

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

October, 2025



PREAMBLE

“Let all things be done in order.” I Corinthians 14:40

Desiring that in all things we be found approved of God as workmen that need not be ashamed, we, the members of the Bethel Baptist Church of Galesburg, Illinois, do hereby agree to be guided in our work and conduct by the following constitution.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I NAME AND ORGANIZATION

1. **Name.** The name of this organization shall be the BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH of Galesburg, Illinois.
2. **Organization.** The existence of this organization is according to the incorporation action of June 5, 1891, as the First Swedish Baptist Church of Galesburg, and the action of June 4, 1937, changing the name to the North Chambers Baptist Church, and the action of January 1, 1949, changing the name to the Bethel Baptist Church of Galesburg, Illinois.
3. **Early History.** Galesburg has had a close relationship to the early history of the Baptist General Conference. Gustaf Palmquist, as the earliest and one of the most important personalities linked with the Swedish Baptist History in America, came to the United States in 1851, and to Galesburg in 1852. Having become acquainted with Baptist principles in Sweden, Palmquist now made a thorough study on his own initiative, with the result that he was then baptized in the, then, beautiful Cedar Fork Creek and united with the First Baptist Church of this city. A short time later he located in Rock Island, where on August 13 of the same year, he organized the first Swedish (Baptist General Conference) Baptist Church in America.

ARTICLE II STATEMENT OF PURPOSE, GOALS & VALUES

Purpose. The purpose of Bethel is to heal relationships, first by bringing people to God through faith in Jesus Christ, and then by healing relationships between one another.

Goals. The goals of Bethel are to:

1. **Worship Christ.** We seek to enjoy God both publicly and privately in ways that honor and please him (Hebrews 10:24-25).
2. **Share Christ.** We seek to tell all people how their sins can be forgiven through faith in Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20).
3. **Grow in Christ.** We seek to learn what it means to obey Jesus in every area of one's life (Ephesians 4:14-16).

4. **Serve Christ.** We seek to help all people by applying Christian truth to life and by giving practical assistance to those in need (Philippians 2:5-11).
5. **Fellowship around Christ.** We seek to provide networks of friendship and service that will connect people with people (Acts 2:42).

Values. At Bethel we value the following:

1. **Grace:** Receiving God's free gift of forgiveness, given to all who repent of their sins and say "Yes" to Christ; and sharing the good news everywhere. (Romans 5:17; Ephesians 2:8-9).
2. **Growth:** Growing into mature followers of Jesus Christ and modeling authentic faith as God would have us to do. (Ephesians 4:14-16; 1 Timothy 4:11-16).
3. **Groups:** Maintaining spiritual health and growth in Christ as we connect with others in small group relationships. (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:25).
4. **Gifts:** Loving and serving God through effective service to others while discovering and using our spiritual gifts in Jesus' name. (1 Corinthians 12:1-31; Romans 12:3-8).
5. **Generosity:** Experiencing the joy of giving as God has purposed. (Matthew 6:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9).

ARTICLE III AN AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH

1. **The Word of God.** We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct (Matthew 5:18; John 17:17; Romans 15:4; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21).
2. **The Trinity.** We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three Persons; that they are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption (Genesis 3:22; Matthew 28:19; John 16:14-15; I Corinthians 12:4-6).
3. **God the Father.** We believe in God, the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ (John 4:24; Acts 4:24-30; Matthew 5:48).
4. **Jesus Christ.** We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth (Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:34-35; John 1:1-3, 14; John 17:5; Acts 4:12; Romans 8:34; I Corinthians 15:3-8; Philippians 2:5-11; Revelation 1:17-18).
5. **The Holy Spirit.** We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, and guide (John 14:26 and 16:7-15; Romans 8:9, 26-27; I Corinthians 6:19-20 and 12:13; Ephesians 1:13-14).

