

**BYLAWS OF
TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF MACON, GEORGIA, INCORPORATED**

The name of this organization is “Tabernacle Baptist Church of Macon, Georgia, Incorporated.” This organization exists by the authority of charter granted by the Superior Court of Bibb County, Georgia on November 14, 1907. This organization shall be governed by the Charter and these Bylaws. All previous bylaws adopted by the church are hereby repealed.

ARTICLE I

Cooperation with Other Groups

This church shall cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention, The Georgia Baptist Convention, and the Macon Baptist Association.

It shall be the intent and practice of Tabernacle Baptist Church to be fully represented at Annual Associational Meetings, Georgia Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Pastor is the spiritual leader of the Church and is an ex-officio member of all committees and organizations of the Church, but does not vote.

ARTICLE II

Purpose, Articles of Faith, and Church Covenant

A. **Purpose**

The purpose of Tabernacle Baptist Church shall be to bear witness to the lordship of Christ by:

1. **Worship**: Leading people into God’s presence in a worshipping community.
2. **Teaching**: Teaching to make God known through Jesus Christ and His message of reconciliation.
3. **Evangelism**: Providing such education, training, and opportunities for service as are necessary for realizing the fullness of Christian evangelism and discipleship.
4. **Ministry**: Seeking, through cooperation with others, to extend the cause of Christ throughout the earth, beginning with ministry to those around us, in the pattern of The Great Commission.
5. **Fellowship**: Offering Christian fellowship and concern in a caring community of agape love.

B. Articles of Faith

Our doctrinal statement is The Baptist Faith and Message, adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000. The following introductory statement gives the reason for a Statement of Faith.

“Baptists are a people who profess a living faith. This faith is rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ who is ‘the same yesterday, and today, and forever.’ ”

Therefore, the sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is Jesus Christ whose will is revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

A living faith must experience a growing understanding of truth and must be continually interpreted and related to the needs of each new generation. Throughout their history, Baptist bodies, both large and small, have issued statements of faith which compromise a consensus of their beliefs. Such statements have never been regarded as complete, infallible statements of faith, nor as official creeds carrying mandatory authority. Thus, this generation of Southern Baptists is in historic succession of intent and purpose as it endeavors to state for its time and theological climate those articles of the Christian faith which are most surely held among us.

Baptists emphasize the soul’s competency before God, freedom in religion, and the priesthood of the believer. However, this emphasis should not be interpreted to mean that there is an absence of certain definite Biblical doctrines that Baptists believe, cherish, and with which they have been and are now closely identified.

We think a statement of faith is a blessing because . . .

1. A statement of faith summarizes the essential Christian beliefs.
2. A statement of faith shows unity in Christ.

As members of a local church, we profess the essential tenets of the Christian faith as well as a couple of distinctives that differentiate our beliefs from other Disciples of Christ.

3. A statement of faith helps guard the church from error.

A statement of faith lays out our understanding of doctrine clearly and can be used as a tool to ensure solid teaching.

Because Tabernacle Baptist Church, its ministers and membership sincerely believes the Biblical definition and sanctity of marriage as being between one man and one woman and not between members of the same sex, these Bylaws are adopted in church conference and amends the current Bylaws of Tabernacle Baptist Church, so that;

- (a) This Amendment to Tabernacle Baptist Church Bylaws prohibit the church or any of its ministers from performing same-sex marriages and prohibits any of its members from entering into a same-sex marriage; and further,
- (b) The church facilities, to include all property and assets owned by Tabernacle Baptist Church shall not be used to condone and/or allow any activity condemned by the church’s doctrines; and further,
- (c) Premarital counseling by minister(s) of Tabernacle Baptist Church shall be required of all persons before any marriage is performed using property and or facilities of Tabernacle Baptist Church; and further,

Tabernacle Baptist Church shall adopt a written hiring policy that prohibits the church from hiring homosexuals, whether practicing or not, and from hiring individuals who do not believe or have the convictions that homosexuality is a grave sin before God.

