

Revised Constitution and By-Laws *Of* *Second Baptist Church* *Joliet Illinois*

PREAMBLE

Receiving by faith the Lord Jesus Christ and relying wholly upon Him for our salvation, believing the Bible to be the verbally inspired Word of God, and knowing that "all things should be done decently and in order" we do willingly and joyfully join together as a body of baptized believers and adopt this revised constitution as a declaration of our faith and as the foundation for growing in Christ at Second Baptist Church of Joliet Illinois to the glory of God.

Article I – Name and Location

1. **Second Baptist Church of Joliet, Illinois** derived her name as early as 1880 in the city of Joliet as a New Testament assembly of believers forming a local Church defined in scripture as those "*called out*" of the world and into the Body of Christ by the authority of Jesus spoken in Matthew 16:18.
2. Second Baptist Church is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit, faith-based entity.

Article II - Autonomy

1. Second Baptist Church is a local assembly and manifestation of the universal, scriptural Church of Jesus Christ, welcoming all people worldwide to unite as believers herein.
2. Second Baptist Church is in free association and voluntary cooperation with other Church associations on local, state and national levels. However, Second Baptist Church is self-governing and free from control by any external authority and legally independent from any hierarchy of individuals or organizations.
3. Second Baptist Church is responsible for its own adoption of doctrine, administration, practices and activities ranging from the selection of officers as servant leaders, discipline of members, the ordination of men into the Gospel ministry, and determining the magnitude and method of Church-to-Church association and cooperation.
4. Second Baptist Church in accordance with scripture, submits to the laws of our city, our state and our country, insofar as those laws do not require violation of God's Word in the Bible (66 Books). Second Baptist Church will pray for government leaders to rule righteously as all human authority has been permitted as such by God.

Article III - Purpose

Second Baptist Church purposes to be nothing less than a local Church defined by the Word of God in the New Testament scripture. **Our Mission:** We commit to adhere to the commands of the Great Head of the Church Jesus Christ, who builds the Church as His Body (Matthew 16:18), to promote His coming Kingdom by faith and practice.

Recognizing the **Church as the Body of Christ**, Second Baptist Church seeks to fulfill this purpose in a *sevenfold* manner by:

- 1. Body Prayer:** As the New Testament Church received her start in prayer, each member of the Church will seek to spend time with God by maintaining a personal prayer life to the Lord and consistently set aside time to pray collectively in "prayer meeting" on one accord seeking God first for His continual manifested presence, providing guidance to the leaders, maturity to members, wisdom for expansion and growth with blessings for meeting the innumerable needs of our day. We purpose to involve God's presence in all endeavors of the Body regardless of location by commencing every activity of the Church with prayer.
- 2. Body Worship:** We commit to always put God first in all human affairs. We will worship (to bow to) God in private and in public. We commit to come prepared on a regular basis to the House of God in the assembly of God to worship the Lord "in Spirit and in Truth." We will strive to worship Him in our attitudes and lifestyles at all times.
- 3. Body Discipleship:** Discipleship is the process whereby a member of Church becomes a learner or one who studies the Word of God in order to emulate the life of Christ. Against stagnant membership, we commit to a process of growth by the consistent study and application of God's Word by attending Bible study in Church or home. Members will reach toward maturity to operate in their spiritual gifts and bear much fruit in God's Word, becoming equipped for ministry in order to evangelize and carry out Christian missions in the surrounding communities to regions worldwide. As we mature in God's Word, we also commit to mentor and serve as surrogate parents to help equip those who are younger in the Lord.
- 4. Body Fellowship:** As the early Church broke bread together as a means of fellowship (Acts 3), we commit to grow together in Christ through mutual fellowship. God designed relationships to be crucial to human life, especially new life in Christ. Fellowship in the Body of Christ develops the relationship life of the believer in a new community with godly values, holistic success and positive affirmation of our identity in Christ amidst people striving to show the love of Christ. This fellowship is a critical alternative to the un-Christlike fellowship offered by the world that stunts proper spiritual growth.
- 5. Body Ministry:** Ministry is a commitment to meeting the needs of the whole man in the Body of Christ. This ministry is intended to identify and remove impediments to growth such as afflictions, disease, hurts, strongholds or any other obstruction in order to provide advancement in body, mind and soul toward greater liberty and effectiveness in serving Christ. Leaders in the Body of Christ are committed to helping the whole man to move closer to Christ through disaster assistance, benevolence, skill development, education assistance, healing, counseling, addiction recovery and deliverance from all strongholds.
- 6. Body Outreach:** Driven by the burden to help reproduce the salvation in others that the Holy Spirit has produced in us, we are the Church that is not bound by our walls or our grounds. Just as we are "called out" to be regenerated in Christ, we are called to go back out in the "highway and hedges" and compel potential new believers to come. From

involvement in the local community (earning the right to be heard) to traveling to worldwide regions, we are compelled to serve in missions and evangelism to win new believers in Christ.

- 7 Body Warfare (Spiritual):** As believers in Christ, we have been given the authority of Christ to do no less in spiritual warfare than what the Seventy did in Christ when He sent them out. Jesus has given us “the Keys of the Kingdom” to permit and forbid on earth what has already been permitted and forbidden in heaven. This is the beginning of realizing that vital portion of our prayer life modeled in the Lord’s prayer – “Thy Kingdom come.” Jesus promised the gates of hell shall not overpower the Church. We believe the Church has been equipped by Christ to take authority over the enemy’s intrusions/strongholds into the Church and the home in order to freely advance the Kingdom of Christ.

