



CONSTITUTION  
AND  
BY-LAWS

PARMA HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH

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**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**  
**OF**  
**PARMA HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**Amended 12/6/2015**

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## PREAMBLE

We, the members of Parma Heights Baptist Church, do ordain and establish the following constitution to which we voluntarily submit.

We embrace wholeheartedly the following articles of faith:

1. The Bible was written by holy men of God; the Old and New Testaments were verbally inspired and inerrant in the original writing and should be accepted in all doctrine. We further believe that the Bible is the supreme standard for all human conduct, creeds, and opinions (II Peter 1:19-21; II Timothy 3:16, 17).
2. The Godhead exists in three equal persons as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that these three are one God, having the same nature, attributes, and perfection, each executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption and plan of God (John 14:26; John 15:26).
3. Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man (Luke 1:35).
4. God created man in His image; man sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also spiritual death which is separation from God; all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and, in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word, and deed (Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12; Genesis 1:26,27). God wonderfully and immutably created each person male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person (Genesis 1:27, Deuteronomy 22:5).
5. The Lord Jesus Christ died for our sin as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; on the basis of His shed blood, we are justified by faith apart from human merit (II Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:8,9) and that our salvation is sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of His coming. (Ephesians 1:13,14; Ephesians 4:30)
6. The Lord Jesus Christ came forth from the grave, was bodily resurrected, ascended into heaven, and in His present work is there for us as High Priest and Advocate (John 20:27; Acts 2:29-32; Hebrews 5:7-10, Hebrews 7:23-26; I John 2:1,2).
7. The "Blessed Hope" set before us is the personal, premillennial, and imminent return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 19, 20).
8. The bodily resurrection of man will bring everlasting blessedness to the righteous and everlasting damnation to those who have not been "born again" (John 3:7; John 5:28, 29; Matthew 25:46; I Corinthians 15).

9. Satan and the other evil beings are real personalities in rebellion against God, and are seeking to deceive all men (Matthew 4:10; Isaiah 14:12-14; Revelation 12:9).
10. The ordinances of the Church are: (1) water baptism (immersion) for believers (Acts 8:36-38; Acts 10:47, 48; Colossians 2:12; Matthew 28:19) and (2) the Lord's Supper for those walking in fellowship with Christ (I Corinthians 11:23-29).
11. Believers are to pattern their living after the life and teachings of Christ, and faithfully witness to all men (II Corinthians 6:14-18; Ezekiel 33:7-9).
12. We believe that the term marriage has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are exclusively married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Genesis 2:18-25, Exodus 20:14, 17, 22:19, Leviticus 18:22-23, 20:13, 15-16, Matthew 19:4-6, 9, Romans 1:18-31, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 15-20, 7:2-5, 1 Timothy 1:8-11, Hebrews 13:4, Jude 7).

# **CONSTITUTION**

## **ARTICLE I - NAME**

The name of this church shall be Parma Heights Baptist Church, Parma Heights, Ohio.

## **ARTICLE II - STATEMENT OF MISSION**

Our mission is to help people find and follow Jesus Christ.

## **ARTICLE III - AFFILIATION AND GOVERNMENT**

Parma Heights Baptist Church shall be democratic and autonomous. However, it shall maintain cooperation with and support of the North American Baptist Conference. It also recognizes that there are other churches and organizations which are a part of the body of Christ and may cooperate with them in matters with which it is in agreement.

We believe in the congregational form of church government. Hence, the government of Parma Heights Baptist Church shall be vested in the body of members who compose it. Specifically, the membership of this church shall have the sole authority to govern in the following areas as described in this constitution:

1. Calling of the Senior Pastor and all full time Pastoral Staff
2. Affirmation by vote of the Deacon leadership
3. The purchase or sale of any land or property
4. Approval of the church budget and any non-budgeted increases
5. Major capital projects
6. Constitutional revisions

All other areas of authority and administration will be the responsibility of the Board of Deacons; however, the day-to-day administration of the church shall be the responsibility of the Church Administrator with the assistance of the Senior Pastor and other church staff.

## **ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP - QUALIFICATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

Any person who confesses Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, followed by baptism by immersion, who subscribes to the Articles of Faith in the Preamble and this constitution, and is willing to enter into covenant with this church to help accomplish our mission and will strive to reflect our Core Values, may be eligible for membership after completing the necessary admissions procedures by approval of the Deacons.

Members of this congregation commit themselves by the aid of the Holy Spirit . . .