C. Church Covenant

The Church Covenant is a statement of shared responsibilities of church members in relation to God and to each other.

“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 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 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, comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel 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 all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of, and use of, intoxicating drinks as a beverage; 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 feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay.

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

ARTICLE III

Officers and Their Duties

Section 1 - GENERAL STATEMENT---The term of office of all officers of the Church, except as hereinafter provided for, shall expire August 31st of each year, but, if for any reason the Church is late in holding the election of officers for the ensuing year, officers of the previous year shall continue to serve until their successors are elected.

Officers of the Church may be elected at any church conference, and shall be elected from the membership of the church and must continue to be a member of the Church in order to remain an officer.

Section 2 - CHURCH CLERK---It shall be the duty of the Church Clerk, in cooperation with the Clerk’s Committee and the Church Office, to keep accurate minutes of all business meetings of the Church in a book provided for that purpose; to keep a record of all members received into the Church and to issue church letters to other churches of Like Faith and Order.

Section 3 - CHURCH TREASURER---It shall be the duty of the Church Treasurer to account for all funds deposited in the bank by the Money Counting Committee and to disburse funds as authorized by the Finance Committee. All disbursements shall be made by check. All checks shall be signed by two of the following people: the Treasurer, the Chairman, or Vice-Chairman of the Finance Committee.

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to publish a financial report monthly and make it available to the membership. Otherwise, it shall be read at the regular business meeting of the Church. The Treasurer shall make his records available for examination by the Auditing Committee or the Finance Committee.

Section 4 - TRUSTEES---There shall be four Trustees elected from the church membership. Each new Trustee shall be elected for a term of two years. After serving a full term or unexpired term, a Trustee shall not be eligible for re-election for a period of one year after expiration of his term.

It shall be the duty of the Trustees to sign all legal papers, including deeds, mortgages, deeds to secure debt, promissory notes, contracts, and other legal instruments of every kind and character on behalf of the Church and in the name of the Church when specifically authorized to do so by the Church, and the manner in which they shall sign such papers shall be:

TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF MACON, GEORGIA, INC.

By: _____

TRUSTEES

All papers or instruments signed on behalf of the Church shall be signed by at least three Trustees.

Section 5 - The Church shall elect such other officers as it deems necessary for carrying on of its work and shall specify their duties.

ARTICLE IV

Membership

Section 1 - Qualifications

4.1.1 To qualify for membership in this church, a person

1. must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration,
2. who has been baptized in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration,
3. and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible.
4. Each member must sustain the doctrines of our church and not hold any settled convictions contrary to them, in accord with our Statement of Faith,
5. and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant.

4.1.2 The normal process for becoming a member is

1. an assessment of a person's qualification for membership in an interview with the pastor,
2. complete the prospective member's class,
3. **and a vote by the entire church on the basis of the person's profession of faith.**

Section 2 - Admission of Members

4.2 To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the pastor for admission and accepted by vote of at least 75% of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. At that point newly elected members shall relinquish their membership in other churches. Those applying for membership will be received as members by baptism or letter of transfer. A statement of faith may suffice in the event that a letter of transfer is not obtainable.

Section 3 - Duties and Privileges of Membership

4.3.1 In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those who are members of this congregation shall be entitled to lead in the ministries of the church such as department heads, ministry leaders, and teachers.

4.3.2 It is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters submitted to a vote.

Section 4 – On Member Care

4.4.1 Formative discipline is inherent in the preaching, teaching, and exercise of other ministries in the church.

(Formative discipline is the normal teaching, preaching, exhorting, encouraging, and admonishing that goes on within a healthy body of believers.) When formative discipline fails due to sin, the leadership of the church will take the necessary action to care for the person involved. This may include counseling, admonishment, encouragement, prayer, and exhortation. This will never be entered into lightly or quickly. This is always done for the good of the church and the good of the individual. The goal is remedial, that is, the goal is always the salvation and holiness and good of the one being cared for.

