to the praise of His glory and, ***Whereas***, we desire to conduct ourselves in adherence, first and foremost, to God and His will as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and to the doctrines set out in the ***Baptist Faith and Message (2000)***, which grants autonomous operation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to each church, and the importance of every believer in the discernment of God's will and,

Whereas, this Constitution and By-Laws exist as a written understanding of how the principles of the Bible shall be applied to the administration of this local congregation.

Do declare that if in any point they are determined by the congregation to be inconsistent with or contrary to the Christian Scriptures, they are, in that point, null and void and,

Do, hereby, establish and ordain this **Constitution and By-Laws**.

ARTICLE I. Name

The name of this church shall be: ***Friendship Baptist Church***, Clanton, Alabama, dba ***Peach City Fellowship Church*** of Clanton, Alabama

ARTICLE II. Foundation, Object, and Priorities of Ministry

1. The foundation of this Church is the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:11), and its code of guidance in all its affairs is the Word of God. Consequently, this Church does here affirm its faith that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of Almighty God (Mark 13:31).

2. The object of this Church shall be to worship God (Psalms 96:9) according to the teaching of His Word (Romans 12:1), to practice the precepts and examples of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament (John 4:23-24), to

sustain its ordinances and doctrines and to preach and propagate among all peoples the one true Gospel of Salvation (I Corinthians 1:23-30; Romans 10:8-15) which is by personal faith in Jesus Christ alone as Savior and Lord (Ephesians 2:8-10).

3. The priorities of ministry of this church flow from the vision of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ. We exist to savor this vision in worship (John 4:23), strengthen the vision in nurture and discipleship (I Corinthians 14:26; II Peter 3:18), and spread the vision in evangelism, missions, and loving deeds (I Peter 2:9; 3:15; Matthew 28:18-20; 5:16).

4. The position of this church is that the family is the most basic and sacred foundation of church and society, and that any attempts to supplant the God ordained order for the family, marriage, society, sexuality, sexual orientation and/or gender is to be rejected soundly. In addition to our **Affirmation of Faith: The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)**, we have adopted both the **Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (Addendum A.)** and the **Nashville Statement: A Coalition for Biblical Sexuality (Addendum B.)** as being representative of the church's comprehensive understanding of this proper, Biblical order.

5. The order and unity of this church is established and sustained upon the agreement, affirmation, and confession of sound, Biblical, historical, Southern Baptist doctrine. In addition to the **Baptist Faith and Message (2000)**, this church adopts the **Abstract of Principles (Addendum C.)**, which was adopted by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1858, and the **Peach City Catechism (Addendum D.)** as adjuncts to the **Affirmation of Faith**. These adjuncts shed light on, and are reliable for providing clarity for the **Affirmation of Faith**, especially when its brevity prevents it from providing needed, detailed answers or when there is a need for added, objective authority to settle internal, doctrinal disputes.

AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. 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. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

II. 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 perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. 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 knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

B. 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 human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary 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, fully God, fully man, 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.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. 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 guarantee that God will 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.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

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III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's 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 inherits a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of

God can bring man 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 person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

IV. 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, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. 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.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

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

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

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the 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 whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2

Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39–12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are elders and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of elder is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

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.

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.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

IX. The Kingdom

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 to 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.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

X. 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.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege 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. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness under girded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education 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.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

XIII. 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 as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

XIV. 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.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives 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 Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed,

selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. 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.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

XVI. 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. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

XVII. 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.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

XVIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

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.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of

Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

ARTICLE III Membership

The membership of this Church shall consist of persons who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by living consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine, and practice of this Church, who have been baptized and who have been received into its membership according to the By-Laws of this Church. Voting privileges for members will begin on or after their 18th birthday.

