

BEREA BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.

BY-LAWS

PREAMBLE

For the purpose of preserving and making secure the principles of our faith in Christ and to the end that this body be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the Bible, the Greater Gaston Baptist Association, and the Baptist State convention of North Carolina and the Southern Baptist Convention. Nothing in these Bylaws expressed or implied shall be interpreted in such a way as to limit the autonomy of Berea Baptist Church of Gastonia, Inc. as expressed by a majority vote of its members.

I. NAME

The name of this body shall be the Berea Baptist Church of Gastonia, Inc. The church is located at 2522 Hickory Grove Road Gastonia, North Carolina 28056.

II. ARTICLES OF FAITH

The Articles of Faith shall be those adopted by a majority vote of the active members of Berea Baptist Church.

Section A: The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards and the means for procreation of the human race.

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

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

Section B: Human Sexuality

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance.

Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13, Leviticus 18:1-30; 20:13, Romans 1:26-29, 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8, Hebrews 13:4.

We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman.

Genesis 2:24, Romans 7:2, 1 Corinthians 7:10, Ephesians 5:22-23.

A self-proclaimed homosexual, lesbian and/or transsexual cannot be a member of this body, hold office or position in the church and cannot use the church and/or facilities as a place of marriage or any other event or activity.

Romans Chapters 1 and 2

The Pastor cannot perform any civil or religious ceremony with any same-sex couple while serving as Pastor of this church.

III. COVENANT

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. We believe that He came down from heaven. By the power of the Holy Spirit and became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake, He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death, was buried, and on the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son, is worshipped and glorified. We believe in one holy universal Church. We acknowledge baptism by submersion as a symbol of our new covenant with Christ. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

IV. PURPOSE

The purpose of this body shall be to provide regular opportunities of public worship and fellowship, to sustain the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, Christian Doctrines and Ethics as set forth in the Holy Bible.

V. MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this church shall be composed of persons who have been born again and who have subscribed to the Covenant and Bylaws of this church, who has received counsel by the Pastor and who has received a majority vote of the church members present.

Section A: Bases of Candidacy

Candidates for church membership shall be presented to the church, after being counseled by the Pastor, from any of the following ways:

1. By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
2. A member of another Church receiving a majority vote of this church upon a letter of dismissal from that church.
3. Any person coming from other denominations who have never been baptized by immersion shall be expected to present themselves as candidates for baptism by immersion.

Section B: Procedure

Any person may present himself or herself at a public service for membership. At the discretion of the pastor, the church may, as set forth in these By-laws, call itself into special session and vote on the membership of the candidate, or the Pastor may acknowledge the desire and postpone the vote until some subsequent meeting. Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the Pastor and the Deacons for investigation and making of a recommendation to the church within two (2) weeks. A majority vote of those church members present and voting shall be required to elect candidates to membership.

Section C: Duties of Members

Members are expected, first of all, to be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian Life; to attend church services as often as possible; to give regularly and systematically to its support and Kingdom causes, and to share in its organized work.

Section D: Rights of Members

1. Only active members may vote in the business transactions of the church.
2. After one year of church membership, every member is eligible for consideration for elective offices in the church.
3. Members shall have access to the principal records of the church including minutes of its governing body, and principle financial reports. However, consistent with Baptist doctrine and practices, these rights shall not include the right to review or inspect individual donor records or personnel files, except their own.
4. No master documents may be removed from the church office.

Section E: Inactive Status

Membership in this church will transfer from the active roll to the inactive roll if the member does not attend regular service in the space of twelve (12) months except for sickness or other unavoidable hindrances.

Section F: Termination of Membership

Membership in this church shall be terminated in the following ways:

1. By death:
The Church Secretary shall remove the name of any member from the roll upon the death of that member.
2. Transfer of letter:
Letters of dismissal may be granted to any church of like Faith and Order for members in good standing. When letters are granted, membership in this church will be terminated.
3. Uniting with a church of different Faith and Order:
When a member of this church joins a church of different Faith and Order, membership in this church will terminate.
4. Exclusion by action of the church
Such exclusions shall be for immoral and unchristian conduct, persistent breach of Covenant vows, or teaching or practicing doctrine contrary to the Articles of Faith. Such exclusion shall be conducted with tenderness and compassion as outlined in Matthew 18:15-18 by the Pastor and Deacons. Upon recommendation by the Deacons to the church for exclusion, a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of members present for voting is necessary for exclusion. An excluded member may be restored by the person's request and evidence of repentance and reform.