4.4.2 ¹⁵ "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (Mat 18:15-17 ESV)

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the care and direction of the leadership as addressed above, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and the example of scripture (1 Corinthians 5).

4.4.3 The purpose of such action should be:

1. For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual (Heb. 12:1-11; Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 6:1);
2. For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (1 Cor. 5:11; 1 Tim. 5:20; Heb. 10:24-25);
3. For the purity of the church as a whole (1 Cor. 5:6-7; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 21:2);
4. For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (Matt. 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:10-14); and
5. Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (Deut. 5:11; John 15:8; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 2:12).

4.4.4 After a demonstration of genuine repentance and proper counseling it is desirable in the case of public sin that a confession be made before the church, so that the church can freely extend forgiveness. Such public confession is especially necessary in the case of the pastor and deacons (1 Tim. 5:19-20; Gal. 2:11-14).

Section 5 - Termination of Membership

4.5 Termination of membership shall be recognized by the church following the death, transfer of membership, or voluntary resignation of any church member. Membership may also be terminated for failure to adhere to Article 4 section 4. This is to be done at the recommendation of the leadership of the church.

ARTICLE V

Church Staff

The Pastor will be administrative head of the Church and, as such, will direct the work of the Church Staff. He is the spiritual leader of the Church and is an ex-officio member of all committees and organizations of the Church, but does not vote.

1. In addition to the Pastor, the Church will employ a Minister of Music who will lead the congregation in the absence of the Pastor. He will serve according to the terms of his job description and these Bylaws.
2. Other staff members, i.e. Minister of Visitation, etc., shall be called as deemed necessary by the Church to adequately direct the programs of the Church.

ARTICLE VI

Committees, Their Election and Duties

A. Election of Church Nominating Committee

The first Sunday morning of March during the morning service, the Pastor shall give the members present an opportunity to make nominations for members of the Nominating Committee. Nominations shall be made by secret ballot.

Prior to the Sunday of the election, each church family shall receive a sample ballot by mail and a reminder of the responsibilities of the committee. Each church member will be encouraged to prayerfully consider nominees of high Christian character and faithful church support. The sample ballot shall contain lines for the names of six people.

On the Sunday of the nominations, each member present shall receive an official ballot on which he or she will write the names of not more than six people.

These ballots shall be given to a Screening Committee composed of the Pastor, Deacon Chairman, Deacon Vice Chairman, Secretary of the Deacons, and retiring Chairman of the Nominating Committee. The Pastor shall chair this special committee. All persons nominated shall be considered and examined as to Christian character, church support, and willingness to serve. The Screening Committee shall then seek out, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, six people who will be willing to serve as the Nominating Committee. These six people will be presented to the Church at any service for approval. The Nominating Committee shall serve for one year, or until their successors are elected, and will not be eligible for re-election for a period of two years after the expiration of their individual terms.

The Nominating Committee shall elect its own Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary.

The first responsibility of the Nominating Committee shall be to prayerfully enlist:

The Sunday School Director (recommended by Minister of Education)
 The Discipleship Training Director (recommended by Minister of Education)
 The WMU Director
 The Brotherhood Director

The Minister of Music, Minister of Education, Minister to Students, Minister to Children, and other ministerial staff shall lead in the enlistment process for all positions in their respective areas of ministry.

The Nominating Committee shall keep in mind that the church year begins September 1, and shall make every effort to recommend to the church the nominees for all elected positions as early as possible so as to give adequate time for preparation and training prior to the new church year.

B. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall be composed of nine (9) elected members and the Treasurer of the Church, who is a voting member of this Committee. Each elected member shall be elected in the same manner as other church officers and shall serve for a period of three years, unless elected to fill an unexpired term. After completing a full term or an unexpired term, a member of the Finance Committee will not be eligible for re-election for a period of one year.