6. **Regeneration.** We believe that all men are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit (Genesis 3:1-24; Psalm 51:5; John 3:16-18, 36; Romans 3:23-24; 5:12-21; 8:28-30; Galatians 3:22; I Timothy 2:5; Titus 3:5-7).
7. **The Church.** We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world (Matthew 16:16-19; 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-47; Romans 12:4-5; I Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 3:7-13).
8. **Christian Conduct.** We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well being of his fellow men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ (I Corinthians 4:1-2; II Corinthians 9:6-8; Galatians 5:22-26; Philippians 2:14-15; Colossians 3:17-23; I Thessalonians 5:12-22).
9. **Christian Marriage.** We believe that God created man and woman in His own image to complete one another as husband and wife (Genesis 2:24). We further believe that at the time God created man and woman He created the institution of marriage (Genesis 2:20-24, Mark 10:6-9). Bethel Baptist Church defines marriage as a sacred union ordained by God between one biological man and one biological woman (Matthew 19:4-5).
10. **The Ordinances.** We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church; baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 22:14-20; Acts 2:41-42; I Corinthians 11:23-34).
11. **Religious Liberty.** We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other (Matthew 22:21; Acts 5:29; I Corinthians 5:12-13; 10:23-24; II Corinthians 5:9-10).
12. **Church Cooperation.** We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with inter-denominational fellowships on a voluntary independent basis (I Corinthians 16:1-4; II Corinthians 8:23-24; Titus 1:5).
13. **The Last Things.** We believe in the personal, visible and imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His Kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal joy of the saved, and the endless suffering of the lost (Matthew 24:30; Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; I Corinthians 15:42-44; II Corinthians 5:10 I; Thessalonians 4:15-17).

ARTICLE IV THE CHURCH COVENANT

We do covenant together, by God's grace, to live our lives consistent with the standards of Biblical teaching, including the support of this local ministry in attendance, prayer, service, and giving; by living lives in word and deed that are an encouragement to others to know and be like Jesus Christ, and by reflecting in all our relationships the servant-love of our Lord.

The book of Colossians provides an appropriate summary of the goals for our church:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another ... And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God ... Colossians 3:12-17

ARTICLE V CHARACTER AND GOVERNMENT

1. The government of the church is vested in the body of believers who are members.
2. Bethel Baptist Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body.
3. The church shall be affiliated with Converge MidAmerica and Converge Worldwide.
4. The directors of the church organization as a corporation shall be known as Elders.
5. The fiscal year of the church shall begin on the first day of April and close on the last day of March.

ARTICLE VI MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this church shall consist of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have been baptized by immersion, who have acknowledged their willingness to submit to the authority of this congregation as expressed in its Constitution and Bylaws, and who have been received into the fellowship of the church.

ARTICLE VII LICENSING AND ORDAINING

In the matter of licensing to preach or ordaining a person to the gospel ministry, the congregation shall follow the recommendations and procedures established by Converge Worldwide.

ARTICLE VIII

DISPOSITION OF CHURCH PROPERTY

1. **Division.** In case of division of the church membership, the property shall belong to those members who abide by the church constitution.
2. **Dissolution.** Should conditions arise where, for any reason, the church work cannot continue, the property shall be transferred to Converge MidAmerica or Converge Worldwide.
3. **Consolidation.** Should conditions arise where consolidation with another church of the same denomination is advisable, the Board of Elders shall be authorized by the congregation to negotiate the terms of such consolidation. Report of such agreement must be made to the congregation and approved by the congregation before legal papers are signed.

ARTICLE IX LIABILITY

No officer or member of any board or committee either elected or appointed by this congregation shall be personally or individually liable for any error, mistake, act, or omission for or on behalf of this congregation occurring within the scope of his official authority or in line with his duty as such officer, board or committee member, excepting only for his own willful misconduct or violation of law.

ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments to this constitution may be introduced through formal motion at any regular or called business meeting, which is at least three months prior to the next annual business meeting. The proposed amendment(s) shall be reviewed by the church and revised if so desired, and then may be presented for adoption through formal motion at any regular or called business meeting, which is at least one month prior to the next annual business meeting. If approved at this meeting the proposed amendment(s) may not be altered, but will be acted on at the next annual business meeting. An affirmative vote of two-thirds majority of the voting members present at the annual business meeting qualified to vote shall be required for acceptance. At no time can any amendment be adopted that would be contrary to historic Baptist beliefs and practices.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I CHURCH LEADERS

Officers

The officers of Bethel Baptist Church shall be:

1. Church Chairman
2. Vice Chairman
3. Treasurer
4. Assistant Treasurer
5. Secretary
6. Assistant Secretary
7. Elders at Large
8. Lead Pastor(s)

The officers shall constitute the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders shall consist of ten Elders elected from the congregation, as well as the Lead Pastor(s). Any Board of Elders voting action ending in a tie is considered voted down.

At the first meeting following the annual meeting, the Board of Elders shall select Elders to serve in the positions of Church Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary. The remaining Elders shall be Elders at Large. No individual shall hold more than one office concurrently.