5. By Removal:

Upon receipt of reliable information that a member has joined another church, the Church Secretary shall remove that person from the membership roll of this church and the church in conference so advised.

6. By Resignation. A member may request that their membership be terminated and such termination shall be effective as of that date the request is received.

VI. MEETINGS

Section A: Worship

This church shall hold regular meetings for worship, teaching, training and fellowship.

Section B. Business Meetings

1. Annual Meeting: The annual meeting for the election of officers shall be during August.
2. Regular Business Meetings: Regular Business Meetings shall be held on the fourth Wednesday night of each month.
3. Special called meetings:
 - a. At any regular meeting of the church, the Pastor may call for an immediate business conference. Those being the reception of members, appointment of messengers to the meetings, the granting of letters and the annual church letter.
 - b. Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons; or if the church is without a Pastor, by the Board of Deacons. Such special meetings must be announced publicly at a service of the church at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. Only the business matters announced in the call may be addressed at the meeting.
 - c. In the event of an emergency, the Pastor or Chairman of Deacons may, with consent of two-thirds of the Deacons, call an emergency meeting without full notice to the members. Such notice as is possible will be given to the membership and action limited to the items requiring the emergency meeting. No meeting under this provision may be called in regard to personnel matters.
4. Moderator: The Chairman of the Deacons shall serve as moderator; or in his absence, the Assistant Chairman of the Deacons; or in the absence of both, the Pastor shall designate a third party as the Moderator.
5. Quorum: The church shall decide upon matters of concern by voting at duly constituted business meetings. A quorum shall consist of a majority vote of the church members present.
6. Procedures: Except where specific provisions are made herein, Robert's Rule of Order, revised, shall be the rule and guide in matter of procedure in all business meetings of the church, except that the moderator may, absence objection or with the consent of the majority, deviate from such rules in the interest of full discussion and harmony.
7. The minutes of all meetings shall be the property of the church and kept at the church office. Business Meeting minutes will be available to all members for review.
8. The church year shall begin on September 1 and end on August 31.

VII. OFFICERS

Section A: General

Officers of the church shall be the Pastor, Deacons, Clerk, Treasurer and such others as the church shall determine. The church shall establish and set forth in the Policy and Committee Handbook, their means of selection and duties. All officers must be members of the church and serve at the pleasure of the congregation.

Section B: Pastor

1. Qualifications:

The qualifications are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4

2. Call:

Whenever the services of a Pastor are terminated, the church will elect a Pulpit Committee in order to seek a new Pastor. The Pulpit Committee will be chosen by secret ballot, on Sunday morning from the list of nominated candidates. The Pulpit Committee shall consist of five (5) members and will consider available prospects and recommend to the church a well-qualified person for a call by the church, including a clear statement of conditions of the call. While a new Pastor is being sought, the Deacons will engage an Interim Pastor or Supply Pastor to serve until a Pastor is called and arrives for his work. The church shall not consider more than one (1) person for the Pastorate at a time. The church shall call a Pastor for an indefinite period of time.

3. Duties:

It shall be the duty of the Pastor to administer to the spiritual needs of the church and congregation and to conduct the services of public worship. The Pastor shall be Ex-Officio Member of all Boards and Committees. The Pastor is responsible for leading the church in functioning as a New Testament Church. The Pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations and the church staff in performing their tasks. The primary task of the Pastor is to preach and teach the Word of God and to equip the saints for the work of service through the preaching/teaching ministry.

4. Salary, Benefits and Expense Allowances:

He shall be paid a salary, benefits and expense allowance as approved by the church and established prior to extending a call. His salary and allowances may be adjusted as the church desires.

5. Revival Meetings:

He shall have charge in arranging revival meetings and choosing evangelists with the approval of the active Deacons.

6. Staff:

He shall work with the Finance Committee in formulating recommendations concerning staff personnel.

7. The Pastor is called to serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the Pastor or the church.

a. Resignation:

The Pastor may resign in writing but shall provide at least two (2) weeks notice before termination of his services. Such written resignation, if without conditions, shall be final and binding when read at a congregational meeting or delivered to the church. If any written resignation is subject to

condition it shall be effective and binding when accepted by a majority vote of the church. If the Pastor resigns without notice his salary and benefits will be terminated immediately.

b. Removal:

A Pastor may be removed by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a properly called meeting. Such a vote may be held only at a called meeting in regard to which notice has been mailed to all church members of the pending action and the Pastor is provided an opportunity to be heard. Such a vote may be initiated by the recommendation of the Deacons or by motion adopted by the church to call for such a meeting and vote.