The Finance Committee shall have control of all church funds and handle all financial matters of the church. They shall fix all salaries and compensation of all paid employees. The Finance Committee shall employ and dismiss all paid employees, not including the Pastor, Minister of Music, and any other full-time ministerial staff member called by the Church. Any paid employee of the Church wishing to resign shall submit his or her resignation to the Finance Committee in writing.

At the first meeting of the Finance Committee in September, it shall elect its Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. The Secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings of the Finance Committee in a book provided for that purpose. The Secretary of the Finance Committee shall not be the Church Treasurer.

It shall be the duty of the Finance Committee to prepare each year a budget setting forth the expected expenditures for the church financial year, January 1 through December 31. The budget shall be approved by the Serving and Supporting deacons and the Church. The budget shall be presented to the church for approval on the first Sunday in December.

C. Money Counting Committee

The Money Counting Committee shall be composed of a least eight (8) members elected annually as other officers of the church. Members of this Committee shall open all envelopes and receive all monies coming into the Church, shall count the money and prepare a deposit slip in triplicate, giving one copy to the Auditing Committee. After preparing the bank deposit, it shall be put into a locked bag provided for that purpose and carried by at least two members of the committee to the bank, if open. If the bank is not open, it shall be deposited in the night depository of said bank.

D. Auditing Committee

The Auditing Committee shall be composed of two members, neither of whom shall be the Treasurer of the Church nor a member of the Finance Committee. It shall be the duty of the Auditing Committee to examine the statement from the bank as soon as it is received each month and verify the deposits made in the bank to see that they agree with duplicate deposit slips furnished the Auditing Committee by the Money Counting Committee. Any difference should be reported to the Finance Committee.

E. Pastor Selection Committee

This committee shall be composed of the Chairman of Deacons, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, The Sunday School Director, The Director of the Woman's Missionary Union, the Discipleship Training Director, the Director of Brotherhood, and the Chairman of the Nominating Committee.

The Chairman of Deacons shall act as Chairman of the Pastor Selection Committee, and the Sunday School Director shall act as Vice-Chairman.

In case of a vacancy in the pulpit, the Pastor Selection Committee shall recommend a new pastor to the **Serving** and Supporting Deacons who will, if they agree, recommend him to the Church.

F. Other Committees

The Church shall elect any other committees it shall deem necessary in carrying on its work. The term of office and the manner of election of such other committees shall be the same as in the case of the regular committees mentioned in these Bylaws.

ARTICLE VII

Church Council

A Church Council shall be established and maintained to assist the Church in planning, coordinating and evaluating church programs. The Church Council is responsible to the congregation. It serves as an advisory group to the congregation in making reports and recommendations to the Church within the scope of its assigned duties.

A. Duties

1. Draft church objectives and goals for recommendation to the congregation.
2. Develop and recommend to the congregation action plans for reaching church goals.
3. Review and coordinate program plans and actions.
4. Prepare recommendations for the congregation regarding the use of resources in terms of the needs of church programs in working to achieve church objectives and goals.
5. Provide for adequate communication among church officers, organizations and committees.
6. Evaluate program achievements in terms of church objectives and goals and to report evaluations and recommendations to the Church.

B. Membership

Membership of the Church Council shall include the Pastor and other Church Ministerial Staff, Educational Staff, the leader of each of the church program organizations (Sunday School, Discipleship Training, Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood), the Chairman of Deacons, the Church Treasurer, the Church Clerk, and such persons as the church may designate from time to time. Chairpersons of the Church Committees shall be ex-officio members of the Church Council and are expected to attend meetings of the Council when matters relating to the work of their committees are to be discussed.

C. Meetings

The Church Council should have regular meetings and called meetings as required. All meetings of the Council shall be open to members of the congregation. The Pastor or his designee shall chair meetings of the Council. Members of the Church Council will be responsible for reporting council actions to their respective programs and organizations before recommendations for church action are presented by the Council.

