

Dear Church Family,

I wanted to say a few words about the PROPOSED Constitution and By-Laws and the process we followed that led to these documents being presented for your consideration.

From the beginning, our goals were to produce documents that reflect how our church is already conducting “business,” are biblically based, meet legal requirements, and are reflective of the awesome spirit of the GBBC family.

During the process we reviewed numerous samples of other church’s existing documents. We researched the definition and purpose of each document, and determined what data needed to be included, or excluded, in each. Wherever possible we included the biblical reference for each standard or process. While developing the documents, we tried not to “create” anything that is not already a part of who we are or how we do business. The only areas where such occurrences may present themselves should be areas that were required to be included, but not subjects that GBBC has previously addressed. The guiding precept throughout was the spirit of grace that abounds so much at GBBC. Each committee member and Brother David have reviewed these documents in their entirety and believe we have met the stated goals. All of our Deacons have had the opportunity to review both documents and have their concerns addressed as well.

Some of you have expressed an expectation that these two documents will answer every question pertaining to how GBBC “does business.” Because of the variety of issues, many circumstances, and the increased voting restrictions attached to these documents that is not possible. As you read these documents you will notice an occasional reference to stand-alone documents such as The Pastor-Church Covenant and church policy letters. Most of our “daily business” is more appropriately addressed in those types of documents. While some of these documents are already on file in the church office, many are still “under construction”. This committee is continuing its service to you by working with the pastor and staff to bring our inventory of policy letters into alignment with our processes.

This committee moves to have these two documents approved as GBBC’s Constitution and By-Laws respectively. We will have a time of discussion at the February 24, 2008 business meeting. Barring the need to reconvene the committee for changes, a special called meeting will follow on March 2, 2008 for a no-discussion vote.

If during your time of review you have concerns or questions, please feel free to contact any member of the committee. The members are Joanne Kicklighter, Dixie Coleman, Janemarie Davis, Danny Clark, Jon Long, John Thrift, and Andy Stewart.

Sincerely,

Andy Stewart,
Chairman, Constitution and By-Laws Committee

The First Baptist Church of Gum Branch, Inc.

By-Laws

Preamble

Whereas we, the members of The First Baptist Church of Gum Branch, Inc., hereafter GBBC, have moved to adopt our Constitution do now endeavor to adopt the following points of clarification and additional instruction regarding the conduct of daily procedures and operational instruction as set forth in these GBBC By-Laws.

Its purpose is to aid in the effective and efficient functioning of staff, committees, ministry teams and church members; to assist church leadership in sound decision making; to optimize the fulfillment of GBBC's ministry purpose and goals; and to have in written form necessary ministry guidelines located in one place for easy and quick reference. Furthermore, these guidelines are to protect the congregation and its leaders -- not to restrict ministry or impede the working of the Holy Spirit. They will be used as a management tool and not a wall of rigidity that could put a damper on GBBC's mission.

Article 1 – Church Covenant

"Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness; to give it a place in our affections,

prayers and services above every organization of human origin; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, toward its expenses, for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. In case of difference of opinion in the church, we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to study diligently the word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintance ; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be kind and just to those in our employ , and faithful in the service we promise others; endeavoring in the purity of heart and good will towards all men to exemplify and commend our holy faith.

We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others; to participate in each other's joys, and with tender sympathy bear one another's burdens and sorrows; to cultivate Christian courtesy; to be slow to give or take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, being mindful of the rules of the Savior in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to secure it without delay; and through life, amid evil report, and good report, to seek to live to the glory of God, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When we remove from this place, we engage as soon as possible to unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word."

Article 2 – Affiliations

GBBC holds firmly to the autonomy, individual rights, and privileges of the independent church. However, so as to increase the impact of the ministries of GBBC, the membership may from time to time, at any regular business meeting, vote to participate with other churches or organizations. These organizations will be evaluated based on its message, mission, goals, and alignment with the beliefs and goals of GBBC. Examples of such organizations are: The Southern Baptist Convention, the New Sunbury Baptist Association, Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed (AWANA), and Word of Life Ministries.

The membership may, at anytime, choose or re-evaluate its affiliations previously aligned and, by majority vote, choose to discontinue its affiliation with any such group.

Article 3 – Membership

Section 1 – Voting

Each member of the congregation shall have the right and privilege of casting one vote for or against any matter brought to the floor during any meeting where such voting may take place.

During special matters of consideration a motion to restrict the voting rights of certain members may be considered. Examples from GBBC history include: staff members not voting on matters of personnel pay packages and an age restriction for matters of large financial purchases or financial commitments.