ARTICLE IV Leadership and Organization

1. Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the Congregation of the Church is the final authority within this local Church. This authority is normally exercised through the election of officers to govern the Church. However, the vote of the membership of this Church at a properly called meeting, as provided in the By-Laws, shall be required to effect the following actions:

- a. Accept members into the Church, give letters of transfer or recommendation to members, or drop members from the Church roll (except as otherwise stated in the **By-Laws, Article I, Section 6, B.** whereby members may be removed from the Church roll for non-attendance without a vote by the congregation);
 - b. Elect officers of the Church;
 - c. Discipline members by dismissing them and discipline officers by removing them from office;
 - d. Approve annual budgets of the Church, authorize any expenditure of the funds of the Church when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget, and approve any transactions regarding real property;
 - e. Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the Church by the Council of Elders, or raised by motion at a business meeting;
 - f. Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or By-Laws of this church;
 - g. Approve the call, job description, and initial salary of Vocational Pastors and Ministers.
2. The offices of the Church shall be Elder and Deacon. The purpose of the officers of the Church is to lovingly govern, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.
 3. The leadership of the Church shall be vested in the Council of Elders, who are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word, and tending the flock of God in this Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function.
 4. Deacons shall assist the Council of Elders by performing services of advice, administration, and implementation.

ARTICLE V The Church Property

1. In the event of a division of this Church, from which may God in His mercy save us, the property of this Church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest portion of the Church membership before recognizing a division therein,

provided such group is loyal to this constitution; otherwise, it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this constitution though it may not be the largest group in such division. Should any controversy arise as to whether such loyalty exists, the question shall be submitted to the Executive Director, or his designee, or committee formed by him, of the *Alabama State Board of Missions (ALSBOM)*, and their decision shall be final.

2. Should a condition arise at any time in the future when for any reason, the Church work cannot continue, the Church property shall be transferred to the *Alabama State Board of Missions (ALSBOM)* or its successor.

3. Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of the same denomination be advisable, the Council of Elders shall be authorized by the Church to negotiate the terms of such consolidation in so far as the property of this Church is concerned. (With final approval as per **Article IV 1. d**)

ARTICLE VI Revisions, Additions, and Amendments

1. Revisions, additions, or amendments to this constitution may be made only in the following manner:

a. at any duly called and announced business meeting;

b. by a majority vote of the membership, or a three-fourths majority of those members present and voting at such meeting, provided at least twenty percent (20%) of the resident membership of the Church is present at such meeting;

c. after presentation by written motion at a quarterly or special business meeting held at least one month before the called meeting;

d. if notice of the proposed change or addition has been given in writing and from the pulpit on at least two Sundays in the interim period between said meetings.

2. **Article II (1) and Article VI (2)** of this constitution shall not be repealed, amended nor revised.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I Membership

Section 1 GENERAL PROCEDURE

All actions regarding membership, either of admission or dismissal, shall be by vote of the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders. At any of the regular meetings for worship, the Church may, without special notice, act upon the reception of members or upon transfer of members to other churches.

Section 2 ADMISSION BY BAPTISM

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a change of heart, and having accepted the faith, aims, and ideals of this Church as expressed in the *Affirmation of Faith* and *Church Covenant*, and this *Constitution and By-Laws* may be received into membership by baptism by immersion, upon recommendation of the Council of Elders.

Section 3 ADMISSION BY LETTER

Members from other Baptist churches holding like faith may be received as members upon presentation of letters of transfer from such churches and upon affirmation of the faith, aims, and ideals of this Church as expressed in the *Affirmation of Faith and the Church Covenant* and this *Constitution and By-Laws*. If such credentials are of an older date than six months prior to their presentation, the applicant may be required to furnish additional information.

Section 4 ADMISSION BY EXPERIENCE OR RESTORATION

All applicants for membership other than by baptism by immersion or by letter of transfer, which by Christian experience, or if having previously received believer's baptism, or by restoration, shall be received into the church in the same way as those by baptism by immersion, except the ordinance shall not be administered.

Section 5 INSTRUCTION TO NEW MEMBERS

All persons uniting with this Church in any of the ways set forth in *Sections 2 through 4* above shall previously, by the Council of Elders, be made acquainted with the *Church Constitution and By-Laws, Church Covenant, and the Affirmation of Faith* through participating in the **New Members Classes**, and by an interview with two Elders to affirm the prospective member's profession of faith and commitment to this Body with their stewardship of time, gifts and financial resources in worship and service.