1. To be faithful in all scriptural responsibilities essential to the Christian life in our daily walk:
  - a. To walk together in Christian love (John 15:12).
  - b. To exercise Christian care and concern for one another (Col. 3:12-14).
  - c. To pray for one another, sharing burdens, sorrows, and joys (Eph. 4:2; Gal. 6:2; Jas. 5:16).
  - d. To be thoughtful and courteous to one another, to be slow to take offense, and to be quick to forgive and to seek forgiveness (Eph. 4:31-32; Rom. 12:15-19).
  - e. To guard the spiritual and scriptural purity, peace, and advancement of the church, and to promote a positive witness to the saving grace of God (I Tim. 5:22, 6:20,21; II Tim. 2:22-26).
  - f. To live our lives in such a way as not to bring discredit, disgrace or dishonor to our faith or our Lord, striving to live our lives before a watching world in a manner that is above reproach. (Col. 3:5-14, Jas. 1:22-25, I Thess. 5:11-22).
  - g. To bring up such children as may be entrusted to our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Prov. 22:6).
  - h. Not to be involved in secret orders (Jn. 18:20, II Cor. 4:2).
2. To faithfully attend services and scheduled business meetings (Heb. 10:25).
3. To consistently support this ministry with tithes and love gifts (Mal. 3:10, II Cor. 9:6-7).
4. To share our time, talents and spiritual gifts for the edification of the body and the fulfillment of our mission (Rom. 12:6-8).
5. To share our faith with others that we may lead them to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 1:8; I Pet. 3:15).
6. To live within the confines of biblical marriage and biblical human sexuality. The term marriage has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. To behave as God intends, sexual intimacy is to occur only between a man and a woman who are exclusively married to each other. To do what God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between one man and one woman. To refrain from any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) which is sinful and offensive to God. (Gen. 2:18-25, Ex. 20:14, 17, 22:19, Lev. 18:22-23, 20:13, 15-16, Matt. 19:4-6, 9, Rom. 1:18-31, 1 Cor. 6:9-10, 15-20, 7:2-5, 1 Tim. 1:8-11, Heb. 13:4, Jude 7).

7. To live as the gender you were born into, God wonderfully and immutably created each person male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. (Gen 1:27, Deut. 22:5)
8. To be faithful in following Parma Heights Baptist Church's Statement of Faith and standards of conduct.
9. To submit to the authority of the pastoral and deacon leadership of PHBC in matters of church discipline.

Members of this church shall have no property rights and shall not be entitled to any interest in its assets. In the event of dissolution of this corporation, the real and personal property assets shall be conveyed to the North American Baptist Conference for use within the Great Lakes Association.

## **ARTICLE V - BOARD OF DEACONS**

The congregation shall affirm by vote a Board of no less than ten Deacons (also referred to as Deacons or Board) who, with the Senior Pastor and Pastoral Staff, will give spiritual guidance and leadership to the congregation.

### Section 1 - General Provisions

Each Deacon will be affirmed to a term of three years, beginning July 1, with approximately one-third of the Deacons affirmed each year. After serving a full term, a deacon may be re-nominated by the Nominating Committee and re-affirmed by the congregation for a second term for a maximum of six years. For Deacons serving two consecutive terms, one year must elapse before being eligible for another term. The Board shall meet on a regular basis.

The spiritual qualifications for the Deacons shall be as set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6:3, and Titus 1:5-9, and they shall have exemplified a spirit of servanthood. Those affirmed shall be members of the church in good standing for at least three years; be at least 30 years of age with evidence of sound marital and family relationships; have been consistent financial supporters of this ministry; and who teach or hold no doctrine contrary to the Articles of Faith as stated in the Preamble. They shall have demonstrated a faithful commitment to this church and faithful service in other ministries of this church.

### Section 2 - Duties and Responsibilities of All Deacons

#### A. Shepherding



- 1) Praying for God's guidance and direction for the church, discerning God's will.
- 2) Leading and giving direction to the Body (leading the flock), modeling Christ-like behavior; putting teaching into practice, setting an example.
- 3) Preaching/teaching the Word of God to the Body (feeding the flock).
- 4) Caring for the Body (carry the lambs, seek those who have strayed), praying for, encouraging, and visiting those with needs.
- 5) Protecting the Body (protecting the flock from savage wolves);
- 6) Protecting from false teaching (maintaining doctrinal purity),
- 7) Dealing with sin and the discipline of unruly members.

B. Overseeing (as a father manages/cares for his family, so the Deacons manage and care for the church)

- 1) Ensuring that PHBC's mission and vision is supported and carried out by the ministries and ministry teams of the church.
- 2) Giving oversight and direction to the Finance Committee to fund our mission.

C. As Shepherds, they shall:

- 1) Jointly, with the Senior Pastor, give biblical direction and guidance to the congregation.
- 2) Devote time to prayer and study, and earnestly seek to discern the Holy Spirit's leading for the congregation.
- 3) Be responsive to the needs of the body and be responsible for maintaining harmony, unity, and encouragement in the faith.
- 4) Confirm that the teaching of God's Word is accurate and applicable.
- 5) Institute discipline when required to maintain a sound, healthy, spiritual body. On occasion, members of the Church may conduct themselves in a manner contrary to biblical standards of conduct and the PHBC Statement of Faith. It shall be a high priority for the Church to restore such persons into conformity with fellowship. If biblical discipline is necessary, the Pastors or Deacon Board have the authority to place individual(s) under church discipline (including termination of membership), in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17 and Gal. 6:1 (See Article XII, Section 2-B).