If a motion to restrict the voting rights of any member carries, the restriction shall be in affect for the precise matter for consideration only. Immediately following the closure of the matter for consideration, voting rights shall be fully restored to all members affected by this procedure.

Section 2 - Church Discipline

Church Discipline, shall be used for repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined: (see Proverbs 15: 5; 29: 15; I Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; I Timothy 3: 4–5; Hebrews 12: 1–11; Psalm 119: 115; 141: 5; Proverbs 17: 10; 25: 12; 27: 5; Ecclesiastes 7: 5; Matthew 7: 26–27; 18: 15–17; Luke 17: 3; Acts 2: 40; I Corinthians 5: 5; Galatians 6: 1–5; II Thessalonians 3: 6, 14–15; I Timothy 1: 20; Titus 1: 13–14; James 1: 22); for the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33; Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5: 14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24–25); for the purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5: 6–7; II Corinthians 13: 10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2); For the good of our corporate witness to non–Christians (see Proverbs 28: 7; Matthew 5: 13–16; John 13: 35; Acts 5: 1–14; Ephesians 5: 11; I Timothy 3: 7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3: 10); and Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5: 11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chronicles 19: 2; Ezra 6: 21; Nehemiah 9: 2; Isaiah 52: 11; Ezekiel 36: 20; Matthew 5: 16; John 15: 8; 18: 17, 25; Romans 2: 24; 15: 5–6; II Corinthians 6: 14–7: 1; Ephesians 1: 4; 5: 27; I Peter 2: 12).

Article 4 – Duties of Officers

Section 1 - Senior Pastor / Elder

The Senior Pastor / Elder shall preach on each Sunday, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, oversee the work of the appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, mobilize the church for world missions, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution. The senior pastor is further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor the active deacon body shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

The departure of the Senior Pastor / Elder from GBBC is a serious matter of consideration. The Senior Pastor / Elder, congregation, deacon body, and other staff members will pursue much prayer and the seeking of God's direction prior to a departure plan being presented for consideration. If the departure is eminent, the Church / Pastor Covenant shall provide the guidance for such activity.

Section 2 - Associate Pastors

Associate Pastors shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertaining to the office of associate pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation and/or the senior pastor/elder.

Section 3 – Deacons

The active deacon body shall serve as an oversight body in reference to the work of the appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions.

The deacons may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The deacons may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of senior and associate pastor. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside with the personnel committee under the advisement of the senior pastor/elder.

The deacons shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may be delegated to a staff member or to the personnel committee.

The active deacon body shall nominate and elect a “Chairman of the Deacons”. The elected chairman shall serve for a term of one year. He may be re-elected to another term only after one year out of the office of Chairman. The office of Chairman of the Deacons is reserved for Deacons who have completed one full term (three years) and one year of inactive service.

Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with the gifts of administration.

No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the senior pastor/elder and the active deacon body.

The deacons, with the agreement of the senior pastor/elder, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws, the senior pastor/elder and deacons shall elect one of the Trustees to serve as the president of the corporation.

Article 5 – Meetings

The deacon body shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held. The pastor shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church. As moderator, the pastor shall determine standard areas of reports for each meeting. He shall ensure the collections of the required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members prior to the called meeting.

Parliamentary Authority of all meetings held at GBBC shall be Robert's Rules of Order (Revised).

Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present. A majority of those church members present shall be

necessary to carry or defeat any issue of business brought before the church. A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members' meeting no more than three months nor less than one month prior to the start of the fiscal year.

At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

Article 6 – Lay Leaders and Committees

Section 1 - Summary

GBBC believes the Bible demonstrates God's desire for His people to serve one another and others. It therefore, utilizes Lay Leaders (non-seminary trained church leaders) and Committees to assist the church in fulfilling its stated purpose. The church shall elect as many Lay Leaders and Committees as necessary to perform the duties and business of the church.

The church shall elect all Lay Leaders and Committees from nominations made by the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall, prior to the individual being submitted for consideration, verify Church membership of each person being recommended.

All standing committees members shall serve for three years with one third of the committee rotating off each year. The Senior Pastor / Elder or his designated representative shall serve as ex-officio on all committees.

Each committee shall meet not later than sixty days after the start of the new church year. A chairman shall be elected for each committee during this first meeting. Each committee shall

meet at least once each church year. There shall not be any Lay Leader or Committee meeting scheduled during Sunday School, Worship Service, or Discipleship Training.