Article IV – Statement of Faith

Section 1. The Holy Scripture

We believe the Bible is Holy Scripture serving as the complete record of God’s redemptive revelation to man. We believe the Bible is a collection of a total of 66 books [39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament] and is the providential work of the Holy Spirit and human writers with stylistic features internally evident. We believe the Bible to be God-breathed and infallible, representing God’s Word to man in this present age.

We believe that the Bible, in its original manuscripts, was inspired by God superintending human writers in every word, equally in all its parts and inerrant as the body of absolute truth. We believe proper and authoritative interpretation is by way of scripture-interpreting-scripture, where no conclusion of its message supports independent human judgment at the grave cost of contradicting scripture. The Bible serves as man’s final authority for faith and practice for all of human experience and is therefore the basis through which all other literary works should be viewed.

Section 2. God

We believe there is but one true and living God, who is Spirit, self-existent, infinite, all knowing, all-powerful, omnipresent, sovereign and perfect in all His attributes. We believe that this one living and true God has revealed to us in His Word that He exists as three persons — God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — and that each person is the same essence, performing distinct but harmonious roles in the great work of human redemption.

God the Father

We believe that God the Father is the first person in the Trinity. He is the Father to all of man but He is the spiritual Father to only believers. His key unfathomable attributes characterized in scripture are His love, His holiness and His Power. From His Love, He made man in His image free in desire to accept or reject his Creator and the Father gave His only begotten Son for redemption through repentance. From His Holiness, there must be a penalty for sin. He is so powerful to be in complete sovereign control but yet has made man with the capacity for free desires where God is not accountable for man’s independent choices of sin.

God the Son

We believe that God the Son is the eternal Second Person of the Trinity and possesses all the divine attributes – He is coequal and coeternal with the Father. We believe that God the Father created all things through His Son, Jesus Christ. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born, and that He accepted all the characteristics of humanity being without sin while surrendering certain performances of deity in an inseparable oneness: the perfect God-Man as the suffering servant. As such, we believe Jesus suffered the full force of the sway of all sin in His humanity but could not have chosen to sin (Impeccability) by definition of his divinity. Thus His magnitude of suffering is incomprehensible and infinitely beyond the experiential limits of any man. Yet He paid this price for all men to satisfy the unknowable standard of the Father's Holiness.

We believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to reveal God to man, to provide redemption, and rule over God's kingdom. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood in His voluntary, sacrificial death as our substitute on Calvary's cross. We believe in the literal, physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and His ascension to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our advocate and High Priest, the only mediator between God and man.

We believe that He is the Head of the Church, which is His Body, and that He will one day return to earth, judge the righteous and unrighteous and reign for one thousand years (Revelation 20).

God the Holy Spirit

We believe that God the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He is a divine person who possesses all the attributes of deity and personality – He is coequal and coeternal with the Father and Son.

The Holy Spirit provides the means of conviction and regeneration, and baptizes all believers into the Body of Christ. His divine activity in this age includes glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and convicting all the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

We believe the Holy Spirit indwells the believer from the moment of salvation in a capacity that grows with spiritual maturity. We believe the Holy Spirit in the role of Comforter, sanctifies believers, instructs them, and empowers them for service, steadily transforming them into Christ's image and sealing them unto the day of redemption.

We believe the Holy Spirit is sovereign in how He chooses to bestow His gifts to believers today, and that He does so with the purpose of edifying and maturing the saints as they are in submission to Him and ministering to the needs of fellow man.

Section 3. Angels

We believe that angels are spirit beings created to worship and serve God. We believe there is allegiance to Christ by the holy angels and rebellion against God by the fallen angels, led by Satan.

We believe God uses the holy angels as messengers of His divine providence and that they are higher in position and power than man but should never be sought after or worshipped.

We believe that Satan is an angel who was created perfect as Lucifer (Ezekiel 28:15, Isaiah 14:12), having elevated rank, but fell into sin because of his conceit and rebellion. We believe that after his fall he introduced sin into this world by tempting Adam and Eve. We believe that Satan is now the god of this world and the enemy of God and believers, but his defeat was

sealed at Calvary and his doom will eventually be realized in God's perfect time. We believe that demons are angels who fell with Satan; although they are organized and powerful, they do not indwell genuine believers, and can be resisted in warfare with the authority of Christ alone through spiritual discipline and prayer.

Section 4. Man

We believe that God created man as the culmination of His creation of the heavens and the earth in six literal days (Exodus 20). We believe that man is a living soul [from God's breath] housed in a body formed by God's hand from the dust of the ground. We believe that God created mankind as male and female in the image and likeness of Himself, but that man does not possess the essence of divinity. In contrast to other creatures, this image that allows the capacity for man to commune God in addition to exercising responsible dominion over the earth, has been tainted by sin.

We believe that God's design created the first man and woman in a state of innocence and oneness called marriage. Therefore we believe marriage is defined by God to be between one man and one woman and that sexual relations are to be confined to the bonds of marriage.

We believe that Adam's disobedience to the command of God by eating fruit from the only forbidden tree caused the fall of mankind and the intrusion of sin and death into the world.