Section 6 DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS

A. Members in good standing shall, upon request, be granted a letter of transfer to unite with such Baptist Church as they may designate. Such letter of transfer shall be sent to the Pastor or the Clerk of the Church the member intends to join and shall be valid only for six months but may be renewed after that time by a vote of the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders if satisfactory reasons be given for the non-use. These limitations of time shall be included in the letter of transfer. Members who shall unite with another church without such letter shall be dropped from the Church roll. Members in good standing who desire to unite with a church of another denomination shall receive a letter of reference, if requested, and be dismissed.

B. Members who move from this city shall supply the Church with their new address and apply for a letter of dismissal within one year, provided there is a church of the same faith and order in the place to which they move. If necessary, it shall be the duty of the Council of Elders to remind such members of their duties in this respect. In case there is no such church in that place, or there are circumstances which render it inadvisable to change membership, the member shall report to the Church as often as once a year at least, in person or by letter and by contribution. All non-resident members who do not so report shall be subject to dismissal by the Church after appropriate efforts have been made to contact the member and remind them of their duties.

C. At the discretion and approval of the Council of Elders (or a duly constituted subcommittee thereof), the names of any members who have not attended a Sunday

Worship Service, weekly discipleship meeting, or Bible study of *Peach City Fellowship*, for a period of at least three months, may be removed from the membership rolls.

Removal will be solely at the discretion of the Council of Elders upon their investigation of the facts related to the member's non-attendance and providing notice to that absentee member. Notice is constituted by a best-efforts attempt to contact the member, which shall include a Letter of Notice being sent to the member's address of record. The removal of the member from the membership rolls shall not take place sooner than 21-days from the date on which the Letter of Notice is sent.

ARTICLE II Church Government

Section 1 GENERAL STATEMENT

A. Officers. The Officers of the Church shall be a Council of Elders and the Diaconate. Officers shall be called to office by a vote of the membership of the Church as provided for in *Article II, Section 2*, and *Section 3* of these By-Laws. All officers of the Church shall be members of the Church in good and regular standing. The Council of Elders shall be composed of men only. Except as provided in **paragraphs (b) and (c)** below, the Council of Elders and the Diaconate are the only bodies and positions created by these By-Laws. The Diaconate may consist of men and women so long as the role of the Deaconess does not entail teaching or assuming authority over men (1 Timothy 2:12)

B. Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary. The Church, upon nomination by the Council of Elders, shall elect, at the Annual Meeting, members to the positions of Church Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall be bonded by the Church in a suitable amount. The Council of Elders shall provide a written description of duties to the Clerk (**Addendum E.**), Treasurer (**Addendum F.**), and Financial Secretary (**Addendum G.**). At the discretion of the Congregation, an individual(s) may be hired to fulfill the roles of Clerk, Treasurer, and/or Financial Secretary. Such an employee will report at least quarterly to the Congregation and shall take his/her instructions from the Council of Elders or a designated Finance Committee.

C. Committees and Appointees. The Council of Elders has the authority to create committees and positions to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility. The Council of Elders has the authority to dissolve any committee or position which it created. The Council of Elders has the authority to appoint Elders, members of the Diaconate, or other members of the Church to serve as members of such committees and to act as its agents in such positions. The Diaconate may nominate candidates for any committee or position, with appointment by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate to the Diaconate the authority to appoint its own members or other members of the Church to serve on such committees and to act as agents of the Council of Elders in such positions. Every committee shall have a chairperson responsible for the overall operation of the committee, who shall be appointed by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate the responsibility for selecting the chairperson to the Diaconate or to the committee itself. Such committees and positions may include, for example, Missions, Christian Education, Benevolence, Children's Ministry, or countless others, as directed by the Elders' Council.