D. As Overseers, they shall

- 1) Annually approve formation or continuation of various Ministry Teams that work to accomplish our Mission and reflect our Core Values.
- 2) Annually approve the members on the Ministry Teams.  
(Members of short-term committees organized or appointed for

- specific projects (e.g., planning a specific event) for specified periods of time do not require Deacon approval.)
- 3) Give guidance to and work with the various Ministry Teams towards accomplishing our mission and reflecting our Core Values. It may overrule any decision of a Ministry Team or committee if it is in the best interest of the spiritual well-being of the church body. The chairman may assign a Deacon to any of the Ministry Teams, or committees for an annual term to attend meetings, give guidance and report their progress to the Board.
  - 4) Approve and monitor the annual goals of the Ministry Teams.
  - 5) Approve the annual budget developed by the Finance Committee.
  - 6) Approve church-wide or significant policies and procedures.
  - 7) Select a search committee to fill vacancies for additional persons as required for the Pastoral Staff and Church Administrator (Article XII, Section 6).
  - 8) Make recommendations to the congregation on (1) buying or selling real property, (2) calling full- time Pastoral Staff (3) authorizing expenditures above or in addition to the annual budget and (4) any other business that they deem appropriate.
  - 9) Administer the Benevolent Fund.
  - 10) Interview candidates for membership and oversee the maintenance of an active membership roll.
  - 11) Appoint task forces for special projects for specific periods of time.
  - 12) Be responsible for administration of the ordinance of communion.
  - 13) Appoint Deaconesses for an annual term as needed to:
    - a. Assist with communion and baptism.
    - b. Coordinate lunches for members who have lost immediate family members.
    - c. Extend hospitality to official guests.
    - d. Assist Deacons on membership interviews.
    - e. Assist Deacons where appropriate.
  - 14) Act as the corporate officers of this corporation (See Article XII, Section 4).
  - 15) Work with Pastoral Staff to supply the pulpit during an extended absence of the Senior Pastor.
  - 16) Approve the times for corporate worship services.
  - 17) The Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Administrative Deacons whose terms will begin on July 1, will be selected from its members.
  - 18) Be responsible for the consistent application and interpretation of this constitution.
  - 19) Establish and execute Admissions Procedures for church membership.

## E. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE DEACONS

A minimum of two Deacons from within the Deacon Board, gifted in administration, will oversee administration, personnel and property matters. Their term will begin on July 1st with new members affirmed as needed. The Administrative Deacons are directly accountable to the Deacon Chairman and/or Vice Chairman.

The Administrative Deacons shall:

- 1) Oversee the functions and activities of the Church Administrator. Perform annual reviews of the Senior Pastor jointly with the Deacon Chair and/or Vice Chair during the third quarter of the calendar year.
- 2) Perform or oversee annual reviews of the Church Administrator, and jointly review all Pastoral Staff with the Senior Pastor during the third quarter of the calendar year.
- 3) Determine, with the approval of the Deacon Chairman and Vice Chairman, Pastoral Staff and Administrative Staff salaries, benefits and policy recommendations and annually review all salaries and benefits as to their equitability.
- 4) Approve all salaries, benefits and policy recommendations and review all salaries and benefits of employed personnel as to their equitability.
- 5) Recommend to the Deacons additional persons required for the Pastoral Staff.
- 6) Approve and oversee the filling of vacancies or adding additional personnel for all positions.
- 7) Recommend to the Deacon Board the employment of Pastoral Staff to fill vacancies on an interim basis for a specified period of time.
- 8) Support the Senior Pastor and Church Administrator in overseeing church administration.
- 9) The Administrative Deacons shall appoint an audit committee (see ARTICLE IX - Section 1).
- 10) The Administrative Deacons shall be accountable to the Chair of the Deacon Board and shall report their administrative activities at regularly scheduled Deacon Board meetings.

### Section 3 - Termination

A Deacon may be terminated from office for any of the following reasons:

- A. He has missed two regularly scheduled meetings within a six-month period without good cause as determined by the Board.

- B. He has submitted his resignation in writing.
- C. His conduct impairs his ability to render responsible leadership. Termination in such instance will require a meeting of the Deacon Board with an 80% quorum and a seventy-five percent majority vote.

## **ARTICLE VI - SENIOR PASTOR AND PASTORAL STAFF**

The Senior Pastor shall be an ordained minister of the North American Baptist Conference or properly credentialed by the same upon his call and meet the spiritual qualifications of I Tim. 3:1-7 and Acts 6:3. As the under shepherd, he shall have in his charge the spiritual welfare of the congregation, working in harmony with the Deacons and Pastoral Staff to cast vision and to give guidance and direction to the congregation in accomplishing the church mission. He shall have primary preaching responsibilities as well as oversee baptism and communion. The Senior Pastor shall be responsible for coordinating and directing the activities of the Pastoral Staff. The Senior Pastor, along with the Administrative Deacons, will perform the annual reviews of Pastoral Staff members during the third quarter of the calendar year.

The Senior Pastor shall be accountable to the Deacons and be an ex-officio member of the Deacon Board. His term of office shall be for an indefinite period of time.

Pastoral Staff shall be called to maintain effective leadership in equipping the members of the congregation for ministry. The Senior Pastor and Deacons will assess the needs for adequate staff and recommend to the congregation such persons and responsibilities required to meet those needs. Each staff member shall have met the qualifications established by the Deacons and shall serve under the direction of the Senior Pastor.

Each Pastoral Staff member shall be accountable for managing the budget of their respective areas of ministry.