Qualifications of Officers

An officer of Bethel Baptist Church shall sign an affirmation that he:

1. Is an Active Member of Bethel Baptist Church.
2. Subscribes to and annually affirms the Statement of Faith and Covenant of this church.
3. Strives to meet the Biblical standards for church leaders (1 Timothy 3).
4. Is a proportionate giver with tithing as a norm.
5. Is at least twenty-one years of age.
6. Is a regular participant in public worship at Bethel Baptist Church.
7. Is actively involved in ministry at Bethel Baptist Church.
8. (With the exception of the Lead Pastor(s) has been a member of Bethel Baptist Church for at least two years and a Christian for at least four years.

Other Leaders

All other leaders shall meet standards as established by the Board of Elders. The standard for ministry leaders shall be a Biblical standard of character and conduct and a commitment to the ministry of Bethel Baptist Church. This shall generally be interpreted to mean:

1. Being an Active Member of Bethel Baptist Church.
2. Having demonstrated leadership in ministry.
3. Being committed to, active in, and having Biblical knowledge appropriate to the specific ministry area.
4. Possessing good reputation in and outside the church, and having demonstrated self-control and appropriate Biblical attitudes in relationships with others.
5. Attending regular public worship at Bethel Baptist Church.

ARTICLE II STAFF

Called Staff

Called staff shall include the Lead Pastor(s), other Pastors, and directors of ministries as determined from time to time by the Board of Elders.

The Board of Elders may make a recommendation of an internal candidate(s) (defined as an existing staff member in good standing) to any Calling Committee and that committee shall make a recommendation to the congregation who will accept or reject said Elder proposed candidate(s) prior to seeking external candidates.

The Board of Elders shall determine job descriptions, titles, and a ministerial code of ethics for called staff.

Qualifications for Called Staff

Each called staff of Bethel Baptist Church shall sign an affirmation that they:

1. Are or will become an Active Member of Bethel Baptist Church.
2. Subscribe to and will affirm the Statement of Faith, the Covenant of this church, and the ministerial code of ethics.
3. Will strive to meet the Biblical standards for church leaders (1 Timothy 3).
4. Will be a proportionate giver with tithing as a norm.
5. Are at least twenty-one years of age.
6. Possess experience, education, and abilities to meet requirements as determined by the Board of Elders.
7. Will become a regular participant in public worship at Bethel Baptist Church.
8. Are sympathetic to and cooperative with Converge Worldwide.

Establishment of Called Staff Relationship

A call to a the lead pastor candidate(s) shall issue from the congregation upon recommendation of a Lead Pastor(s) Calling Committee and a 75% affirmative written or electronic ballot vote of those present at a properly noticed business meeting.

A call to a candidate for a called staff position other than Lead Pastor(s) shall issue from the congregation upon recommendation from the Board of Elders and a 75% affirmative written or electronic ballot vote of those present at a properly noticed business meeting.

When a called staff member is the subject of dissolution, the Lead Pastor(s) shall not vote in the Board of Elders decision to dissolve the relationship. The affected called staff member shall be allowed to appeal to the congregation. A 75% written or electronic ballot vote of those present at a properly noticed business meeting is required to reverse the action of the Board of Elders. If the congregation reverses the dismissal of a the Lead Pastor(s), each of the Elders who voted for dismissal will resign from the Board of Elders.

The Board of Elders shall make recommendations to the congregation in the event of any Lead Pastor(s) resigning, leaving, being terminated, or being physically unable to perform his duties. The position(s) may be left open or filled at the discretion of the congregation. Any action taken by the congregation shall be by a 75% affirmative written or electronic ballot vote of those present at a properly noticed business meeting.

Support Staff

Support Staff includes program staff, business staff, secretarial staff, custodial staff, pastoral interns, pastoral staff assistants, paraprofessionals, musicians, temporary help, and others as needed.

The Lead Pastor(s) shall hire all support staff on terms established by the Board of Elders, with final approval to be granted by the Board of Elders. However, any non-budgeted compensation is subject to the same Board of Elders approval as other proposed expenditures not included in the annual budget.

The Lead Pastor(s) or his(their) designee shall act upon resignations and terminations of support staff.

ARTICLE III DUTIES OF LEADERS

Lead Pastor(s)

The Lead Pastor(s) shall:

1. Be the spiritual leader(s) and executive leader(s) of Bethel Baptist Church.
2. Provide a majority of the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, while overseeing other preaching and teaching, leading public worship services, administering the ordinances, and leading the congregation in a practical Christian life.