ARTICLE VIII

Deacons

A. Number of Deacons and Term of Office

The Church will elect as many Serving Deacons as are needed to help carry on ministry and meet the needs of the Church. All of our deacons are considered Supporting deacons. As often as is necessary, the Pastor with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Deacons will evaluate the needs of the Church and the effectiveness of the deacon ministry, and will make recommendations to the Church if the number of Serving deacons needs to be changed. Upon such recommendation, a change in the number can be made at any regular church conference or conference called for that purpose. If the number is increased, the increase will be a number divisible by three to harmonize with the three-year rotation plan. One third of the positions added will be for three years, one third for two years and one third for one year. The increase will be effective the following September 1, to coincide with new Serving deacons taking office. If the number is increased, the following steps will be taken in order to coordinate with the three-year rotation plan. (Another method may be followed so long as it is compatible with the three-year rotation plan.)

1. Determination will be made as to the number of three-year, two-year, and one-year terms. (Example: If we have seven vacancies due to rotation plus six added positions, we would fill nine three-year terms, two terms of two years, and two terms of one year.)
2. The names of all men to serve, the number of which will be the number required to replace rotating deacons plus the new positions added, will be placed in a common container.
3. A first drawing will be made to fill the three-year terms. Deacons to be ordained will automatically serve three-year terms. Consequently, the church will not ordain more deacons than there are three-year terms to fill. Successive drawings will be made to fill the two-year and one-year terms.

If the number of Serving Deacons is decreased, the reduction will be achieved by not replacing positions vacated through rotation. A reduction plan compatible with the three-year rotation will be followed.

The term of office for Serving Deacons shall be for three years, except when the number is increased as explained above, and when an unexpired term is filled. After serving a three-year term, the deacon must remain off the Serving body for at least one year. Any period of service or portion of a three-year term which is for one year or more shall be considered and treated as a full term.

B. Method of Election

Any male member of Tabernacle Baptist Church, who is at least twenty-one (21) years of age and meets the qualifications as stated in Section D, shall be eligible for election as a Serving deacon. Included are those who are eligible for ordination by this Church and those who have been ordained by other Baptist churches of Like Faith and Order. Any man elected as a Serving deacon must have been a member of Tabernacle Baptist Church for at least one year.

A committee composed of the Pastor, Chairman, and Vice-Chairman of Deacons and two other persons shall serve as a Deacon Nominating Committee. The two other persons shall be nominated by the pastor in consultation with the Chairman of Deacons and approved by the Serving deacons. This committee is deliberately small because of sensitive issues often dealt with in deacon election. This committee will be activated before April 1, and serve until the following September 1. If vacancies occur in the Serving body during the church year, the committee will be activated then.

During the month of April and through the second Sunday of May, any church member may submit to the Deacon Nominating Committee the name or names of men they wish to be considered as Serving deacons. On the last Sunday of May the membership will be given a special opportunity to make recommendations. On that day, at an opportune time at the morning service, the members gathered will be given a recommendation form (developed in the church office) on which they may make recommendations. ALL recommendations must be in writing and signed by the member making the recommendation. Recommendations may also be given directly to the committee members or mailed to the church to the attention of the committee. A record of recommendations will be kept for use in filling vacancies. The church will be advised when the recommendation process has begun and who the committee members are.

After the second Sunday in May, the Deacon Nominating Committee will begin prayerful consideration of all men nominated. The committee may also consider other men of the church who have demonstrated a servant spirit and a Spirit-filled life. Seeking the leadership of the Lord, the committee shall select the number of men needed to fill the vacancies in the Serving body. The selection process shall include a personal visit and interview with the man being considered and his wife. During the interview, the prospective deacon shall be questioned as to his willingness for service, and the qualifications of a deacon will be discussed.

Not later than the last Sunday of July, the committee shall submit to the church for election the names of men to fill the vacancies in the Serving body. Notice of this election and the names of the men nominated will be given to the church one week in advance. Upon their election, deacons will take office on September 1.