## **ARTICLE VII - MINISTRIES**

Under the guidance of the Deacon Board, various Ministry Teams shall implement the church's mission and program. Each year, existing Ministry Teams and their members must be re-approved by the Deacon Board. As needed and pending an available chairperson and willing workers, new Ministry Teams may be established by approval of the Deacon Board. Approval of Ministry Teams and membership will ideally occur during the months of June-August prior to the start of the programmatic year in September. Ministry Team Chairs and members must be members of the church. Pastoral Staff may serve as the Ministry Team Chair. In the event

that a Ministry Team Chair becomes vacant, the Senior Pastor and the Deacon Board will be responsible for finding a temporary or permanent leader for that Team.

- A. Each Ministry Team shall set annual goals, plans and strategies toward accomplishing the church's mission. All Ministry Team annual goals must be presented to and approved by the Deacon Board and have a clearly defined purpose that is directly related to our Mission, Foundation and Core Values.
- B. The Chairperson shall be charged with the task of identifying willing and gifted workers for their team and helping to equip their team to accomplish the goals, plans and strategies of their Ministry Team.
- C. The Chairperson shall be responsible to manage any budget within his/her ministry.

### **ARTICLE VIII - CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**

The Christian School Board (a.k.a. School Board) shall consist of a chairperson and at least five additional members affirmed by vote of the congregation for a term of three years, beginning July 1. The chairperson shall possess a heart for Christian Education and be able to work in tandem with the Minister of Christian Schools. One board member shall be selected with adequate financial training or experience so as to oversee the financial management of all funds. All members of the School Board must be members of the church. After serving a full 3-year term, a School Board member may be re-nominated by the Nominating Committee and re-affirmed by the congregation for an additional 3-year term.

The School Board shall oversee the development and administration of Parma Heights Christian Academy (PHCA) and Sonshine Preschool.

Specific duties of the School Board include but are not limited to:

- 1) In regard to PHCA, setting policies and procedures that provide Christian Education, academic growth and development, primarily, to Christian students in our community.
- 2) In regard to the Sonshine Preschool, it shall oversee the development, promotion and operation of this ministry as an outreach to our community.

With regard to both schools, it shall,

- 1) Approve curriculum,
- 2) Exercise oversight of the finances, including approving an annual budget.
- 3) Approve the hiring of all personnel, including the Preschool

Administrator, except the Minister of Christian Schools who shall be chosen through the process of replacing Pastoral Staff.

The Preschool Administrator is accountable to the Minister of Christian Schools. The Minister of Christian Schools will be accountable to the Christian School Board. The Christian School Board is accountable to the Deacon Board.

Annual financial reports shall be submitted to the congregation. Annual financial budgets shall be submitted to the Finance Committee for review and the Administrative Deacons for review and then to the Deacon Board for final approval. Regular financial reports shall be submitted to the Finance Committee and Administrative Deacons upon request.

## **ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES**

### Section 1 - Audit Committee

The Administrative Deacons shall appoint an audit committee of three qualified persons who shall ensure that the management of finances is within the policies established in this constitution and proper accounting procedures. The qualified persons are to be made up preferably from formally trained individuals from the finance committee and/or deacon board and must be members in good standing. The Audit Committee itself or an independent accounting firm shall examine and submit a written report detailing the financial condition of the church no less than every third year. The Finance Committee shall be responsible to ensure that recommendations made by the independent auditor or Audit Committee are implemented, and deficiencies, if any, are corrected.

### Section 2 - Nominating Committee

#### A. General Provisions

The Nominating Committee shall consist of six members affirmed by vote of the congregation for a term of three years, beginning July 1, with two members affirmed each year. The Deacons shall nominate candidates for the Committee. After serving a full term, Nominating Committee members may be re-nominated by the Deacon Board and be re-affirmed by the congregation for a second term for a maximum of six years. For members serving two consecutive terms, one year must elapse before being eligible for another term.

It shall prayerfully seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in determining the

best-qualified candidates, especially meeting the spiritual qualifications so described for each office, and present candidates, with approval of the Deacon Board and input by the Pastoral Staff, to the congregation in the Sunday bulletin one week prior to the Sunday designated for the affirming vote. They shall fill such vacancies that occur throughout the year by appointment for the remaining portion of the year, until the next affirming vote (See Article XII, Section 10). Any currently serving Deacon, Nominating Committee member, or elected officer (Moderator or Clerk) must be re-nominated by the Nominating Committee, re-approved by the Deacon Board and re-affirmed by the congregation prior to serving a second term. All positions affirmed by vote of the congregation, including part-year appointments, must be held by members of the church.

## B. Nomination & Election Procedures

The Nominating Committee shall secure names in writing from the membership for positions to be affirmed by congregational vote prior to their review and presentation to the Deacons for approval and then to the congregation for action. No nominations shall be taken from the floor. Each nominee must receive a majority of affirmative votes cast. Candidates for all offices must be affirmed by May 31. All terms will begin July 1. No officer shall hold any other office as provided for in this constitution during his/her term of office except as delegates to association and national meetings and the Search Committee.

## Section 3 - Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall consist of a chairperson and a minimum of two other members appointed annually by the Deacon Board for a period not to exceed 6 consecutive years. The appointment should be made to begin July 1. One year must elapse before being reappointed. At least one Administrative Deacon shall also serve on the committee.

The Finance Committee is responsible to the Deacon Board and is accountable to the Chairman of the Administrative Deacons.