3. Be (a) member(s) of the Board of Elders and (an) ex officio member(s) of all ministry teams and committees and in such capacity shall strive to establish and accomplish objectives in conjunction with the strategies of Bethel Baptist Church.
4. Direct the church staff, provide counsel, encouragement, and Christian discipline so as to assist the accomplishment of objectives for each staff member. All church staff members are responsible to the Lead Pastor(s) either directly or through another staff member as he(they) direct(s).
5. Represent the staff to the Board of Elders.
6. Perform other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders.

If any of the positions of ~~Senior~~ Lead Pastor is vacant, or, if any of the ~~Senior~~ Lead Pastor(s) is unable to function, the Board of Elders shall appoint (an) interim Lead Pastor(s) with congregational approval. Until (an) interim Lead Pastor(s) has(have) been appointed, the Church Chairman shall assume that role.

Called Staff

The called staff shall carry out specific areas of ministry under the direction of the Lead Pastor(s). The called staff shall strive “to equip the saints for the work of ministry.”

The Board of Elders may designate each called staff member as an ex officio member of one or more ministry teams.

The Board of Elders may designate a called staff member as an ex officio member, without a vote, to the Board of Elders.

Church Chairman

The Church Chairman shall, in cooperation with the Lead Pastor(s), appraise the work of the Board of Elders and other church organizations on a regular basis to determine the effectiveness of each, and shall act as necessary to improve the performance of each to accomplish church objectives.

The Church Chairman shall provide leadership to the Board of Elders and shall serve as moderator of all church business meetings. In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman or another Elder designated by the Board of Elders shall serve in place of the Church Chairman.

The Church Chairman shall be an ex officio member of all church organizations.

Vice Chairman

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman shall serve as moderator of all church business meetings or meetings of the Board of Elders. The Vice Chairman may also serve as an ex officio member of church organizations in place of the Chairman.

Treasurer

The Treasurer shall serve as the chief financial officer of the church. The Treasurer shall be

responsible for establishing long-term financial strategies and shall provide that processes are established and administered to control handling and disbursement of funds in accord with generally accepted accounting principles and as a responsible Christian steward.

The Treasurer is responsible for preparation of the annual budget for Elder Board and Congregational approval. The Treasurer will be responsible to recommend to the Elder Board individuals to fill positions to be treasurers of the various funds, the Financial Secretary, and individuals for the team to review and reconcile the accounting functions.

Assistant Treasurer

The Assistant Treasurer will be responsible to assist the Treasurer with his duties. In the absence of the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer shall perform the duties of the Treasurer.

Secretary

The Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining official church records and recording minutes of church and Board of Elders meetings. The Secretary shall assure that the church is adequately represented in all legal matters and that contracts or legal documents are appropriately reviewed prior to signature.

Assistant Secretary

The Assistant Secretary shall be responsible for fulfilling the duties of the Secretary when he is either absent, unable to fulfill his responsibilities, or requests assistance.

Members at Large

The Member(s) at Large of the Board of Elders shall carry out assignments as directed by the Board of Elders and its Chairman. This will include assignment to work as Board of Elders representative(s) of specific ministry teams or committees.

ARTICLE IV GOVERNMENT

Board of Elders

The Board of Elders shall be responsible for the strategic direction and spiritual oversight of Bethel Baptist Church, and shall have authority to manage its business affairs. It is responsible to the congregation to develop objectives and establish strategies to fulfill the church's purpose, to review progress against the objectives, and to assure that the organization operates consistently with the strategies. The Board of Elders and its individual officers shall be leaders of the congregation in life, thought, and ministry.