C. Vacancies

If for any reason a Serving deacon cannot fulfill his term of service, he shall submit his resignation in writing to the Chairman of Deacons for notification to the church. When such notification is accepted by the church, that action shall terminate that tenure of service and shall be considered final. In cases where a position is vacated and a written resignation cannot be obtained, the Chairman of Deacons shall notify the church. Church acceptance of this notification declares the position vacant and final.

The Deacon Nominating Committee shall recommend to the church men to fill vacancies. The committee will refer to the record of recommendations in Item B and will follow the same plan of prayer, visits, and interviews as in seeking a deacon to serve a full term.

D. Minimum Standard for Service at Tabernacle Baptist Church

Before a person is selected as a deacon, the following should be considered:

1. A deacon must accept the Bible as the authority for personal conduct and church policy.
2. A deacon must meet the qualifications as set forth in I Timothy, Chapter 3.
3. A deacon must understand his position to be one of "Ministering Servant."
4. A deacon must feel that the Baptist faith is the best expression of his Christian faith.
5. A deacon, after expressing his personal views and finding himself in the minority, must be willing to cooperate with the decision of the majority.
6. A deacon must believe the teaching of I Corinthians 3:16-17, that his body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and, as such, must be holy (set apart) for the service of god. This is to commit heart, soul, mind, and strength to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
7. A deacon must tithe at least one-tenth of his total income to the support of Tabernacle Baptist Church.
8. A deacon will be expected to support the total church program, to include his attendance in Sunday School, Discipleship Training, worship services, prayer meeting, and Deacons' meetings.
9. A deacon must agree to keep confidential the deliberations of the Deacons' meetings for the best interest of the church.
10. A prospective deacon must have been a member of Tabernacle Baptist Church for at least one year prior to the election.

E. Duties of the Deacons

1. Duties of the Serving Deacons

The Serving deacons shall cooperate with and assist the Pastor in the administration of all the interests of the church; they shall devote themselves to the spiritual welfare of the church members and to their enlistment in active church service; they shall take active leadership in matters related to The Lord's Supper and Baptism; they shall meet at least once per month for the prayerful consideration of the state of the Church and church business, and for the general welfare of the congregation; they shall give general counsel upon request to the various church committees; they shall make such recommendations to the Church in conference as seems to them expedient. All matters of vital importance to the total church program and welfare shall be referred to the Church in conference for the final decision.

2. Total Deacon Deliberations

At various times in the course of the church year, decisions of greater proportion must be made by the congregation. To assure maximum input into the decision and maximum communication throughout the membership, at the following points, all ordained Serving and Supporting deacons in Tabernacle will be invited to participate in the meetings where the decisions will be made. Each deacon attending will be allowed full discussion privileges plus one vote in the process. Serving deacons will be expected to attend meetings. The quorum requirements for Serving Deacons must be met for these deliberations to be official. Advance notice will be given of such meetings, regular or called, and the nature of the business will be announced.

The topics permitting such expanded deacon attention include:

- (a) Consideration of the annual Ministry Action Budget
- (b) The purchase of any real estate property
- (c) Any major capital expenditure not covered by the budget
- (d) Any matter related to full-time staff members
- (e) Any other matter deemed to be of such importance that a majority of the Serving Deacons may wish to broaden the base of the decision.

This larger group of Serving and Supporting Deacons will conform to the authority patterns of the deacon officers and pastor.

F. Meetings

- 1. The regular meetings of the deacons shall be held as determined by them.
- 2. A quorum for Serving Deacons shall consist of a simple majority.
- 3. Called meetings may be announced for the Serving deacons at any time upon reasonable notice by the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman and/or Pastor. A quorum for special meetings will be a simple majority. The issue of business must be announced prior to the meeting.

G. Election of Officers

The active deacons shall elect at their first regular meeting of each church year (in September), a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary/Treasurer to serve during the ensuing church year.