Section 2 VOCATIONAL PASTORS AND DIRECTORS/COORDINATORS

A. Definition. Vocational Pastors are the ordained Elders of the church who, in response to God's call, have devoted their vocational lives to the ministry of the Word and prayer in service to Christ's church. Vocational Directors/Coordinators are the non-ordained employees of the church who, in response to God's call, serve the church as their primary vocation. Both Vocational Pastors and Vocational Directors/Coordinators are supported financially by the church in return for their vocational labors. Vocational Pastors must have the biblical qualifications of Elders and will serve on the Elders' Council.

B. Duties. In addition to the duties of their office, as described in **Sections 4** and **5** below, Vocational Pastors and Directors/Coordinators shall perform such duties as determined by the Council of Elders. Their duties shall be in writing at the time of the call to service. Vocational Directors/Coordinators are not called to the Eldership but as assisting

partners in the ministry. Vocational Pastors will always be called by the church to the Council of Elders. Since, by definition, Vocational Pastors are Elders, no Vocational Pastor may be called who has not first been examined and approved by the Elder Council.

C. Vocational Call by the Church. The members shall call Vocational Pastors and Directors/Coordinators (1) by ballot upon recommendation of the Council of Elders and (2) by at least a three-fourths majority (75%) of those members voting at the meeting with at least twenty percent (20%) of the membership of the Church present. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on the two successive Sundays preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail or via electronic media (such as text, e-mail, or other means deemed appropriate by the Council of Elders) to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.

D. Termination of Vocational Call by the Church.

1. **Resignation.** The question of terminating the vocational call of a Vocational Pastor or Director/Coordinator shall be considered at any time by the church upon the presentation of the Pastor's or Director's/Coordinator's resignation.

2. **Grievance.** Where a grievance exists against a Pastor or Director/Coordinator, either due to his preaching or teaching contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in **Article II** of its Constitution or to alleged conduct unfitting an Elder or Director/Coordinator, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing, following the procedure prescribed in **Article VII** of these **By-Laws**. If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the vocational call of the Pastor or Director/Coordinator may be terminated at any business meeting upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by ballot of a simple majority of those members of the Church present and voting with at least twenty percent (20%) of the membership of the church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays next

preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail or via electronic media (such as text, e-mail, or other means deemed appropriate by the Council of Elders) to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.

E. Licensing and Ordination. In the matter of licensing and ordaining any person to the Gospel Ministry, the church shall follow its own established procedures, in keeping with pertinent Biblical guidelines (**Addendum H.**).

Section 3 LAY OFFICERS

A. Definition. Lay officers are the non-Vocational Elders and Diaconate of the Church.

B. Duties. Lay Elders and the Diaconate shall have the duties of their offices as described in **Sections 4** and **5** below.

C. Calling. The Council of Elders shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for Lay Elder or the Diaconate. The Council shall provide for individual members of the Church either to nominate candidates or to present themselves to the Council as candidates for office and for the Council's further investigation. In no instances shall any individual be considered a nominee for the office without the nominee's consent. In those cases where the Council of Elders concludes that a nominee is not qualified for office, they shall so inform the nominee, stating the reasons for this conclusion. The Council of Elders shall present a ballot of candidates for calling/electing as Elders, or to the Diaconate, to the congregation at any duly called meeting they deem appropriate.

Lay Elders and the Diaconate shall be called/elected by the Church for indefinite terms, only to be interrupted by resignation, removal for cause, or due to a requested leave of absence. Such leaves of absence shall be up to one year and may be extended solely by vote of the Council of Elders.

D. Removal.

1. Resignation. An officer may resign his office at any time if he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.

2. Grievance. Where a grievance exists against an officer of the Church – either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in **Article II, Sections 1 and 2** of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder, member of the Diaconate – such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing, following the procedures prescribed in **Article VII** of the **By-Laws** of this Church. If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the officer may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by a closed ballot of over one-half of those members of the Church present and voting at any annual, quarterly, or special meeting with at least twenty percent (20%) of the membership of the church present at such meeting.

Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays next preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail or via electronic media (such as text, e-mail, or other means deemed appropriate by the Council of Elders) to the membership at least one week before the meeting.