The Board of Elders shall normally meet monthly, and at other times as necessary to accomplish

its duties. The Board of Elders may meet by conference call. The Board of Elders may take action by a majority vote of the total number of the officers, unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws. A quorum for action by the Board of Elders shall be a majority of the officers. It shall maintain permanent, typed minutes. The Board of Elders shall have specific duties to:

1. At least annually review and develop objectives and establish strategies to accomplish the church purpose.
2. Annually review and approve the charter and objectives of each ministry team. As part of the Board of Elders review it may request objectives from the staff and ministry teams.
3. Regularly review and evaluate the total program of the church to determine that objectives are being accomplished. To establish policies as necessary to guide the church and to take or recommend corrective action, or revise objectives, where objectives are not being accomplished.
4. Represent the congregation in certain staff relationships including:
 - a. Annual appraisal of the ministry of the Lead Pastor(s) and the ministry of the other called staff, and provide godly counsel, or to disciple as required.
 - b. Annual review and approval of staff compensation and approval of compensation for new staff.
 - c. Approval of personnel expenses for any staff member or activity. This is normally done by the Chairman of the Board of Elders or the Treasurer.
 - d. Establishment of personnel policies and administration of those policies as they directly relate to the Lead Pastor(s).
 - e. Approval of job descriptions for new staff positions.
 - f. Maintenance of current job descriptions for all staff members.
5. Recommend to the congregation any ordinations, and to act upon any licensing and commissioning.
6. Approve ministry team leaders and have oversight over all church workers.
7. Make recommendations on all matters to be brought before the congregation, other than from committees directly responsible to the congregation, and to call church meetings as necessary.
8. Appoint a Financial Internal Examination team to monthly review and reconcile the financial records of Bethel Baptist Church.
9. Recommend to the congregation to establish or dissolve missionary relationships.
10. To have responsibilities to:
 - a. Communicate the proposed budget to the membership prior to the annual business meeting.
 - b. Present the proposed budget to the congregation at the annual business meeting.
 - c. Approve and submit to the congregation at its annual business meeting, The Elder Board's recommendations regarding the prior year's Total Revenues Less Expenditures exceeding five percent of the prior year's annual budget.
 - d. Approve total expenditures not included in the annual budget not to exceed two percent of the total annual budget. Except as provided in part 10,e. of this Article dealing with designated contributions and expenditures, all non-budgeted items require congregational approval for amounts greater than these limits.
 - e. Make expenditures for a specific purpose, when the purpose is consistent with the objectives and strategies of Bethel Baptist Church.
 - f. Buy, lease, acquire, own, hold, improve, use and deal in any interest in real or personal property, sell, convey, mortgage, create a security interest in, exchange, or

dispose of any interest in real or personal property. Actions valued in excess of two percent of the total annual budget may proceed after having received congregational approval with three-fourths majority of the active members present at a meeting called for such purpose. Any action involving the construction or financing of the church facilities outside of a budgeted expenditure and the limits of part 10,d. of this Article, must be approved by the congregation at a business meeting called for such a purpose. In case of dissolution of Bethel Baptist Church, the property shall be transferred to Converge MidAmerica.

11. Sign contracts consistent with the budget, constitution, congregational approval, and state law. This includes authority to borrow money, and to acquire, encumber, and sell real and personal property consistent with provisions of Article VI of these Bylaws.
12. Hear and respond appropriately to concerns of members.
13. Establish a process to accept and terminate membership and to regularly act to terminate membership as required.
14. Ensure that the church is adequately represented in all legal matters.
15. Incorporate and operate new churches and other organizations as appropriate to fulfill the objectives and strategies of Bethel Baptist Church.
16. Have the authority to hold closed meetings to discuss personnel matters.

Ministry Teams

Ministry teams shall be formed as required to implement the varied ministries of Bethel Baptist Church. Ministry teams shall be chartered by the Board of Elders to implement specific ministries. The charter for a ministry team shall include: the statement of purpose, strategic goals, leadership structure, description of ministry, and a provision that the ministry team shall terminate fifteen months from the most recent Board of Elders review. The list of ministry teams shall be determined annually by the Board of Elders, upon recommendation of the church staff, in accord with Bethel Baptist Church's purpose, strategies, objectives, and as dictated by organizational and functional effectiveness. The duties of ministry teams shall be to:

1. Develop and review annually its charter for submission to the Board of Elders.
2. Recruit and train ministry personnel.
3. Define and provide the necessary materials required for ministry.
4. Submit annually to the Board of Elders proposed budgets and objectives for the forthcoming year.
5. Meet as required to plan and execute specific ministry objectives.

The ministry team may select ministry team members in accord with the guidelines approved in its ministry charter. Each ministry team shall normally have at least one staff person and one Elder as ex-officio members.

Committees

Nominating Committee

There shall be a Nominating Committee that is responsible to the congregation. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible to:

1. Present candidates for elective office at the annual meeting, and at interim meetings as

- necessary. It shall normally present one candidate for each vacant office.
2. Present candidates as required for a the Lead Pastor(s) Calling Committee.
 3. Present at the annual business meeting at least twelve names of candidates for election to the new Nominating Committee.
 4. The Nominating Committee shall publicly communicate the nominations for the following year no less than five weeks prior to the annual business meeting.