Section 2 – Lay Leaders

Lay Leaders are persons elected by the church to fill the following positions for one-year terms and to perform the duties listed for each position:

Sunday School Director: ensures classrooms, equipment, teachers, and training materials are available for the conduct of Sunday School classes.

Assistant Sunday School Director: assists the Sunday School Director in completing their duties.

Nursery Coordinator: ensures classrooms, equipment, teachers, helpers, and training materials are available for the nursery. Plans and conducts special events for the nursery. Coordinates caregivers for the nursery during special events as needed.

Preschool Coordinator: ensures classrooms, equipment, teachers, helpers, and training materials are available for the preschool aged students. Plans and conducts special events for the preschool aged students.

Children's Coordinator: ensures classrooms, equipment, teachers, helpers, and training materials are available for children aged first to fifth grade. Plans and conducts special events for children.

Children's Church Coordinator: ensures classrooms, equipment, teachers, helpers, and training materials are available for the conduct of Children's Church for children during each Sunday Morning.

MOPS Director: serves as the coordinator to the MOPS national organization, plans and conducts in-reach and outreach activities for its membership and others.

Men's Ministry Director: plans and conducts in-reach and outreach activities for its membership and others; serves on the missions committee.

Circle of Friends Ministry Director: plans and conducts in-reach and outreach activities for its membership and others; serves on the missions committee.

Woman-to-Woman Mentoring Director: plans and conducts in-reach and outreach activities for its membership and others; serves on the missions committee.

Vacation Bible School Director: ensures classrooms, equipment, teachers, training materials, people to prepare snacks and crafts, game activity leaders, and music trainers are available for the conduct of Vacation Bible School.

Outreach Coordinator: prepare visitation cards for each person to be visited, develops plan to ensure maximum contact of visitors and members.

Sunday School Teachers: prepares classroom, material, and self in order to share and expound on the gospel of Christ to attendees of Sunday School, maintains contact with the Sunday School

Director or other church leadership in order to share the needs, decisions, and growth of class members.

Discipleship Leaders: prepares classroom, material, and self in order to share and expound on the gospel of Christ to attendees of Wednesday night discipleship classes (includes adult, youth, and children classes), maintains contact with the Minister of Education or other church leadership in order to share the needs, decisions, and growth of class members.

Section 3 – Committees

Building and Grounds: consists of six members; responsible for the general building and grounds maintenance/repair, obtains bids and make recommendations for jobs deemed outside the scope or ability of the committee.

Bus: consists of three members; responsible for the general maintenance/repair of the church bus/buses, obtains bids and make recommendations for jobs deemed outside the scope or ability of the committee.

Benevolence: consists of four members; serves as the point of contact for persons with specific needs i.e. financial, lodging, travel, etc.; makes recommendations to the church leadership or the congregation for needs deemed outside the scope or ability of the committee.

Counting: consists of three members; counts and prepares for deposit into the church's banking institution the tithes and offerings from each service.

Baptism: consists of two members; responsible for the general maintenance/repair of the church baptismal, obtains bids and make recommendations for jobs deemed outside the scope or ability of the committee.

Bereavement: consist of four members; serves as the point of contact for the church to assist in the outreach to families during the loss of a loved one.

Men's Ministry: consists of five members; plans and conducts in-reach and outreach activities for its membership and others.

Women's Ministry: consists of four members; plans and conducts in-reach and outreach activities for its membership and others.

Circle of Friends: consists of five members; plans and conducts in-reach and outreach activities for its membership and others.

Woman-to-Woman Mentoring: consists of one member; plans and conducts mentoring opportunities for its membership and others.

Personnel: consists of three members; serves as the point of contact for the congregation and/or staff to voice concerns regarding personnel, assists in search of new hires as needed, recommends personnel actions such as raises, promotions, and counseling as needed.

Budget: consists of six members plus the church secretary and church treasurer as ex-officio members; gathers annual ministry budget requests, considers request as compared to historical

contributions and makes recommendations to the church concerning up-coming year's budget, provides insight and makes recommendations for special funds request.

Music: consists of four members; plans and conducts musical presentations with the purpose of worshipping God.

Mission: consist of five members plus the Senior Pastor as an ex-officio member (the Men's and Women's Ministry Chairs are automatically assigned to this committee); reviews ministry opportunities and makes recommendations regarding missions to the congregation.