We believe a nature corrupted with inclination to perpetuate Adam's sin, has been passed in conception to all people of all ages. [The virgin birth Jesus Christ was the only exception.] We believe that man who is apart from Christ is lost, being ruled by this sinful nature; man is bereft of any escape from the destruction of his sinful nature by good works alone.

We believe the works of man, while potentially positive for the greatest social benefit, are without any capacity to merit the favor of God in redemption. We believe man's only means of salvation is through God's grace in receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Man must be regenerated in Holy Spirit to be saved.

Section 5. Salvation

We believe that salvation is the act of man in willful surrender to conviction by the Holy Spirit to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We believe there is no salvation through any other Name than Christ.

Through Christ, man is rescued from spiritual death and God delivers him to eternal life. Salvation is based on God's grace alone, through faith in the sacrificial death and shed blood of Jesus Christ to the Glory of God alone; it is not merited by any human merit (Ephesians 2).

We believe that God, before the foundation of the world, graciously chose in Jesus Christ salvation for all those He foreknew. We believe that He graciously saves anyone who, by faith, repents of his sin and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe that God regenerates the new believers and reckons the new believer completely righteous (Justification) based on faith in Christ alone. We believe that God restores His fellowship to the repentant sinner, abolishes the penalty of sin (death), and transfers Christ's righteousness to the new believer. We believe that the gift of salvation, once received, is forever and cannot be lost, and that genuine believers persevere to the end, thus evidencing that they possess eternal life.

We believe at salvation, God sets the new believer apart unto Himself and reckons him holy through the shed blood of His Son.

We believe that sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit that gradually transforms the believer's life, empowering him to become more and more like Jesus Christ — a continual process in which conduct of holiness and righteousness are increased and conversely sinful attitudes and practices are decreased. Sanctification is expressed by the believer's daily decisions to conform less to this world and by the renewal of his mind as he reads and obeys the Word of God.

We believe sanctification is a lifelong process where the believer will become more victorious over daily struggles with continued growth and intercessory prayer with intervention by the "strong bearing the infirmities of the weak" in the Church (Romans 15/ Jude 23).

Section 6. The Church

The Body of Christ

We believe that the church is the Body of Christ – a spiritual organism in visible assembly- made up of all true born again believers in this present age. The Church can refer to a local assembly of believers or to all believers worldwide. We believe that every person who believes in Christ as Savior is immediately placed (baptized) into the church, which represents the Body of Jesus Christ on earth.

We believe that the purpose of the church is to advance the coming Kingdom of Christ through the authority of Christ by exalting and worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ, edifying believers, and evangelizing the world with the message of Christ combined with the mission of meeting needs. We believe that the congregation is to mature into the work of the ministry while in submission to the godly rule of its leadership.

The Church Ordinances - Baptism and Communion:

We believe that Christ commanded the observance of two church ordinances: the baptism of believers by immersion in water and the Lord's Supper, neither of which transfers salvation in and of itself to the believer. We believe that Scriptural baptism is the dipping into water of a believer in Christ, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; It shows forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its application in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. The ordinance of baptism is a pre-requisite to the privileges of Church relationships. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper convenes the members of the Church for the sacred use of unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine to personally commemorate together, the undying love of Christ before His sacrifice. This ordinance is always preceded by solemn self-examination.

The Church and Social Opportunity

We believe that the existence of civil government represents God's design for authority and rule, and is intended to be for the best interests and good order of human society; We believe the leaders are to be prayed for by the Church. Their positions should conscientiously be respected and legislations obeyed (Romans 13) as responsible citizens, except in cases that are opposed to the written Word and Will of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As Christians seek to advance the Kingdom of Christ in human society and take advantage of critical opportunities to win commitments to Christ, the means and methods used for the

improvement of society by way advocating righteousness can be helpful in earning the right to be heard among the un-Churched. The possibility of regeneration of individuals by the saving grace of Jesus Christ may follow.

In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak and offer godly counsel on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love with the view to win souls to Christ when opportunities come forth. In order to promote this goal, Christians should be ready to work in society always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ, His truth and His mission.

Section 7. The End Times and the Coming Kingdom of Christ

We believe that physical death is the separation of a person's immaterial soul and spirit from their material body, and when that separation occurs, even though the body is dead, there is no loss of consciousness, whether the person is a believer or an unbeliever (Luke 16).

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all people: believers to eternal life with assignment of rewards and unbelievers to judgment and eternal justice.

We believe that the soul and spirit of the New Testament believer passes immediately into the presence of Christ and remains separated from his body (2 Corinthians 5:8) until Christ returns, at which time the believer's body is resurrected a glorified body and reunited with his soul and spirit to be forever with the Lord.

We believe that at death the soul and spirit of the unrepentant sinner is kept in a state of conscious punishment and torment in hell [the lower parts of the Earth] until resurrected for judgment, at which time the unbeliever will be held accountable by God for his/her rebellion and be eternally separated from God, being cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20).

We believe in the literal, personal and bodily return of Jesus Christ in two events. We believe He will return to catch away His Church from the earth to meet Him in the air in an event called the rapture, at which time He will receive to Himself the resurrected bodies of all those who have "died in Christ" and will also change from mortal into immortal the bodies of all those who are "alive in Christ" (1 Thessalonians 4).

We believe that in the last days, there will be a period of time, the Bible refers to as great tribulation. Concluding this tribulation, we believe that Christ will physically return to the earth's surface (His second coming) at which time He will judge the living and the dead, and that He will reign over the entire earth for a literal one thousand year period known as the millennium, after which He will execute the final judgment (Revelation 20).