Lead Pastor(s) Calling Committee

There shall be a Lead Pastor(s) Calling Committee, as necessary, which shall be responsible to the Congregation. A Lead Pastor(s) Calling Committee shall be responsible for the calling of a the Lead Pastor(s). Its duties shall be:

1. To check background and references, interview, evaluate, and select possible candidates for the position of ~~Senior~~ Lead Pastor(s). No more than one proposal consisting of one potential vote (for example, one vote for or against a set of co-Lead Pastors) shall be presented to the congregation.
2. To make a recommendation to the congregation at a properly noticed business meeting; to issue a call with specific terms approved by the Board of Elders.
3. To handle all communication with candidates until a call is accepted, after which communication shall be made by the Board of Elders or staff.

Special Committees

The Board of Elders may appoint special committees as necessary to carry out specific activities or tasks including the search for called staff other than the Lead Pastor(s). Each committee shall normally include at least one board member and shall cease to exist upon the completion of the assigned task.

Organizational Structure

The congregation is the governing body of this organization, having final authority in all matters. The congregation approves annual budgets, strategies, and objectives for Bethel Baptist Church.

The Board of Elders acts for the congregation in all matters not specifically reserved to the congregation in this the Constitution/Bylaws or where the congregation has not taken specific action.

A ministry team has the authority to act in the designated areas of its ministry charter.

Rules of Office

1. Officers

The congregation shall elect officers at its annual business meeting. The term of office shall be two years. Terms shall be staggered so that as nearly as possible one-half of the officers' terms shall expire each year.

Officers shall be limited to ten consecutive years of service on the Board of Elders. Six months or

more of service during an elective church year is deemed to be one year of service. After a lapse of one year, an Active Member shall again be eligible to serve as an officer.

An officer may be terminated from office by expiration of a term, by resignation, or upon a vote of dismissal by a two-thirds majority of all remaining officers.

Any officer whose two-year term is expiring and who is eligible for an additional term shall be allowed to stand for election to a subsequent term unopposed.

2. Ministry Team Leaders

Each ministry team shall organize itself as required to perform its ministry. The ministry team and the associated staff member(s), subject to approval by the Board of Elders, shall select ministry team leaders annually.

Ministry team leaders must be Active Members of Bethel Baptist Church.

3. Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee member shall be an Active Member of Bethel Baptist Church. The Nominating Committee shall include seven members who are elected at the annual business meeting of the congregation. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least twelve candidates for election to the succeeding Nominating Committee. Two members of the Board of Elders shall be nominated, with only one to be elected, to serve as chairman on this committee.

Members of the Nominating Committee shall serve for one year and shall be limited to one term consecutively. Service for any part of one year shall be deemed to be one year's service.

The Nominating Committee shall give notice to the congregation of its first meeting for selecting members of a Lead Pastor(s) Calling Committee or candidates for the Board of Elders. The Nominating Committee shall select its officers at its first meeting.

4. Called Staff Calling Committee

A Calling Committee for a the Lead Pastor(s) shall have ten members. The chairman of the board shall be a member of the committee. The nominating committee shall nominate five from the active membership of Bethel Baptist Church, and two more from the Board of Elders. Two additional members shall be elected at large at a congregational business meeting at which all members of the Lead Pastor(s) Calling Committee shall be approved. The Church Chairman and the two active members of the board shall continue to serve on the Calling Committee regardless of discontinued service on the Board of Elders as long as they remain active members of Bethel Baptist Church.

Other called staff Calling Committees shall be appointed by the Board of Elders. The members shall include at least one elder as a member. The Lead Pastor(s) is(are) an ex officio member(s). The committee will solicit resumes, interview, evaluate, check references and background, and

make a recommendation to the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders shall offer the applicant an opportunity to candidate, and shall make a recommendation of the candidate to the congregation. A 75% affirmative written or electronic ballot vote of those present at a properly noticed business meeting is required to act on the recommendation.

The Calling Committee shall terminate upon the acceptance of a call by a candidate for called staff.

5. Other Church Leaders

The Board of Elders shall appoint other church leaders for a full term of one year or for partial terms to fill vacancies.