The Finance Committee will be responsible for:

1. Oversight of the church's finances, ensuring that income and expenses are in agreement with the approved budget and any policies established by the Deacons and the congregation.
2. Preparing the annual budget from recommendations of the ministry areas, the Church Administrator and the Administrative Deacons, and submit it to the Deacons for approval. After approval by the Deacon Board, it shall present the proposed budget to the congregation for approval at the year-end business meeting.

3. It shall, in conjunction with the Pastoral Staff, manage the operating and capital budgets of the church, promote effective stewardship within the congregation, and receive and deposit all tithes and love gifts. It shall appoint a financial secretary to keep confidential giving records of each contributor.
4. It shall promote and invest endowment funds for the ministry and provide for counsel to the congregation for estate planning, bequests, etc.
5. The Finance Committee shall provide regular reports as requested to the ministry teams, Administrative Deacons and to the Deacon Board, detailing income and expenditures.

## **ARTICLE X - ELECTED OFFICERS**

### Section 1 - Moderator

A moderator shall be affirmed by vote of the congregation for an annual term, with a maximum of six consecutive terms. He shall preside over the congregational business sessions in an impartial and objective manner. He must be filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3; Gal. 5:22). In the temporary absence of the moderator, the Vice Chairman of the Deacons shall preside.

### Section 2 - Clerk

A Church Clerk shall be affirmed by vote of the congregation for an annual term with a maximum of six consecutive terms. The Clerk shall keep the minutes of all congregational business sessions and establish the quorum through the church office for conducting business.



## **ARTICLE XI – ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF**

### **CHURCH ADMINISTRATION**

Church Administration will be headed by the Church Administrator and shall be responsible for the maintenance of buildings, grounds, related equipment and adequate insurance coverage. It shall determine the general usage of facilities and security. It shall also provide for, maintain and coordinate the usage of transportation vehicles for church functions.

The Church Administrator, with the approval of the Administrative Deacons, shall employ administrative, maintenance, support personnel and select committees, as needed, to adequately support the Pastoral Staff and the daily operation of the ministry.

The Church Administrator shall assist the Administrative Deacons by scheduling and providing forms for the annual performance appraisals of the Pastoral Staff and Salaried Staff. The Church Administrator performs annual reviews of Support Staff.

The Church Administrator is accountable to the Administrative Deacons.

## **ARTICLE XII - BY-LAWS**

### **Section 1 - Admission of Members**

The following are prerequisites for church membership: (1) Confession of one's faith in Jesus Christ with evidence of personal salvation (2) baptism by immersion following a confession of faith, (3) subscribe to the Articles of Faith in the Preamble and the Constitution, (4) a willingness to commit to the Membership Covenant (5) strive to reflect our Core Values and completion of any other requirements for membership established by the Deacon Board.

#### **A. STATEMENT ON MEDIATION**

Members of the church from time to time may have legal disputes with the church. Members first are encouraged to try to settle such disputes between themselves and the church with the attitude of reconciliation. Should a dispute still be unresolved and escalates, Members of the church agree to submit any legal dispute with the church for mediation before a mutually agreed-upon mediator. Lawsuits between believers, or threats of lawsuits between believers, are a matter of grave concern for the church, are contrary to biblical and church teaching, and mediation is an effort to resolve disputes in a biblical fashion (1 Cor. 6:1-7).

Mediation will be governed by the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC Rules), unless modified as stipulated by the parties. In particular, subject to the more detailed provisions of the ICC Rules, mediator(s) will attempt to assist us in reaching a voluntary settlement of any disputes through mediation. The confidentiality of the mediation process will be protected and these matters will not be discussed with people who do not have a necessary interest in them. If settlement can be agreed upon, the conciliators may, at their discretion, issue an advisory opinion. Neither the opinion, nor any communication exchanged in the mediation process, will be admissible for any purpose in any subsequent legal proceeding.

## Section 2 - Dismissal of Members

Any member may request withdrawal or be dismissed from the membership in one of the following methods:

### A. LETTER of TRANSFER or WITHDRAWAL

Any member may request a letter of transfer to another church or withdraw from membership by making a written request to the Deacons.

### B. REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

Should a member, by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct (Gal. 5:19), failure to adhere to the Articles of Faith and Membership guidelines, become an offense to the Gospel, promote discord (Titus 3:10), or injure the unity and effectiveness of the church, the Senior Pastor and the Deacons shall respond by making every effort to bring that member to reconciliation. The approach must be loving and redemptive. Opportunity shall be given to the member to present a defense. If reconciliation and restoration cannot be achieved, upon the action of the Deacon Board, that person's membership shall be terminated. The principle of Scripture in Matthew 18:15-17 will be applied.

### C. INACTIVITY

Any member who has failed to participate in services of worship for a period of six months, except for illness, infirmity, absence from this area, or temporary employment in another area, shall be considered an inactive member. Inactive members shall not have voting rights, nor have voice, or hold an office. Inactive members that do not respond to reasonable efforts to restore their membership covenant relationship after a period of one year shall have their membership

terminated.