We believe that this present heaven and earth will be dissolved and replaced with a new heaven and new earth where only righteousness will exist, and the saints of all ages will dwell there

forever in God's Kingdom in His fellowship and fulfilling God's will for our eternal lives (Revelation 21-22).

Article V - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership by Confession with Church Affirmation: All candidates seeking to unite with the local Church in membership of the Body that show evidence (sincere confession) of being born again of the Spirit of Christ shall be accepted by coming before the congregation to receive unanimous affirmation by "Amen." After baptism or testimony of same, candidates will receive the "right hand of fellowship."

Section 2. Admission:

- 2.1 By Baptism:** Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ thereby showing evidence of a change of heart shall receive water baptism as Christ commanded – in the Name of the Father, Son and The Holy Spirit.
- 2.2 Transfer by letter:** Members transferring from other Churches in Christ shall give the confession of faith and the above specified baptism. Transfer members shall be encouraged to provide a letter showing evidence of good standing before serving in a leadership position before observation.
- 2.3 By Christian Experience or Rededication.** All candidates for renewed membership must confess a renewed commitment to Christ and His Church, having been baptized in accordance with item 2.1 of this section. If they have not been properly baptized, this ordinance shall be required.
- 2.4 Watchcare:** Watchcare provides oversight and the required follow up as necessary to assist candidates facing challenges to successfully become new members. Candidates who are not mature enough to confess their faith in Christ will be put on watchcare until such time as their faith can be evidenced. Also, watchcare status will apply in cases where conversions occur followed by a long delay before coming before the congregation, or for persons who want to affiliate with the Church but are not prepared to completely unite.

Section 3. Expectations of Members:

Practice:

- 3.1** Each member is expected to faithfully attend and complete the new members/ Church orientation course before uniting to serve in any auxiliary or ministry as well as exercising the privilege to vote. Exceptions require consent from the pastor. Each member is automatically associated with the Men's or Women's Fellowship. Mentoring and oversight assignments to leaders will be performed accordingly.
- 3.2** Each member is expected to grow in Christ and express this growth by uniting with the **Church's purpose** expressed in **Article III** and to diligently study God's Word to understand and believe the **Statement of Faith** in **Article IV** for personal edification.
- 3.3** Each member is expected to unite with and support the vision, worship, prayer meetings, Bible studies, ministries, missions, fellowship, meetings, special services and the various activities of Second Baptist Church. Each member is expected to maintain an active

testimony with a personal prayer life, giving to Church and Christian service on and off Church grounds.

- 3.4** Each member is expected to attend church business meetings. Each member is expected to submit to the authority of the leadership positions that God has established in the church.
- 3.5** Each member is expected not to teach or promote anything contrary to the Word of God in scripture to avoid the process of separation (see item 3.10) if repentance and cessation of errant conduct is not evident.
- 3.6** Each member is expected to pledge with the entire body in unison, the Church Covenant which is a compilation of minimum reasonable commitment practices derived from God's Word in the New Testament. See **Exhibit A: Second Baptist Church Covenant**

Giving:

- 3.7 Tithes and Offerings:** Tithing is the practice of giving by faith back to the Lord what belongs Him. God is Jehovah-Jireth, the God who provides. Tithing is His offering of first fruits dedicated to Him and His purposes. All members in good standing in the Church are encouraged to tithe where Church leaders are expected to model the tithing example before God and Church.

NOTE: Fund Designations

The Church will comply with IRS rules to honor a designation made by a donor where a designation change requires consent from the donor. Donations made to the Church memorial fund will be designated for the best interest of the Church by Church leaders (via pastor, deacon and trustee ministry meetings) within the scope of the Church's mission as defined in the Church's Purpose [Article III] and Statement of Faith [Article IV]. A donation with a designation outside the Church's mission cannot be accepted unless the donor consents to revise the designation.

- 3.8 Active membership** is maintained by means of both attendance and/or giving as evidenced in the Church giving record, occurring within a 12-month period. After 12 months of absence without any contact, the membership status will become inactive where re-instatement will be needed with a financial giving record to restore the privilege to vote in Church business meetings after an initial 30 day period for re-orientation.

DISCIPLINE

- 3.9 Corrective action for an offense:** It's Method and Spirit - any member having cause of complaint against another member for an offense must seek to remove it as directed in Matthew 18:15-17. If this is not sufficient, the complaint shall be brought to the attention of the Deacons who will alert the pastor. The Pastor and Deacons shall meet with both parties. It shall be the discretion of pastor and deacons for a recommendation to be made to the church for the appropriate action with the hope of repentance and public apology.
- 3.10 Separation:** Upon the recommendation of the Pastor and Deacons and vote of the church, a member guilty of gross un-Christian conduct may be excluded, provided that reasonable notice of a meeting to separate be given to such member and said member be

given opportunity for defense or satisfactory explanation. No member shall be excluded from the church without the privilege of their case being heard. After separation and prolonged period of time, reconciliation should be sought through forgiveness and restoration. All discipline shall be formulated and carried out in the spirit of Christ, in meekness and in Godly fear, lest any would-be member fall by the way.

Article VI - Servant Leaders

Section 1. Senior Pastor.