2. Removal of Employees. Church employees, including Directors/Coordinators, may be removed, with or without cause, by the Council of Elders—or their designees or a duly assigned personnel committee—at any time or for any reason deemed necessary. This church shall be prohibited from offering employment contracts, and no offer for employment should be construed as a contract. All employment is *at will*. Salaried employees may be terminated with written notice and will be given one month of severance pay if they have been employed for at least one year. Hourly employees may be terminated immediately with written notice.

Section 4 COUNCIL OF ELDERS

A. Composition, Term, and Calling. The Council of Elders shall be composed of men, both Lay Elders and Vocational Elders. The Council of Elders shall be composed of a majority of Lay Elders. The number of Elders at any time will be determined by the

needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men in the church. Each Elder shall be called by the membership of the Church to an indefinite term. That call shall be conducted as provided in **Article II, Section 3** of these **By-Laws**.

B. Qualifications. Elders and nominees for Elder shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts are I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and I Peter 5:1-4.

C. Responsibilities. The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The Elders are responsible for leading this Church, teaching the Word, tending to Christ's sheep, and defending the flock of God in this Church against wolves and false teaching/teachers. This church is Elder-led and Congregationally-ruled—which is a form of Baptist polity called *Elder-led Congregationalism*.

The responsibilities of the Elders shall include: examining prospective members and acquainting them with the *Affirmation of Faith* and *Church Covenant*, overseeing the process of Church discipline, examining prospective candidates for office, scheduling and providing a moderator for business meetings, providing for reporting and recording of official Church business, overseeing the work of the Diaconate and appointed church agents, employees, Directors/Coordinators, and committees, conducting worship services, administering the ordinances of the Gospel with the assistance of the Diaconate, equipping the membership of the Church for the work of the ministry, teaching the whole counsel of God both formally and informally, correcting error, overseeing, coordinating and promoting the ministries of the Church, and mobilizing the Church for world missions.

D. Organization. The Council of Elders shall organize itself however it determines to be best to achieve the mission of the Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. The Elders must meet at least once per month. Meetings of the Elders may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the Elders may simultaneously hear each other. Unless the Council provides otherwise, meetings of the Council may be held immediately upon

notice. A quorum for meetings of the Elders is defined as at least one-half of the Lay Elders plus at least one-third of the Vocational Elders, except for matters on which only Lay Elders are entitled to vote in which case a majority of the Lay Elders shall constitute a quorum. The Council shall annually select its Chairman and Vice-Chairman from among its Lay Elders.

Section 5 THE DIACONATE

A. Composition, Term, and Calling. The Diaconate shall be composed of men and women (deacons and deaconesses) identified by the Council of Elders and/or the members of the congregation as having the requisite qualifications and the demonstrated willingness to serve. The number of the Diaconate shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of the members of the church (but, subject to qualification, should at no time be less than two). Each member of the Diaconate shall be nominated by the members of the church and examined by the Council of Elders. The Elders, if the candidate is acceptable, will put the Nominee's name forward to be called by the membership of the Church to an indefinite term. The call shall be conducted as provided for in **Article II, Sections 2 and 3** of these By-Laws.

B. Qualifications. The Diaconate and nominees for the Diaconate shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include I Timothy 3:8-12 and Romans 16:1.

C. Responsibilities. The Diaconate shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the Church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Their responsibilities may include:

1. Administering a fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress;
2. The greeting and welcoming ministries of the church;
3. Assisting in administering the ordinances of the Gospel;

4. Assisting at fellowship gatherings of the church;
5. Caring for and maintaining the Church properties;
6. Assist in administering the business affairs of the Church.
7. Deaconesses will carry out any duties for which they are biblically suited. This service may include unique ministries to women for which men may be unsuited. Excluded from the responsibilities of Deaconesses are any duties or responsibilities that would entail teaching biblical content to men or assuming authority over men in the church.

D. Organization. The Diaconate shall organize itself however it determines to be best to achieve the mission of the church. The Elders or the Diaconate may designate any specific Deacon/Deaconess or group of Deacons/Deaconesses to specialize in some particular Ministry function. Meetings of the Deacons or subcommittees thereof shall be held as needed to best fulfill the responsibilities of the Diaconate. The Diaconate shall appoint for itself, at least once annually, a Chairman. Deaconesses are not eligible for this position as it would potentially put them in a position of authority over men in the church. The Chairman of the Diaconate will typically act as the liaison between the Council of Elders and the Diaconate.