### Section 3 - Membership Status

The Church Administrator and the Pastoral Staff shall semi-annually review the membership rolls and make recommendation to the Deacon Board to place each member in one of the five following categories:

1. Active Adult Resident Membership – Members 18 years of age and over living within a 100 mile radius of the church [see Article XII, Section 2.C].
2. Inactive Membership [see Article XII, Section 2.C]
3. Non-Resident Membership – (e.g. temporary relocation, college students, missionaries etc.) those living outside a 100 mile radius of the church.
4. Children and Youth – Members under 18 years of age
5. Shut-ins – Members who are home bound or in nursing homes

### Section 4 - Officers of the Corporation

The Deacon Board shall act as legal officers of the corporation in accordance with the laws of the State of Ohio. It shall convey, sell, and mortgage church property only when ratified by members of the congregation. The officers of the corporation shall be the Chairman (president), Vice Chairman (vice president), and Secretary of the Board, and they shall have the authority to sign documents on behalf of the congregation as so directed.

### Section 5 - Senior Pastor: Search, Calling & Termination

#### A. SEARCH COMMITTEE

When the Senior Pastorate becomes vacant, the church shall select a Search Committee totaling nine members (to include three Deacons) representing a proper cross-section of age, occupation, gender, and area of ministry. Church members may suggest names to be considered for the search committee. All names received in nomination will be reviewed by the Deacons, and nine candidates (including three Deacons) shall be recommended to the congregation for approval by vote. Each member must be filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3; Gal. 5:22). The Search Committee shall choose a chairperson from those selected.

#### B. CALLING

When the Senior Pastorate is vacant, the Senior Pastor Search Committee will survey the congregation to discern the qualities desired in

the pastoral candidate. It shall investigate the merits of each applicant and, after approval by the Deacons, shall present a candidate to the congregation for extending a call as the Senior Pastor. A business meeting shall be held for this purpose with such notice being given no less than ten days prior to the time of meeting both from the pulpit and through written notice. A three-fourth's majority of the qualified voters of the congregation present shall be required to extend a call. Voting shall be by written ballot.

### C. TERMINATION

The professional relationship between the Senior Pastor and the congregation may be terminated by his initiation with a forty-five day written notice to the Chairman of the Deacons, or by the following procedure initiated by the Board:

1. After objective and serious deliberation, the Deacon Board may take action to terminate. This action will require a quorum of 80% of all Deacons with a three-fourths majority vote of those present and voting. The termination shall be immediate, but with a minimum of forty-five days for completion of compensation.

During the vacancy of the Senior Pastorate, an Interim Pastor shall be called to assume appropriate responsibilities.

### Section 6 - Calling & Termination of Pastoral Staff and Administrator

The Deacons shall recommend positions and candidates for Pastoral Staff to give adequate leadership to the church's ministry. For full-time Pastoral Staff positions, a special business meeting shall be called when the Search Committee, after approval by the Deacons, is prepared to present such a candidate with notice given from the pulpit at least ten days prior to the meeting time. A three-fourths majority of those present and voting shall be required to extend a call. Pastoral Staff members shall serve for an indefinite period. Their professional relationship may be terminated by the action of a three-fourths majority of the Deacon Board. A quorum of 80% would be required for action.

The Deacons shall approve candidates presented by the Search Committee to fill the position of Church Administrator. The Church Administrator will be chosen by the Deacon Board.

### Section 7 – Worship

Worship services shall be held on the first day of the week and at other times as the Deacons deem wise. Hours of worship shall be set by the

Deacon Board. No business shall be transacted by the congregation or any group during such worship services. Communion shall be observed at least every other month.

### Section 8 - Finances

Necessary finances for conducting the ministry of this body shall be obtained from tithes and offerings of members and friends. Even though budgets are adopted, the church will not expend more than its income for its general operation. This does not preclude specially financed capital projects as the congregation may approve. Any special fund-raising for specific projects by various groups must be approved by the Deacons.

### Section 9 - Business Meetings

#### A. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS

One annual business meeting shall be held no later than three weeks prior to the end of the fiscal year for the purpose of adopting the annual budget.

#### B. SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

Special business meetings may be called by the Deacons, Senior Pastor, or 15% of the active, adult, resident membership, provided that notice shall be given ten days in advance from the pulpit and shall state the purpose and nature of the business to be transacted. No business other than that stated can be conducted during that session. No business shall be transacted other than at a meeting as prescribed by this constitution.

#### C. QUORUM

10% of the active, adult resident membership (see Article XII, Section 3.1) shall constitute a quorum for voting at any church business meeting. The number for the quorum shall be determined by the Church Office. Absentee ballots can be secured from the Church Office.

### Section 10 - Rules of Order

Christian conduct (Gal. 5:22-23, 1 Cor. 14:40) shall be the guideline for conducting the business of the congregation.

The Moderator shall judge the nature of any matter under discussion and shall have the liberty to refer a matter back to the Deacon Board for further study.

Only active members (Adult and Youth) shall have the right of voice at a business meeting. Only active Adult members shall have the right to vote.

### Section 11 - Amendments

This constitution may be amended at any regular or specially called meeting by those present and voting provided that notice shall be given two Sundays prior to the meeting date in the church bulletin and from the pulpit. Printed copies of the proposed changes must also be available to the membership two Sundays prior to the meeting date with copies mailed to members upon request. Any proposed amendment must be recommended by the Deacons, and will require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting for adoption.