He shall conduct the public service or worship, and the general development of the church work shall be under his supervision as he models the servant leadership of Christ. He shall be an ex-officio member of the Deacons, the Trustees, Auxiliaries and Committees. He shall act as moderator of all business meetings of the church when present. In his absence, the assistant to the pastor shall serve or he and the church shall elect a moderator pro temp for each meeting.

The pastor is responsible to Jesus Christ and the Church to lead the church by promoting the vision to fulfill its mission according the **Purpose of the Church [Article III]** with Biblical views consistent with the **Statement of Faith [Article IV]** and move toward the attainment of its mission. He proclaims the gospel and provides pastoral care for persons in the Church and the community.

He is responsible for the activities of the Assistant to the Pastor, Youth Pastor and other associate pastors/ministers/evangelists to be in accord with the purpose and mission of the Church. He serves as a teacher and trainer to equip the saints and involve church members in the work of the church so that its divine mission can be achieved. An example of the pastor's responsibilities is highlighted in **Exhibit B**.

Section 2. Calling a Pastor

Under the orderly and unified leadership of the Deacon ministry, a Pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. The Deacons will lead the Church into prayer and fasting with designated groups to lead and/or participate in prayer meeting each month for the Lord to send His chosen servant leader.

The Deacons will be responsible for pulpit supply. Consideration may be given to selecting an interim minister (ineligible for the pastorate) to lead worship service, bring the message of God's Word as well as teach Bible study. A pastor search committee consisting of at least five to seven best-qualified members, possessing the confidence of the church, shall be selected by the Deacons and elected by the Church to seek out the best recommendation for the new pastor.

The search committee's number-one recommendation will constitute the nomination. An example method of a process to be used to make the best recommendation for nomination follows: The pastor search committee shall identify a top candidate by way of 1) a written package detailing biographical information, experience, conviction and references to be submitted, 2) audio-visual examples (DVD's, CDs) to be submitted and 3) as much as practical, travel to outside services to witness the candidates in sessions of prayer, preaching and teaching.

Under the oversight of the Deacons, any member has the privilege of making recommendations for the search committee to consider but under no circumstances shall a nomination for Pastor come to the Church except through the evaluation process of the pastor search committee. At the conclusion of the search and evaluation process, the pastor search committee shall present to the Church its best recommendation to become the nominee for Church election.

Believing God to send one man in answer to the prayers of the Church, only one nomination shall be presented to the Church to be decided by vote as one body. This process of presenting one nominee will repeat itself only if the Church vote falls short of a two-thirds affirmative decision. Election shall be by secret ballot. The affirmative vote shall be based on at least two-thirds of the active members present at this meeting. The Pastor's election shall be the sole purpose of this meeting with a minimum of two week's public notice to be given. The Church shall cooperate with the prayerful and godly leadership of the Deacons to maintain unity and order during this critical time.

The nominated candidate for vote must have been witnessed by the Church in leading prayer meeting, teaching Bible Study [example: "What is the Church?" or cover the Statement of Faith - Article IV] as well as preaching the Word of God with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or by a separation process approved by the Church body as may be necessary in severe cases where irreparable reproach is brought to the ministry. This process being of last resort, also requires a two-thirds affirmative vote of active members.

The Pastor shall have a signed covenant on record with the Church detailing the compensation package with the option to be renewed at the end of each calendar year. The covenant shall also describe cause and provide terms for separation from the Church including the requirement of at least a two month notice of resignation before concluding his responsibilities as pastor.

Section 3 - The Deacons. It shall be the duty of the Deacons to cooperate with the Pastor in overseeing the work of the church. To help fulfill scripture (Acts 6:4) for a stronger ministry, the Deacons shall be ex-officio members of Trustees, Auxiliaries and Committees. They shall be charged especially with helping all members to hear God's Word and fulfill the Church's mission, promoting peace and unity among leaders, solving membership problems in effective watchcare as well as preparing and distributing the Lord's Supper. The Deacons with the Pastor shall determine the character and fix the hours of all worship services.

They shall be responsible for the pulpit supply in the absence of the Pastor or his designee. At least once every three years the Deacons shall thoroughly revise the church roll. The Deacons shall meet regularly each month and when called by the Pastor or Chairman. Any Deacon who is remiss in fulfilling his responsibilities (without extenuating circumstances) or whose conduct brings significant reproach to his ministry will be required by the initiative of Pastor and Deacons to take an extended leave for self-examination and spiritual remediation or be removed after unsuccessful remediation. For the expected standard of qualifications and additional responsibilities, see **Exhibit C - Example Responsibilities of Deacons**.

Section 4 - The Trustees. The Trustees shall be composed of godly leaders with exemplary hallmarks of integrity recommended by the pastor/deacons and elected by the church. Their

authority and methods of conducting business shall be in accord with the provisions of statutes of the state of Illinois. They shall be responsible for the financial and legal interests of the church, the oversight and upkeep of the buildings and all property of the Church. The trustees shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any real estate property without a specific vote of the Church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of the trustees are required. See **Exhibit D - Example Responsibilities of Trustees**.

In no case shall Trustees or Church leaders be authorized to make an **unbudgeted** expenditure or create an unplanned indebtedness of more than **\$1500.00** without the authorization of the church in a business meeting. Emergency action/repairs deemed by the Pastor/Deacons/ Trustees are an exception where the Church needs to be notified.