ARTICLE V QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS

Manner of Receiving Members

1. By Baptism. Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and willing to abide by the faith and practice of this church as expressed in the Constitution and Bylaws, after having been baptized by immersion, may apply for membership.
2. By Letter. Any person from another Baptist church, by the virtue of their church's letter certifying their baptism by immersion and a willingness to abide by the faith and practice of this church as expressed in the Constitution and Bylaws, may apply for membership.
3. By Experience. Any person from another church, who professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and has been immersed and affirms a willingness to abide by the faith and practice of this church as expressed in the Constitution and Bylaws, may apply for membership.
4. To affirm one's desire for membership, all applicants for membership, after completing a newcomer's class, shall submit a signed Statement of Commitment that shall include the church covenant.
5. All applicants for membership shall be reviewed by the Board of Elders (a minimum of three elders required) and upon the unanimous recommendation of the elders present, may thereafter be voted upon by the congregation at any meeting of the church.

Membership Status

1. Active Members shall include all members regularly received into the membership who have not been moved to another membership status or have been removed from membership for the following:
 - a. A member requests termination or transfer.
 - b. A member dies.
 - c. Church discipline requires it as outlined in Scripture.
2. Non-resident Members are members who are living too far away to attend regularly, but who maintain contact with the church, such as students, personnel in the armed forces, missionaries and retirement home residents.
 - a. If 16 years old or older, they shall have the right to vote when present at a business meeting.

- b. If not present at a meeting, they shall not be counted in determining the requirements for a quorum.
 - c. The Board of Elders shall annually review and determine the status of non-resident members.
 - d. They shall be moved to active status upon notifying the Board of Elders of their change in residence back to this area.
3. Inactive Members are those who have been absent from the church for a period of six months without manifesting any interest and who have been moved to “Inactive Member” status by the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders may move members who move out of the area to “Inactive Member” status until such time as they join a church near their new home. Inactive Members will be notified in advance when they are to be placed on inactive status; a contact with the family will be made to those with immediate family members at Bethel if the person is not reached.
 - a. They shall not be counted in determining the requirements for a quorum.
 - b. They must make a request to the Board of Elders and have it approved in order to be transferred to active status.
 - c. Their right to vote will be restored only after being moved to active status.
 - d. The Board of Elders shall annually review and determine the status of inactive members.
 4. In the event that a membership is terminated, the process for reinstatement shall be the same as above.

Responsibilities of Membership

1. All Active Members who are 16 years old, or older, shall have the privilege and responsibility to vote in all matters requiring congregational approval.
2. Members shall strive to keep their covenant obligations. They should honor and esteem their pastors, pray for them regularly and assist them in carrying out the program of the church. They will endeavor to preserve the unity of the church and if at any time find themselves opposed to the doctrines of this church and our Baptist denomination, they will not seek to disrupt its fellowship but will quietly withdraw from its membership.
3. Every member of the church is expected to be faithful in the support of its meetings and worship services; to bring the whole tithe into the house of God; and to keep the church secretary informed as to their residence.

ARTICLE VI MEETINGS

Annual Business Meeting

The annual business meeting of the church shall be held during the latter part of April, as determined by the Board of Elders. The agenda of the annual business meeting shall include election of elders, approval of budgets and objectives for the current year, and other matters as determined by the Board of Elders. In preparation for the meeting, the Board of Elders shall make available to church members written reports from key ministries, together with a proposed agenda, financial report, budget, and Lead Pastor(s)’ report at least ten days prior to the annual meeting.

The annual business meeting, as well as any special business meeting, may be restricted in whole or in part to Active Members, as determined by the Board of Elders.

Quarterly Business Meetings

Quarterly meetings of the church should be held during the last half of July, October and January. The specific date is to be set by the Board of Elders. In preparation for each meeting, the Board of Elders shall make available to church members a proposed agenda, financial report, minutes from the previous quarterly, or annual business meeting, minutes of any special business meetings for the quarter and any other pertinent information at least seven days in advance of the quarterly meeting.

Special Business Meetings

The Board of Elders may convene business meetings, in addition to the annual and quarterly business meetings, as it deems necessary. A business meeting may also be convened by written petition signed by at least five percent of all Active Church Members.

Proper Notice

Special business meetings of the church may be held at any time by order of the Board of Elders. Notice of such a meeting, stating the purpose thereof, shall be given from the pulpit no less than fourteen days prior to and at each Sunday service until the business meeting. Said notice shall also be communicated electronically or by paper at request.