### Section 12 - Delegates to Annual Meetings

The Senior Pastor, in consultation with the Chair of the Deacon Board, shall appoint a minimum of two delegates to represent its constituency at association and national meetings. These delegates shall act in accordance with the direction of the congregation.

### Section 13 - Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures shall be established regarding various activities and ministries. They will not be listed as part of this constitution but will be established by action of the Deacon Board.

## **Non-Constitutional Items**

### **Policies and Procedures**

1. Minutes of all meetings established in this constitution must be filed in the church office.
2. The Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary of the Deacon Board will be selected by the Board by ballot and serve a one-year term commencing on July 1.
3. The Chairman of the Deacon Board shall preside over the Board's meetings. The Vice Chairman shall assume the responsibilities of the chairman in his absence.
4. No two members of an immediate family may be permitted to serve on the Deacon Board at the same time.

5. Each area of ministry shall meet monthly or as needed and shall choose its own assistant chairperson and a secretary to record minutes of all meetings.
6. Special meetings of the ministry areas may be called by the ministry's chairperson or the chairman of the Deacons and the Senior Pastor.
7. Any elected officer shall be presumed to have vacated his/her office by missing two regularly scheduled meetings within a six-month period without good cause.
8. The fiscal year shall be the calendar year.
9. Deacon candidates shall receive some formal training for their office.
10. The financial commitment to NAB Missions shall be kept in balance with other mission programs and missionaries.
11. A review of this constitution may be conducted periodically by the Deacon Board or a special ad hoc committee appointed by the Deacon Board for the purpose of maintaining an effective structure and ministry.

## **Our Mission**

### ***Helping People Find and Follow Jesus***

*We strive to be a church with a desire to fulfill the Great Commands and the Great Commission of Christ. These commands and commission are summarized as:*

- *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37)*
- *“Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:39)*
- *“Go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19)*

*If we truly love God, we will obey him. Therefore, we seek to go into our world and make disciples. To be a disciple of Jesus is to be a follower of Jesus and requires a relationship and commitment. Hence, we seek to help people come to know Jesus (i.e., to “find him”) and to make a life-changing and life-long commitment to him (i.e., follow him).*

*All that we do as a church has its roots in this mission and is reflected in the following Foundation and Values statements.*

## **Our Foundation**

*Our relationship with God, based on faith in Jesus Christ, is important above all else and is the foundation for all that we are and do. It is a*

*personal, growing, intimate, love relationship with Jesus Christ. He is our Lord, Savior, and Friend and we long to know him, serve him, and glorify him daily. Because of our relationship with him, we hold strongly the following values:*

## **Our Core Values**

### **These things we highly value:**

#### **God's word is our guide**

*We value God's word as the inspired and divine revelation of God's plan and truth for all people of all ages. It is in and through the Bible, guided by the Holy Spirit, that we learn about and meet Jesus Christ. It is the basis and only authority for living a holy life acceptable to God and demands our total obedience. (II Tim. 3:14-17; Col. 3:16)*

#### **Prayer**

*We believe that through prayer we are given the strength, guidance and power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's purposes. We also communicate with our loving Father to confess our sins and express our thanks, praise, concerns, fears and needs. (Phil. 4:6, 7; Matt. 7:7, 8; Jas 1:5, 6; Lk. 19:46)*

#### **Commitment to personal holiness**

*We believe that we were created to honor and glorify God daily in all that we do. We believe that our life honors God best when it reflects the life and character of Jesus, our Savior and Lord. We believe this life can only be lived through the power of the Holy Spirit living within us. As believers, we value a lifestyle that seeks personal holiness, purity and integrity in a life fully surrendered and devoted to God. (I Pet. 1:15, 16; II Pet. 3:11; Rom. 12:1, 2)*

#### **Christ-reflecting relationships between believers**

*We believe as we relate to one another as members of a family with openness, honesty, acceptance, love and forgiveness that we can become a God-honoring community. We value relationships of love, care, encouragement, fellowship and accountability that help each of us to grow to be more Christ-like. (I Cor. 12:12-27; Jn. 15:17; Rom. 12:9-21)*

#### **Redemptive relationships with non-believers (Outreach)**

*We believe God loves everyone and desires a personal love relationship with each one of us. It is God's plan that each believer has been given a ministry of loving, caring and sharing with non-believers in our community and around the world with the hope of bringing them into a love relationship with God. (Jn. 13:35; Matt. 19:19; Matt. 22:39; Lk. 6:27-35; II Cor. 5:18, 19; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; I Cor. 9:19, 22, 23)*



## **Meaningful worship**

*We believe that worship is our response to the nature and awesome character of God, an expression of our love and reverence to Him. It is to exalt Jesus Christ and focus on God, not ourselves. Its form should be meaningful and relevant in the sense that people of all ages and backgrounds should be able to participate in a way that expresses their love and adoration to God. (Jn. 4:21-24; Ps. 100; Matt. 22:37, 38; Matt. 28:17; Rev 4; I Chr. 16:28, 29)*

## **Biblical View of Marriage**

**From the Bible we believe . . .**

### **That God's intention for marriage is established throughout the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.**

*This is expressed in creation and the creation story, the Law of Moses, the wisdom literature, and in the prophetic tradition. The Divine establishment of marriage is confirmed by the words of Jesus and the New Testament authors. They provide guidance for perfecting marriage, and affirm its spiritual significance. Chaste singleness and marriage are both honored as faithful and holy lifestyles ordained by God.*