Section 5 – Finance Ministry: Treasurer, Finance secretary, Membership clerk and Finance members: The finance ministry shall be under the direct auspices of the Trustees, Deacons and Pastor where monthly administrative meetings shall convene to examine all financial transactions against the resultant change in church accounts (when statements are available), evaluate listed ministry cash flows compared to budget and assess the overall financial operation of the Church in contrast to its goals. All bank statements shall be reviewed as proof documentation of Church accounts on a monthly basis.

Designated Trustees and Deacons shall be joint account holders with finance members for all Church accounts for audit access as necessary.

The Treasurer with Finance Secretary/ Finance member assistance shall:

- Disburse all funds for local expenses, missions and benevolences.
- Pay out of the church funds available for the purpose all salaries and expenses according to the approved annual budget without need of an additional vote. Church employees, musicians and staff ministers as applicable must be compensated in accordance with signed agreements on file.
- Trust funds now belonging to or hereafter given to the Church, shall be invested in a safe manner, using the income from the funds from time to time as may be necessary or advisable for carrying out the purpose of the various trusts created, or if permitted by terms of the trust, for general purpose requirements of the Church.
- Keep a record of all receipts and disbursements, with proper vouchers for 7 years.
- Present a summary of the financial condition of the church at each business meeting and a complete report at the annual meeting.
- Keep a record of membership offerings and issue giving/ wage statements annually or upon request. Provide the record of member offerings to the membership clerk to keep the active membership list up to date.
- Secure a professional level accounting review of the Church's financial system annually for reporting at the annual meeting.
- The Treasurer and finance members shall be elected annually. The treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the Deacons and the Financial Secretary shall be ex-officio to the Trustees to represent the financial matters of the church.
- The treasurer, finance ministry members, trustees and any leader affecting the assignment of contracts or checks (by way of vouchers), must sign a conflict-of-interest ethics agreement (including but not limited to a confidentiality commitment and a pledge

to abstain from negative and un-Christlike stewardship practices such as gambling) each year after election at the annual meeting.

Fiscal Method of the Church. The Church shall use the unified budget system with outstanding auxiliary petty cash funds not exceeding \$300. The fiscal year of the Church shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

Formal Church Audit: The Church shall conduct a full Church audit every 5 but not longer than 10 years with results and recommendations for system changes as necessary to advise and assist financial officers.

Section 6 - Church Clerk: The clerk shall keep accurately the record of all church business which shall be approved at each Church business or annual meeting; the clerk shall preserve all church documents on Church grounds, and shall keep an updated roster of the membership. The clerk shall keep a list of all inactive members for Church "in-reach" through the "backdoor." The clerk will submit timely resolutions upon request by the bereaved. At the annual meeting of the church, the clerk shall submit a complete report detailing changes in the membership. **Church Secretary/ Administrative Assistant:** The Church secretary and administrative assistant duties shall be defined as needed. These position holders shall be elected annually.

Section 7 - Ministry, Officers, Auxiliary and Committee Leaders

Official Leadership Ministry:

In addition to the Pastoral staff, the Deacons, Trustees and Finance Officers, all ministry, auxiliary and/or committee position holders shall form the official leadership ministry of the Church. This leadership ministry will conduct themselves in the servant leadership model of Christ in administrative order to coordinate and plan the ministry work of the Church according to the vision and direction of the Church.

The Official Leadership ministry will meet monthly to review progress-to-goal status of ministry objectives determined in the annual plan agreed-to before the Church. Each leader is responsible to help the Church stay on track regarding projected income and expenses in the approved Church budget and demonstrate the required ethics (Section 5) in spending as a condition of service.

Besides the pastor, the terms of all position holders in the Official Leadership Ministry shall expire every twelve months and begin the First Sunday after successful ratification at the Church's annual meeting.

The Christian Education Ministry. There shall be a Christian Education Ministry composed of the following:

- Pastor or designee
- Chairman of Deacons and/or Deacon designee(s)
- Chairman of Trustees
- Director of Christian Education,
- Sunday School Superintendent,
- Missions Leader
- Evangelism Leader
- Men's Fellowship,
- Women's Fellowship,

- Music Leaders
- Youth Pastor/ Staff
- Nursery Leader
- Mentoring Leader
- Usher Leader
- Church Secretary
- Other ministries or members as requested

The duty of this ministry shall be to develop and implement Christian education and resultant ministries / programs for the Church. Ministry job descriptions shall be provided for ministry position holders to enable objective assessments of service with accountability recommendations to the pastor and deacons. Besides Deacon and Trustee ministries, this ministry shall select nominees to fill all vacancies in ministry or auxiliary positions prior to the annual meeting to be approved by the church.

Sunday School Ministry Emphasis The Sunday School Superintendent shall be the servant leader providing direction for effective Christian education in the Sunday School and shall exercise general oversight over all departments with accountability to the church.

Mission and Evangelism Ministry Emphasis. The Church shall give mission and evangelism emphasis to the membership of the church, and it shall also cooperate with the state and national missionary agencies for worldwide evangelism impact.

New Ministries/Auxiliaries of the Church: With the aid of the Christian Education, these shall form as occasion and purpose in the Church shall determine to accomplish the objectives/mission of the Church and shall report on need and progress at the monthly Official ministry meetings. It is understood that as the needs of the Church/Community change, some ministries/ auxiliaries will need to be rearranged to follow the need.

Article VII - WORSHIP

Sunday - The Lord's Day: The church shall meet regularly on each Lord's Day for public worship, holding as many services as decided. Communion or the Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday of each month, unless otherwise directed by the pastor and church.