ARTICLE III Church Employees

In addition to Vocational Pastors and Ministers, the church may employ additional personnel. The moneys for such personnel must be approved by the congregation at a properly called business meeting. The Council of Elders shall be responsible for determining the duties of and hiring such personnel.

ARTICLE IV Church Finances

Section 1 IN GENERAL

No method of raising funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the Scriptural ideals of the Church. All funds donated for missions by the societies and organizations of the Church shall pass through the ***Church Finance Secretary*** and the ***Treasurer*** (or the individual(s) hired to do those duties) in order that due record may be made and credit

given to the Church. The Diaconate shall provide assistance to the Church Finance Secretary in accounting for funds donated.

Section 2 CONTRIBUTIONS

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the Church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in Scriptural giving, in accordance with II Corinthians 9:6-8.

Special offerings may be sought by the Church, or by any of its organizations, with the approval of the Council of Elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

Section 3 FINANCIAL PLANNING

The financial planning of the Church shall be carried out through the medium of annual budgets for carrying out the various programs of its work. Annual budgets shall be adopted by the Church upon recommendation of the Council of Elders or, if authorized by the Council, the Diaconate, or other committee. Matters involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the lay members of the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate this responsibility, provided such delegation is to the Diaconate or other lay members of the Church. All salaries and benefits will be approved by the congregation (although this approval may be in the form of a consolidated budget—as opposed to a separate approval of each pay and benefits package).

Section 4 ACCOUNTS

Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the Finance Secretary (or the employee filling that role) according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The Treasurer of the Church (or the employee filling that role) shall disburse these funds promptly according to the financial program of the Church as detailed in the Budgets or other authorized designations.

Section 5 AUTHORITY TO BIND THE CHURCH

Trustees appointed by congregational vote are the only individuals who have authority, in accordance with these **By-Laws**, the **Church Constitution**, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances. For the purposes of the corporation, these Trustees will serve as President and Secretary/Treasurer, respectively.

ARTICLE V Meetings

Section 1 FOR WORSHIP

Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated at least once a month or at such other times as the Council of Elders may determine. Other religious services may be appointed as the advancement of the work of the Church may require.

Section 2 FOR BUSINESS

A. The Annual Meeting. The annual meeting shall be held on a selected date during the last month or the first month of the calendar year for the purpose of calling officers and reviewing proposed budgets and other business. Officers called at the annual meeting shall assume their duties on the Monday following the date of the Annual Meeting. The calendar year and the fiscal year are one and the same.

B. Quarterly Meetings. Quarterly meetings of the Church shall, ideally, be held within the first month of each quarter of the calendar year. These dates may deviate by no more than 45 days from the first day of the first month of each quarter without a vote of the congregation. The tentative dates of these meetings shall be published in the annual report and made available at or immediately following the Annual Meeting.

C. Special Meetings. The Council of Elders or any ten members in good standing may call for a special meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit or by other notification, the particular object of such meeting being clearly stated in the notice. In the calling of special meetings for purposes where an interval after advance notice is required

by a provision in these By-Laws or according to law, such provisions shall be observed. Notice shall be given at least two weeks in advance for meetings on especially important matters not otherwise provided for.

D. Quorum. At least 20% of the active church members shall constitute a quorum at any ordinary meeting of the Church. At meetings dealing with particular matters stipulated in these **By-Laws**, the quorums prescribed shall apply.