- 1) The officers and the members shall make every effort to follow biblical principles including the process set forth in Matthew 18 in dealing with conflicts regarding Pastoral staff. An effort should be extended to permit reconciliation of conflicts in a manner consistent with Christian faith and doctrine.
- 2) Removal shall be effective immediately upon the adoption of a motion terminating the Pastor but salary only shall continue for not less than thirty (30) days. Any resolution to dismiss may also contain recommendations concerning other financial aspects of the termination including severance pay.

Section C. Deacons

1. Qualifications:

- a. General: Each Deacon should be willing to serve in such capacity and be fully conscious of the divine purpose and duties of the work of a Deacon.
- b. “Likewise must deacons be grave, not doubled tongued, not given too much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well will purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus.” (I Timothy 3:8-13)
- c. Doctrinal: They should know and understand the teaching of the Gospel and the distinctive principles of their own denomination.
- d. Church relationships: They should be active, as much as possible, in all organizations of the church.
- e. The nominee shall be a baptized Christian who is 21 years of age or older and have been a member of Berea Baptist Church for at least one (1) year prior to the nomination.

2. Duties:

Deacons are servants of the church who assist the Pastor in the churches spiritual leadership. Specifically they shall have the following duties:

- a. Be zealous to guard the unity of spirit of the church.
- b. Serve as a council of advice and conference with the Pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and the work of the church.

- c. Shall have the general oversight, along with the Pastor, of the spiritual building of the church.
 - d. The Deacons shall make monthly reports and present recommendations to the church at the regular business meetings.
 - e. In the absence of the Pastor, the Chairman of Deacons or Vice-Chairman shall assume his duties insofar as they pertain to the business matters of the church.
3. Number and Terms:
The number of active Deacons shall be based on total church membership. Membership of the Deacons shall consist of one deacon for every twenty-five (25) members. Deacons shall serve on a rotating basis, with each term lasting three (3) years. A designated number of Deacons shall rotate off each year and an election shall be held to fill the number of Deacons needed for that year.
4. Election:
At the end of the church year, one-third (1/3) of the Deacons with the longest service shall rotate off the Deacon Board. On the third Sunday of June each year, the Pastor and Deacons will prepare a list of nominees consisting of all qualified men for the office of Deacon, which will be handed out to the church members. On the first Sunday in July, the church body will nominate men from this prepared list with those receiving the highest number of member votes being the nominees. The number of church members will determine the number of nominees. A ballot shall be prepared containing the nominees with the highest amount of nominating votes. This ballot shall be given to the church on the first Sunday of August, at which time the members of the church shall vote for a predetermined number of Deacons in order to maintain one (1) Deacon for every twenty-five (25) members and facilitate the one-third (1/3) rotation. The required number of men obtaining the highest number of votes in the church election shall be declared elected to that office. Anyone who has served as a Deacon must have been inactive for at least one (1) full year in order to be eligible for re-election to the Deacon body.

Section D: Board of Directors

The currently serving Trustees shall, meeting and acting together, constitute the Board of Directors of Berea Baptist Church of Gastonia, Inc. Such Board of Directors shall change by and in the same procedure as for the terms of Deacons. In their capacity as Directors, they shall have the duties and responsibilities attendant to Directors, subject however to the limitations set forth in the Charter and By-laws. The Directors shall not have power, except as expressly authorized by the congregation, to purchase or sell or encumber any real or personal property, to install or remove officers or staff, or to amend the By-laws or Charter, or to bind the Corporation to any contract.

- 1. Corporate Officers
The Chairman of the Board of Directors (Trustees) shall, whenever required by law or practice, serve as the President of the Corporation, having, however, only such express powers as are granted by the congregation and having no power absent such express authorization to bind the Corporation in any matter or act for it.
- 2. In a similar manner and subject to the same limitations, the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors (Trustees) shall be authorized to act as the Vice-President.

Section E: Clerk

The Clerk shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church annually. It shall be his or her duty to attend, or be represented at all church business meetings, to keep in a suitable book an accurate record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. Preserve on file at the church all communications and written official reports and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these Bylaws. The Clerk shall serve whenever required by law or practice as the Secretary of the Corporation.