The Midweek Service: At least once in each week the Church shall meet for prayer and Bible Study.

Weddings/ Funerals: All weddings, funerals and/or related services in the Church shall be conducted in a manner where the nature of all actions, conduct, elements, items, objects, images, displays, rituals, tributes, music and/or symbols involved shall be not be contrary to the worship of the Name of Christ or against the Word of scripture.

Article VIII - BUSINESS MEETINGS

Section 1. **The Will of the Lord in the Church:** Upon convening for a matter of decision, the Will of God is expressed through the Church on any given matter, duly expressed by its vote in the spirit of worship. A parliamentary-procedure type process shall be used for order where the outcome shall be carried out by all the full body of the Church as each member has pledged in the Church covenant.

Section 2. **The Annual Meeting:** The annual meeting of this church is for the presentation of the Pastor's vision update with leadership goals and objectives to meet the Church's mission for Christ. Written reports are submitted from all officers and the departments of the church showing progress made against last year goals for accountability with the Church. Reports should include petty cash amounts and uses. The Church elects the officers and the votes to accept the annual budget with other business proposed as necessary; this annual meeting shall occur on or before the 4th Sunday in January.

Section 3. **Quarterly Business Meeting:** Once a quarter designated as deemed necessary, there shall be a business session held at which time the clerk's minutes shall be read and approved and a financial statement given to the church of both the current expenses account and missions and benevolence. At this meeting the recommendation of the Deacons and Committees of the church shall be presented. Due notice of these meetings shall be given to all members.

Section 4. **Official Leadership Meetings:** In addition to quarterly business meetings, any member of the Church can attend the monthly Official leadership meetings to get financial information and learn planned activities as well as inquire about current Church matters with an interest to serve in leadership.

Section 5. **Special Meetings:** Special meetings shall be called by the Pastor or by the request of ten (active) members over twenty-one years of age by signed request to the Church Clerk; The special meeting shall be announced during a regular Sunday Service at least two Sundays before the meeting, where the purpose of such meeting is stated to all members never forsaking in the spirit of worship. In the case of pastoral vacancy, the Chairman of Deacons must provide the leadership to the set up the meeting and administrate addressing the issues in the servant-leader example of Christ.

Section 6. **Quorums:** In all business meetings twenty-five shall constitute a quorum, except in special meetings for important business, (1) the calling or dismissal of a Pastor; (2) revisions to the Church's Constitution and Bylaws; (3) the buying, selling, mortgaging, leasing or transfer of real estate property; or (4) the borrowing of money. When after proper notification of attending active membership, a representative number shall be 25 percent.

Article IX- Representation and Commissioning

Section 1: Representation

The Church shall participate in associations and conventions as directed by the leadership and as occasion and purpose allow. Historical examples include participation in the Lebanon District Association, Area I ABC, Baptist General State Convention, the Regional Convention ABC, the National Baptist Convention NBC, the Biennial ABC and the Baptist World Alliance.

Section 2: Political Involvement

While the Church has social responsibility as shown in the Statement of Faith [Article VI, Section 6], the Church shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Section 3: Commissioning - Licensing and Ordaining

Any member who in the judgment of the pastor, gives evidence by his confession, his spiritual life and aptness to teach and speak with divine authority, shall be put on trial for being called of God to preach the gospel and do the work of the ministry. After having the opportunity to preach a trial sermon in the hearing of the church, the candidate may be licensed to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, providing three-fourths of the members of the church witness and agree to same. By the initiative of the pastor, a licensed preacher, possessing the scriptural qualifications shall receive full ordination by calling a council of ministers and brethren including those from associated churches to examine the qualifications of the candidate with ratification by the congregation.

Article X – Dissolution

As society's response to the Church undergoes change in latter times and in the unlikely event of dissolution of the Church, the Church shall perform the following in accordance with a ratified plan: after paying and making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the Church, disburse all the assets of the Church to such organizations that are Christian faith based. This includes organizations operated exclusively for religious purposes under Section 501 (c) (3) of Internal Revenue. Assets may be distributed to missionaries, mission based organizations, other Churches or Christian groups advancing the Kingdom of Christ. No part of the Church's assets shall be paid or distributed to the leaders or members of the congregation.

Article XI - Amendments

Amendments. These articles may be amended at any regular meeting of the church by a vote of two-thirds of the members present, provided that a two-week notice be given and announced during Sunday worship services.

Exhibit A

Second Baptist Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in

The name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, 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 doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to 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 devotions; to study diligently the word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be kind and just to those in our employ, and faithful in the services we promise others, endeavoring in the purity of heart and good will toward 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 joy, 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 eighteen chapel 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.

Exhibit B: Example Responsibilities of the Senior Pastor:

The following is a standard of service for the senior pastor:

- (1) Proclaim the gospel and lead all associated ministers, church leaders and members in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and fulfill the purpose and mission of the church as expressed in Article III and Article IV.
- (2) Provide care (including visitation, counseling and prayer) for persons and lead Deacons and church members to provide the same care for persons in the church and in the community.
- (3) Provide administrative leadership to guide the church in attainment of its divine mission.