E. Business Meetings. These shall be conducted by the Elders or their designee(s) in accordance with the Christian conduct found in the Bible. The unity of the body in a bond of peace shall be the goal of all business and discussion as we seek the Lord's wisdom and will in all things through the Word and prayer. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting

ARTICLE VI Organization of Members for Ministry

Members of this church shall have the liberty to participate in and organize themselves for ministry, provided that such participation and organization does not conflict with **Article II** of the Constitution. Any such organization must seek church sanction from the Council of Elders as an official ministry of Friendship Baptist Church, dba *Peach City Fellowship Church*. Such sanction shall be granted provided that **1)** the object, purpose, belief, and conduct of the organization and its members is consistent with **Article II** of the Constitution, and **2)** the primary officers of the organization are members of the church or other regular attendees of the church who have been approved under guidelines established by the Council of Elders. Sanction by the Council of Elders does not necessarily imply support of the organization by the church with personnel, finances, or facilities. Such support may be requested and provided or denied by approval of the Elder Council and/or congregational vote of the church when necessary.

ARTICLE VII Discipline

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to **(1)** Glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), **(2)** To edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy

5:20), and **(3)** To promote the spiritual growth of the offending believer through repentance and reconciliation (Galatians 6:1).

Members of this church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the Council of Elders shall be subject to church discipline, including dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18. Before such dismissal, however, **(1)** it shall be the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of the erring individual's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct such erring individual in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then **(2)** the warning member shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his or her repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent. The first and second warnings may occur with no specified time interval.

If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then **(3)** it shall be brought to the attention of the Council of Elders (or a duly appointed Committee of the Council, per **Article II, Section 1 (C)** of these Bylaws, at the sole discretion of the Council). If the Council of Elders (or a duly appointed Committee of the Council) determines—after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Timothy 5:19—that there is corroborating evidence that the erring individual has sinned or is continuing to sin, that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and that he or she has refused to repent, then the Elders shall inform the church and the congregation thereof at a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance. The process of calling the erring individual to repentance is at the discretion of the Council of Elders.

If the erring individual demonstrates repentance, then notice to that effect may be given at a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting. If, however, the erring individual does not repent in response to the church's collective call to repentance, then (4) he or she shall be publicly dismissed from the fellowship and/or membership of the church and the congregation thereof at a regular scheduled or specially called business meeting. If the erring individual, after such dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Council of Elders (or a duly appointed Committee of the Council at the sole discretion of the Board), then he or she shall be publicly restored to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of fellowship and/or membership at the discretion of the council of elders.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the elders in the exercise of their discretion may proceed directly to the third stage of church discipline, (i.e. the informing of the church and the congregation thereof at a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance) or to the fourth stage of church discipline, (i.e. the dismissal from the fellowship and/or membership of the church) when one or more of the following have occurred: **(i)** Where the transgression and the refusal to repent have been public, i.e. openly and to the offense of the whole Church (1 Cor. 5:1-5); **(ii)** Where the disciplined party has taught or otherwise disseminated doctrine deemed false or erroneous as determined by the Council of Elders, then chosen to disregard the direction and reproof of the elders (Romans 16:17); or **(iii)** Where the disciplined party has been warned twice to cease from factious and divisive conduct, as determined by the Council of Elders and has chosen to disregard that warning (Titus 3:10-11).

The members of this church, and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the third or fourth stages of church discipline (I Cor. 6). Members, who are under discipline by the church,

as defined in the previous paragraphs, forfeit and waive the right to resign from this church. Resignations from membership are possible only by members who are in good standing and who are not under any disciplinary action.

Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the elders (or a duly constituted subcommittee thereof), a member, non-member regular attendee, or other individual may be notified that he or she is not to be present upon church premises for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of others on church premises. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with church discipline of that person.

ARTICLE VIII Amendments

GENERAL

Amendments to these By-Laws may be introduced through written motion at any **quarterly meeting** but shall not be acted on until the following quarterly or annual meeting, at which time an affirmative vote of the majority of the membership of the Church or a two-thirds majority of those members present at the meeting and voting shall be required for acceptance; provided, however, that at least twenty percent (20%) of the membership of the Church be present at such meeting, and that notice of the proposed change or amendment be given from the pulpit on at least two Sundays and in writing to the resident membership in the interim period between the meetings.

Version 10.2023 Friendship Baptist Church dba Peach City Fellowship Church, Clanton, Alabama

“To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy– to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.” (Jude 24, 25).