H. Any member of the Church desiring to appear before the Serving deacons on church business may do so by making his request known to the Chairman in writing prior to any regular or called meeting of the Serving deacons. Any member of the Church may attend any meeting of the Serving Deacons as a visitor.

I. The Serving deacons, by majority of those present, may hold a “closed” meeting, in which case only deacons may attend. Visiting members may not enter into discussions until and unless recognized by the presiding officer. The presiding officer, in the interest of time, may limit the participation by such visitors.

ARTICLE IX

Licensing and Ordination

A. Licensing

When a church member feels led to respond to God's call to preach the Gospel, he may desire to be licensed to the Gospel Ministry by the Church. If so, that person shall approach the Pastor with his request. The Pastor shall advise the deacons, and a procedure for inquiry will be established. The procedure will include an opportunity to talk with the individual, hear his testimony, examine his doctrine and church relationship and pray. Upon satisfactory completion of this process, the deacons shall recommend to the Church in conference that the person be licensed. When the Church so votes, the record will be noted in the church minutes, and a suitable certificate of license shall be presented to the candidate in a subsequent worship service.

This church action shall constitute legal authorization to the candidate to freely exercise his gifts of preaching under the watchcare of the church.

B. Ordination

1. Of Ministers: Ordination to the Gospel Ministry is an event that culminates a process. The event is the investing of an individual with the functions and office of ministry. The process shall be as follows:

A candidate's ordination may be called for

- (a) By another congregation of Like Faith and Order in relation to the candidate's call to service in that congregation; or
- (b) By the Candidate himself as he embarks upon a specific and legitimate phase of his own ministry.

The first communication of a request for ordination shall be given to the Pastor. The Pastor shall then advise the deacons and work with them in the ordination procedure. The Pastor will lead in a process of preliminary investigation to determine the readiness of the candidate to proceed with ordination. Once the Pastor and deacons are satisfied that all is in order, the deacons shall recommend to the Church in conference that ordination be pursued.

When the Church so votes, steps will be taken to assemble either a Presbytery, composed solely of ordained ministers, or an Ordaining Council, composed of ordained ministers and laymen. This group shall meet at a specified time for the purpose of examining and instructing the candidate in matters of salvation, doctrine, church polity, and faith.

Upon the satisfactory completion of the examining body, the Clerk of the Body shall recommend that the church proceed with ordination.

The ordination service will be a duly announced service of worship in which the candidate will give testimony of his salvation and call to service, a sermon will be preached to the congregation, a charge given to the candidate, appropriate music will be presented, the ordination prayer will be prayed, and all ordained persons present will participate in the laying on of hands. Afterward, the candidate shall be presented a Bible, a Certificate of Ordination, and the right hand of Christian fellowship by all persons present.

Ordination credentials are given by the Church in consistent relationship with the Articles of Faith of the Church. These credentials are only valid within the framework of Gospel ministry as performed by New Testament congregations of Like Faith and Order.

2. Of Deacons

Ordination to the Deacon Ministry is an event that culminates a process. The event is the setting apart of an individual to the servant ministry of the New Testament office of deacon.

A candidate's ordination shall be called for by the Church upon his election to serve as a Serving deacon. Once elected, the process leading to ordination shall include:

- (a) A period of time in which the deacon-elect will receive personal instruction on the Biblical material relating to that office, as well as a time of prayer, personal cleansing, and spiritual preparation.
- (b) A meeting of the Ordaining Council, to include ministers and deacons, for the purpose of examination and further instruction, and a
- (c) A Service of Ordination. This shall be a duly announced worship service to include hymns, prayers, the Candidate's testimony, charges to the Candidate and the Church, the ordination prayer, and the laying on of hands by all ordained persons present.

ARTICLE X

Meetings of the Church

A. Worship Services

Primary meetings of the Church are gatherings for worship. Regular worship services will be maintained on Sunday mornings and evenings. Regular prayer and praise meetings will be maintained on Wednesday evenings.