Nominating: consists of five members plus the Senior Pastor, Sunday School Director, and Youth Pastor as ex-officio members; seeks church members to fill each lay leader and committee position, conducts personal interviews to determine preparedness of each nominee for the position being considered, and makes recommendations to the congregation for each position.

Senior Adult: consist of one member; plans and conducts in-reach and outreach activities for its membership and others.

Social: consists of two members; plans and coordinates social events for the congregation.

Shower: consist of one member; plans and coordinates baby and marriage showers for church members.

Constitution and By-Laws: consists of seven members; serves as the point of contact for matters regarding procedures and processes for the conduct of church business, reviews current

Constitution and By-Laws annually to ensure adherence and appropriateness, makes recommendations as needed.

Scholarship: consists of five members; sets annual guidelines and qualifications for college level scholarships sponsored by GBBC, reviews candidates and recommends recipients to the congregation.

Set-up: consists of five members plus youth volunteers; reconfigures seating and other equipment for special events and returns the area to the original configuration or to the next configuration if another special event is scheduled as needed.

Ushers/Greeters: consists of twenty-one members; greets persons as they enter a service and ushers guest and members to seating as needed, counts the number of attendees at each service, provide visitor information packs, conducts the process of collecting the tithe and special offerings.

Article 7 - Furnishings, Equipment, Buses, and Buildings

The use of all furnishings, equipment, buses, and buildings shall be granted based on the standing policies of the church. Copies of each of these policies are available in the church office for review. The standing policies may be changed at anytime as a result of a vote by the membership.

Article 8 – Church Year

The church year for GBBC shall begin on the first day of September and end on the last day of August each year.

Article 9 - Amendments to by-laws

These By-Laws may be amended by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

The church clerk shall make the revised version of these By-Laws available to all church members.

The First Baptist Church of Gum Branch, Inc. Constitution

Preamble

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants to unite here in 1833 under the name Gum Branch Primitive Baptist Church, for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and He has sustained and prospered this work to the present day; and

Whereas we, the members of the First Baptist Church of Gum Branch Inc., hereafter GBBC, Gum Branch, Georgia, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Holy Spirit, have recognized the need to reconstitute ourselves to more closely conform to His will for the Church in this age and prepare ourselves for greater efforts in His name;

Now therefore we, the members of GBBC, do hereby organize ourselves and adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in the Church Covenant of this church and The Baptist Faith and Message, hereinafter Statement of Faith, of 2000.

Article 1 – Name

The name of this church is The First Baptist Church of Gum Branch Inc.

Article 2 – Purpose

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through: Worshipping Him; Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study; Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture; Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work, local, domestic, and international; Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion; Encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers; Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ; and Calling fellow churches to biblical faithfulness and purity.

Article 3 – Membership

Section 1 – Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized by emersion, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible.

Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The pastor shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, he may rely on a person's profession of faith, letter of good standing from another Baptist Church, or by statement of faith by the individual.

Section 2 – Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the moderator for admission and accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God.

Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the deacons.

Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation. Under Christ, its members govern this congregation of believers.

Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

Section 4 – On Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the deacons and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the deacons or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, and deposition from office. (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3: 14–15; 1 Timothy 5: 19–20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5). The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined; for the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them; for the purity of the church as a whole; For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians; and Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.

Section 5 – Termination of Membership

The church, following the death or voluntary resignation of any church member, shall recognize termination of membership. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline at the recommendation of the deacons and with the vote of two-thirds of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members as outlined in the By-laws.

Article 4 – Officers

Section 1 – Summary

The Biblical offices in the church are pastor/elder, associate pastors, and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of Clerk, Treasurer, Church Secretary, and Trustees. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Section 2 – The Senior Pastor/Elder

The senior pastor shall satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 6–9. Subject to the will of the congregation, the senior pastor shall oversee the

ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6: 1–6 and I Peter 5: 1–4, the senior pastor shall devote his time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock.

The senior pastor shall be received as a gift of Christ to His church and set apart as an elder, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall not be subject to reaffirmation or any term limitation. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 4.

Section 3 – Associate Pastors

The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of associate. An associate pastor shall satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 6–9. He shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching, teaching, and his specific ministry service. His call shall not be subject to reaffirmation or to the any term limitation. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 5.

He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation and/or senior pastor/elder.

In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the deacon body.

Section 4 – Deacons

The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3: 8–13 and Acts 6: 1–7. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. They shall be elected to one term lasting for a maximum of three years and may be re-elected to another term after one year of inactive service.

Section 5 – Clerk

It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the pastor, the deacons, or the church.