Section F: Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for keeping a register of the names of the members with dates of admission, dismissal or death, together with a record of baptism. The Secretary shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church. The Secretary is responsible for notifying any person or any committee of any action or changes approved by the church regarding that person or committee. All church records are church property and should be filed in the church office. The Secretary shall prepare the annual church profile and send to the Associational Clerk. The Secretary shall be co-custodian with the Moderator, of all valuable papers of the church and keep them in a bank safe deposit box. The Secretary shall, upon invitation, meet with the Board of Directors.

Section G: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church annually.

Section H: Finance Chairman

It shall be the duty of the Finance Chairman to render to the church at regular business meetings, an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. These reports shall be turned over to the Church Secretary who shall preserve them as permanent records of the church.

VIII. MINISTRIES AND LEADERSHIP

Section A:

The ministry organizations of the church shall be: Sunday School, Discipleship Training, Women's Missionary Union, Brotherhood and auxiliaries related thereto and such others as the church may deem appropriate.

Section B:

The church may establish such positions of leadership for its work as it deems appropriate and for each such position shall establish the qualifications, terms, duties and means of selection. These, when approved, shall be set forth in the Policy and Committee Handbook. The church shall place its approval upon all church officers and other workers by electing them annually by majority vote at a business meeting.

Section C: Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee consists of the Chairman of the Deacons, Sunday School Director, the Brotherhood Director and the WMU Director.

Section D: Committees

1. Committees of the Church:

Committees of the church shall be Nominating, Finance, Building and Grounds, Benevolence, Kitchen, Floral, Ushers, Ordinances or any other committee the church deems necessary. All church committees, unless otherwise specified, shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee on a year-to-year basis. At the time the Nominating Committee presents its recommendations, further nominations may be presented from the floor but no one member may nominate more than one member for any committee from the floor. For all such committees, the church shall establish their means of appointment, terms

and duties and set them forth in a Policy and Committee Handbook which has been approved by the church.

2. Election of Committees:

The Nominating Committee shall nominate to the church in its annual business meeting, persons to serve for the succeeding year on the standing committees, except the Nominating Committee. The church will then elect the personnel of the several committees.

Section E: Church Staff

The church may employ full or part time staff to assist in fulfilling the church's mission and work of the church. For all such positions, the church shall establish processes for selection, supervision, accountability and termination, as well as job descriptions for all such positions and set them forth in the Policy and Committee Handbook.

Section F: During the Churches' Physical year no new Sunday School Class can be formed.

IX. CHURCH FINANCES

Section A: Policy

Financial policy shall be recommended by the Finance Committee and voted upon by the church.

Section B: Budget

The Budget and Finance Committee shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and other expenses. Offering envelopes will be provided for members use.

Section C: Accounting Procedure

Monies shall be properly counted and deposited by the Finance Committee and accounted for by the Treasurer. The Secretary of the Church will record these monies in the books of the church. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Finance Committee. All monies given separately from the morning service must be given to either the Chairman of the Deacons, the Chairman of the Finance Committee or the Treasurer to be placed in the church safe.

Section D: Expenditures and Receipts of Funds

1. No funds shall be disbursed without the express authorization of the church as provided for in the budget or separate authorization.
2. No designated funds shall be received except where the church has approved the expenditure of all funds for that designated cause. Separate accounting shall be maintained for all designated gifts and funds.

Section E. Audit

The Finance Committee shall be responsible for setting up an annual audit in coordination with the Church Secretary of the accounts of the Church Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer of a type and nature they deem appropriate.

Section F. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

X. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The officers shall assure the creation and maintenance of a Policies and Committee Handbook which shall contain all currently controlling policies and procedures governing any aspect of the church's affairs including committee task descriptions, policies regarding the handling of funds, use of facilities and employment practices.

XI. AMENDMENTS

These By-laws may be amended, altered or repealed by three fourths (3/4) majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting of the church provided that:

1. Each amendment has been presented in writing to the moderator and is available to each church member at least one week prior to a normally scheduled Business Meeting.
2. That one week's notice is given to the church regarding the regular business meeting for voting on proposed amendments.
3. That a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of those church members present and voting be required for each amendment to be adopted.

A copy of these Bylaws shall at all times be kept by the Secretary among his or her records and another copy shall be kept in the church office and all amendments to or revisions thereof shall, after passage by the church, be prepared by the Secretary and posted in the copies of the Bylaws and made available to the church members generally upon request.

Revision 2 – 08/09/04

Revision 3 – 08/06/06
II: Articles of Faith

Revision 4 – 04/25/07
VII: Meetings

Revision 5 - 04/18/12
Committee amended the By-laws Document and wrote the Church and Committee Handbook