### **That God ordained marriage as a voluntary union for life of one man and one woman.**

*Our creation as man and woman, who are complementary to one another, has significance in revealing aspects of the image of God and His relationship to humanity. The permanence of the marital bond mirrors God's faithfulness, just as its monogamy reflects God's singular devotion to His people and His people's singular devotion to Him.*

### **That sexual intimacy is legitimate only within the bounds of marriage.**

*The commands of God are clear. Sexual activity profoundly affects people emotionally and spiritually. Sexual intercourse outside of marriage, promiscuity, common law relationships, adultery, homosexual acts, exploitation, incest and sexual perversion contradict God's purpose for human sexuality.*

### **That marriage is more than a contract between two persons: It is a covenant before God.**

*God is committed to every marriage between a man and a woman. In the covenant of marriage, God joins a man and a woman together "in one flesh," and forbids anyone to break it. This covenant is unique among human relationships. God intends the married couple to recognize and celebrate His call to an irrevocable commitment to love, to cherish and remain faithful which transcends the quid pro quo of contracts.*

***That in Christian marriage, the Church acts as an agent of God's blessing, as a primary witness and as a supportive community.***

*The church declares the blessing of God but does not create that benefit. Therefore the church cannot confer the spiritual blessing of marriage on other relationships.*

***That a healthy marriage is the best foundation for families and the raising of children.***

*The practical benefits of marriage are inherent to its form. A healthy marriage is a unique source of benefits for children including the stability of the family and the access of children to a mother and a father. God intended that children should receive nurture from male and female parents, and in turn learn to honor both. Neither the church nor anyone else can confer the innate benefits of marriage or other forms of relationships or unions.*

***Every believer is a “gifted” minister***

*We believe that every believer is a minister called to serve with excellence. We value working together and using our spiritual gifts to accomplish God's work to the best of our ability. I Cor. 12:4-31; I Cor. 12:7; Rom. 12:3-8; I Pet. 4:10, Col 3:17; II Cor. 5:15*

***Every believer is a steward***

*We believe we are stewards and not owners of all we have, including our spiritual gifts, abilities, time and possessions. As stewards who will be held accountable, it is our responsibility to be found faithful in using wisely and giving generously of all that has been entrusted to us. (I Cor. 4:2; I Cor. 4:1-5; II Cor. 8:1-7; Mal. 3:10; Matt. 6:19-21)*

***Unchanging message, culturally relevant methods***

*We believe that the message and beliefs of the church never change, but methodologies will. Our methods in outreach, worship, teaching and serving must be relevant to our culture while remaining true to God's Word. (Matt. 24:35; II Tim. 4:2-4)*

## Positions affirmed by vote of the Congregation

<b>Number</b>		<b>Title</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Start Date</b>
10+		Deacons	3 years renewable to 6 years total	July 1
1		Moderator	1 year renewable to 6 years total	July 1
1		Clerk	1 year renewable to 6 years total	July 1
6		Nominating Committee	3 years renewable to 6 years total	July 1
5		School Board including Chair	3 years renewable	July 1

## Constitutional Calendar of Events

Note: This calendar is not a part of the Constitution but is intended as a helpful reminder of Constitutional events. Required Constitutional events/dates are shown in *italic*. Dates are based on the current Jan. 1–Dec. 31 fiscal calendar.

### January

Deacons solicit names from membership for Nominating Committee (affirming vote by May 31).

Nominating Committee solicits names from membership for Deacons, Moderator, Clerk, (affirming vote by May 31).

### February

### March

### April

### May

31 Affirming vote for offices of Deacon, Moderator, Clerk, and Nominating Committee must be completed before May 31.

### June

Pastoral Staff and Ministry Team Chairs submit Ministry Team names to Deacons for approval for annual term beginning July 1.

### July

Deacon Board approves Ministry Teams and Ministry Team membership

1 New terms start for all elected offices: Deacons, Moderator, Clerk, Nominating Committee.

30 Deacons approve Ministry Team membership by July 30.

### August

Deacon Board approves Ministry Teams and Ministry Team membership.

### September

1 Programmatic year runs September-August.

Ministry Teams present annual plans and goals to Deacon Board for approval.

30 Ministry Teams submit budget request to Finance Committee (October 15<sup>th</sup>)\*.

### October

Ministry Teams present annual plans and goals to Deacon Board for approval.

### November

Budget approval required late November or early December (see December calendar entry).\*

### December

Budget approval by membership three weeks before end of the fiscal year. Vote should occur first week of December or latter part of November.\*

\* Based on Jan. 1-Dec. 31 Fiscal Year

## **Activities to be scheduled:**

- Pastoral Staff: Communion is to be observed at least every other month (Article XI, Section 7).
- Church Administrator and the Pastoral Staff: Semi-annually review of membership roll (Article XI, Section 3)
- Deacons: Semi-annually review and approval of membership roll (Article XI, Section 3)
- Administrative Deacons: Annually appoint Audit Committee (Article VIII, Section 1).
- Audit Committee: At least every 3 years, recommend to the Administrative Deacons a licensed and independent accounting firm (Article VIII, Section 1).