The Church will conduct other meetings for worship, prayer, praise, instruction, ministry and evangelism as determined by the congregation or the pastor.

When the Church meets for worship, no other scheduled meetings, official or unofficial, shall take place at the church, in order to give rightful priority to worship. For any meetings of church members to be considered official, the meeting must take place on church property or be scheduled on the church calendar.

B. Organizational Meetings

Regular meeting times of the organizations shall be as approved by the Church. Each organization and service program is, however, encouraged to be flexible in scheduling activities so as to be most accessible to potential participants.

ARTICLE XI

Church Conference or Business Meeting

A. Regular Conference

The regular conference or business meeting of the church membership shall be Wednesday night after the second Sunday of October, January, April, and July. This meeting date may be changed by a majority vote of members present at any regular conference meeting, but the new meeting date selected must be at least three weeks from the meeting date at which such change is voted.

The Church may be called into special conference at any regular Sunday morning or Sunday evening service or any regular Wednesday evening service by the Pastor or Chairman of Deacons.

All motions, resolutions, or other actions pertaining to any business matter brought up or handled at any conference or business meeting of the church membership must receive a majority vote of those members present in order to be passed or to represent the action of the Church.

MODERATOR OR PRESIDING OFFICER: At all business meetings of the Church, the Moderator shall be the Pastor. In case the Pastor is absent or disqualifies himself, or if the Church is without a Pastor, then the Chairman of Deacons shall act as Moderator. If both the Pastor and Chairman of Deacons are absent or if both disqualify themselves, then the members present may elect a temporary Moderator.

The Moderator may, at his discretion, refer to the Serving deacons any matter he considers controversial. Such a matter cannot then be brought upon the floor of any church conference until the Serving deacons have had an opportunity to discuss the matter at their next meeting. After the next regular meeting of the Serving deacons, whether or not the Serving deacons make any recommendation regarding the matter at issue shall be brought before the church for consideration and/or vote.

B. Called Business Meetings

Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor or Chairman of Deacons by announcement at least one week prior to the date set for the same and notice published for the membership giving items to be considered. Only published items can be voted upon at such meetings.

ARTICLE XII

Quorum

The members of the Church present at any regular business meeting of the church or special meeting, duly called and announced, shall constitute a quorum of the Corporation.

ARTICLE XIII

Ordinances

In accordance with its Statement of Faith, Tabernacle Baptist Church will observe two ordinances, Baptism and The Lord's Supper.

- A. Baptism shall be observed as a meaningful part of the church's worship service as soon after the candidate's acceptance for membership as can be reasonably scheduled. While the Pastor will normally baptize candidates, other ordained ministers may assist with or baptize candidates as determined by the Pastor or church body.
- B. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly for the entire membership and at such other times as may be fitting for its observance. All persons who have accepted Christ as Saviour and who have publicly professed their faith in Him through believer's baptism and have membership in a New Testament Church will be invited to partake of The Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE XIV

Rules of Order

At all meetings of this church membership and at all meetings of the deacons and at all meetings of any of the other organizations or committees of this church, Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall apply and govern except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws.

ARTICLE XV

Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of those voting, there being a quorum present as heretofore provided, at any regular or duly called business meeting of the Church, provided that notice of any proposed amendment and the form of the amendment have been published and given to the members two weeks prior to the meeting at which said proposed amendment is to be presented. Final action taken on amendments shall be published and distributed to the membership.

ARTICLE XVI

Interpretation

Any questions concerning interpretation of intent or purpose of any portion of these Bylaws will be referred to the deacons for clarification.

ARTICLE XVII

Effective Date

The foregoing Church Bylaws, upon adoption by the Church in regular or called conference at which a quorum is present, shall become effective immediately, and shall supersede any other set of Bylaws which has been previously adopted.

**BYLAWS OF
TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH**

OFFICIALLY ADOPTED IN CONFERENCE BY UNANIMOUS VOTE

REVISED September 21, 2015