The clerk shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year.

In the absence or incapacity of the clerk the senior pastor shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk.

Section 6 – Treasurer

The treasurer, who shall not be a paid church staff member, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each members' meeting. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books

belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the active deacon body annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church. The treasurer shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year.

Section 7 – Church Secretary

The church secretary, for purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws, shall serve as the secretary of the corporation. The secretary shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members. They shall further maintain a copy of the active and inactive membership rolls. The secretary shall serve as an ex-officio member of the budget committee and perform duties as outlined in the job description in the by-laws.

Section 8 – Trustees

The church, according to its needs, shall determine the number of trustees. The trustees shall be elected to indefinite terms. The trustees, representing the church as its agent, shall administer the business and secular affairs of the church. All legal documents shall require the signature of at least three trustees. They shall look to the welfare of the physical plant of the church. They shall not sign any agreements, contracts, or any form of obligation until the subject has been properly presented and approved by the majority of the church in a regular or called church conference. They shall not have authority to sell, lease, give away, or dispose of church property.

Article 5 - Meetings

Section 1 – Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Sunday, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines (i.e. revivals, special Easter or communion services).

Section 2 – Members’ meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Roberts’ Rules of Orders shall be the guiding authority for each members’ meeting. There shall be a regular members’ meeting the Sunday evening following the quarterly Deacons’ meeting, typically held the last Tuesday of the first month of the quarter.

Special members’ meetings may be called as required by the active deacon body, or at the written request, submitted to the deacons, of five percent of the voting membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the active deacon body shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

Emergent members’ meetings may be called by the active deacon body to be held the following Sunday for issues deemed emergent by the active deacon body. An attempt will be made to notify the voting membership of the meeting by whatever means deemed appropriate by the active deacon body and senior pastor.

Article 6 – Elections of Officers

Section 1 – Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:

Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process; Nominations should proceed with the support of the senior pastor/elder and deacons; All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members; The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2 – Selection of Clerk and Treasurer

The election of the clerk and treasurer shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. The nominating committee shall present the names of nominees to serve as the clerk or treasurer during the annual presentation of nominees. Recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process is encouraged and expected.

Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the senior pastor/elder. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the senior pastor/elder as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting.

The election shall proceed as directed by the moderator. The moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

Section 3 – Selection of Deacons

The election of deacons may be held at a members' meeting or during a special called members' meeting. Nominations will be collected from the general membership at least one month prior to elections. The nominee shall have been a member of Gum Branch Baptist Church not less than one year.

Should the nominee not already be ordained for the office of deacon, the senior pastor/elder and active deacons shall examine him to determine his eligibility for entrance into the deacon mentoring process. A nominee found eligible to serve in the office of deacon but not yet ordained shall not be eligible for election until successfully completing the mentoring process and receiving an affirming vote from the active deacon body.

A list of qualified men eligible for election to the office of deacon shall be published to the general membership two weeks prior to the election. Prayer and reflection is encouraged during these two weeks. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the senior pastor/elder or chairman of the deacons. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the senior pastor/elder as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting.

The election shall proceed as directed by the moderator. The moderator shall declare elected the men receiving the highest number of votes from the congregation that will maintain the minimum number of active deacons, abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. The persons elected shall assume their respective offices on the first day of the church year.

Section 4 – Calling of the Senior Pastor

Following the recommendation of any man to this position by the elected search committee, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential senior pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the deacons that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as senior pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

Section 5 – Calling of Associate Pastor

A similar process of calling a senior pastor/elder must be followed. However the search committee for an associate pastor may consist solely of the personnel committee. The committee will give much consideration to the insight of the Senior Pastor. The candidate must be given adequate opportunity to share their vision or demonstrate their spiritual gift, or gifts, as it relates to the potential position for which they are being considered. Before being asked to express its judgment, the church must receive assurance from the deacon body that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as associate pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

Article 7 – Indemnification

Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the deacons determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification

At the discretion of the deacons, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

Section 3 – Procedure

If a quorum of the deacons is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of deacons seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

Article 8 – Dispute Resolution

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18: 15–20, I Corinthians 6: 1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles and the avoidance of suits of law or equity to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities. The senior pastor/elder and deacons shall adopt policies and procedures to effect these requirements and aspirations.

Article 9 – Amendments

The Church Covenant and/or the affirmation of the Statement of Faith may be amended by a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

The church clerk shall make the revised version of this constitution available to all church members.