Matters of business concerning membership additions and dismissals may be presented and acted upon at any regular stated meeting of the church without previous notice. The person conducting the meeting shall notify the church office secretary of any action taken in order to keep the records up to date.

Proper public notice of a meeting to amend these Bylaws of Bethel Baptist Church shall be made at least twenty-eight days prior to the meeting.

Public Worship

The stated meetings of the church for public worship shall be Sunday mornings, and such other meetings as may be scheduled. The Board of Elders may make exceptions to a weekly schedule as required.

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall usually be observed the first Sunday of each month, with the invitation to participate extended to those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior. The Board of Elders may make exceptions as required.

Marriage Ceremonies

In adherence to religious doctrines grounded in Scripture, Bethel Baptist Church, its facilities and/or its pastors/ministers/clergy will only facilitate, conduct, participate in, and/or solemnize marriages between one biological man and one biological woman.

ARTICLE VII ELECTIONS AND VOTING

Annual Elections

It shall be the privilege of any church member, who is qualified to vote, to suggest the name of any eligible person for any office (providing that the person in question has given consent) to the Nominating Committee by December 31st of the fiscal year to allow the Nominating Committee to utilize their process of evaluation and discernment on the individual(s) suggested.

Members seeking to suggest an eligible person for nomination to the Elder Board shall utilize [*Elders & Leadership Structure at Bethel* booklet] to better understand an Elder's qualifications.

The Nominating Committee shall publicly communicate the nominations for the following year no less than five weeks prior to the annual business meeting.

At a business meeting to be held no less than five weeks prior to the annual business meeting, if possible to be held in conjunction with the January Quarterly Business Meeting, the Nominating Committee shall present the nominations for the following year in writing to all church members in attendance.

No nomination shall be made from the floor at the time of election, but each voter may vote for the person of his choice by writing in that person's name on the ballot.

All offices to be voted upon shall be contained on one ballot.

An incumbent officer presented for election to an officer position shall be presented as a single candidate.

Interim Elections

Interim elections to fill vacancies may be held at any business meeting, with proper notice.

Voting

All Active Members, and Non-resident Members who are present, who are 16 years old, or older, are permitted to vote at business meetings.

Non-electronic, signed absentee ballots shall be received by the call to order for the intended meeting

Electronic votes shall be cast through the Elder Board's approved methods.

If more than one candidate is presented for a vacant position, the candidate(s) receiving the most votes shall be elected. When a single candidate is presented to fill a position, an affirmative vote of 75% of those voting is required for election.

A written or electronic ballot vote shall be used for:

1. Election of Officers
2. Election of Nominating Committee members
3. Election of Lead Pastor(s) Calling Committee members
4. Calling of staff members
5. Acquiring, selling, or building upon real property
6. Borrowing money
7. Any other time that the chairman of the meeting deems necessary

Unless otherwise provided in these bylaws, a majority vote is required for action by the congregation.

Quorums

Quorums shall only be required at meetings in which a vote is taken on old or new business. A quorum is defined as ten percent of Active Church Members, which includes members who are physically or electronically present.

Effective Date of Service

Officers, Nominating Committee members, and all appointed church leaders assume responsibility on the first day of the elective year, unless elected or appointed during the year to fill a vacancy.

ARTICLE VIII AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws require three scheduled congregational business meetings, with the second and third meeting following the previous meeting by at least one month.

1. At any business meeting of the church, proposed amendments may be introduced through a formal motion. The proposal shall be reviewed by the church and revised if so desired and then may be presented for adoption at a business meeting that is scheduled at least one month later.
2. At a business meeting of the church that is held at least one month later than the one at which the proposed amendment(s) are introduced, the church shall review the proposal and make revisions, if so desired. If approved at this meeting, a meeting shall be

- scheduled at least one month later for a vote on the proposal.
3. At a business meeting of the church that is held at least one month later than the meeting in 2, the proposed amendment(s) with no additional changes will be voted on by the congregation. The proposed amendment(s) must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the qualified voting members present at the business meeting.

At no time can any amendment(s) be adopted that would be contrary to historic Baptist beliefs and practices.

ARTICLE IX PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

All business meetings of the congregation shall be conducted according to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

This Constitution was adopted by the church at the annual meeting held on October 26, 2025

Members of the committee were:	Weston Oxley
	Ben Kraft
	Ron Reed
	Steve Apsey
	Josh Reed
	David Christensen