- (4) Provide leadership for congregational services, and lead in conducting the church ordinances (Lord's Supper and baptism). The pastor is solely responsible for seeing that the pulpit is filled, but in the event he is incapacitated and unable to do so, then the assistant to the pastor or his designated alternate shall fill the pulpit until the pastor is able to resume his responsibility.
- (5) Conduct wedding ceremonies and funeral services.
- (6) Work closely with the deacons in their training and performance in their work of proclamation, caring, building up the church fellowship, and other services they may render to help the pastor as he leads the church to fulfill its divine mission.
- (7) Serve as ex-officio member of all church committees, and moderate the church business meetings. As an ex-officio member of all church committees, the pastor may attend any meeting he desires and he must be kept informed by the committees when and where they meet. The pastor's attendance is not mandatory at any committee meeting except for the church council and business meetings, and he may only vote on issues in a committee meeting to break a tie.
- (8) Supervise church staff members with coaching and accountability. Provide leadership training and development for a process of equipping Church members to become tomorrow's leaders.

Exhibit C: Example Responsibilities of Deacons

Deacons should strive to meet the following Church standard for eligibility and continued service:

- (1) Must be an active church member, at least 25 years old, not a recent convert, and mature in the Christian faith.
- (2) "Worthy of respect" (ref I Timothy 3:8) Have a good reputation within the church and outside of the church.
- (3) "Sincere" (I Timothy 3:8)- Honest, genuine, their "yes" means "yes" and their "no" means "no". The candidate is not a hypocrite.
- (4) "Not indulging in much wine" (I Timothy 3:8) Not addicted or enslaved to alcohol, drugs, and other evil habits.
- (5) "Not pursuing dishonest gain" (I Timothy 3:8) The candidate's motive for service is not to line his pockets with money or to use this position in the church for his own personal gain.
- (6) "They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience" (I Tim 3:9) The candidate must have a close personal relationship with Christ and a practical and personal knowledge of God's Word and show evidence in their life that they are not just talking the talk but also walking the walk.

(7) "They must first be tested" (I Timothy 3:10) The deacon candidate must have a past record of experience in church work and service such as teaching in Sunday School, working in Vacation Bible School, teaching Discipleship classes, work on church committees, personal evangelism, preaching, etc.

(8) "Then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons" (I Tim 3:10)
If no factors are found that would render the deacon candidate's service ineffective then he may be presented as a deacon candidate to the church.

(9) "In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything" (I Timothy 3:11) Recognizing that the role of the deacon's wife will impact both his ministry and the welfare of the church, due consideration will be given to her character and spiritual maturity. If the deacon candidate is married, his wife will be a help and not a hindrance to his service to the church. The deacon candidate's wife will have a good reputation inside and outside the church, and will keep in confidence anything her husband may tell her.

(10) "A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well" (I Timothy 3:12) If the deacon candidate is married, then he must be faithful to his wife and have a stable relationship with her and his children. This is not a mandate that only married men can serve as deacons and this does not prohibit a divorced man from serving as a deacon.

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice in the New Testament, Deacons are to be servants of the church by:

(1) Proclaim the Gospel to Believers and Unbelievers through:

- a) Personal witnessing activities
- b) Preaching as a layman
- c) Church revival support
- d) Teaching the Bible

(2) Care for the Church's Members and Other Persons in the Community by:

- a) Ministering in times of crisis
- b) Listening to burdened persons
- c) Serving on the Benevolence ministry
- d) Referring persons in need to qualified sources for assistance if the church is unable to render aid through its Benevolence ministry.
- e) Counseling and family ministry

(3) Build Christian Fellowship Among Church Members

- a) Sharing information about the church's life and work
- b) Assist in administering the ordinances of the church

(4) Serve as an Exemplary Christian Leader

- a) Set an example in Christian life (I Timothy 3:8-13)
- b) Provide personal support to Church activities

- c) Stand alongside the pastor as a co-laborer in the gospel ministry
- d) Provide constructive advice and feedback to the pastor as he strives to lead the church to attain its divine mission and fulfill the Great Commission

(5) In the absence of the pastor, or the assistant to the pastor, the chairman of the deacons shall moderate the business meetings.

Exhibit D: Example Responsibilities of Trustees

The following serves as a Church standard for Trustees serving in Ministry:

- a) The Trustees shall hold in trust all property belonging to the Church and shall take all necessary measures for its protection, management and upkeep.
 - 1. All emergency repairs, minor maintenance and budgeted operating expenses shall be handled by the Trustees as soon as possible without specific approval required from the church.
 - 2. In the event of new "improvement" projects which involve costs in excess of \$1,500, the Trustees will plan the project, and present the project with accompanying bids to the Pastor/Deacons to recommend to the Church for approval prior to implementing the project.
- b) The Trustees shall control the use of Church buildings for all purposes, and set forth the regulations and conditions for all activities outside of normal church services.
- c) Individuals requiring keys to the church building will request them from the Trustees who will keep a record of issue and return.
- d) The Trustees will recommend a "Church Building Improvement Plan" which will identify a prioritized listing of projects and requirements for improvement of the church building. This plan may be modified or priorities changed as required but is intended as a guide for financial planning.
- e) Trustees shall have no power to buy, mortgage, or transfer any church land or buildings without specific vote of the Church authorizing such action.
- f) The Trustees working with Finance members shall designate the bank where the funds of the Church shall be deposited with the approval of Pastor/Deacons.
- g) The Trustees shall perform such other duties as are imposed upon it by the Church and the State.
- h) The Trustees shall make written reports to the Church at the annual meeting and at such other times as may be desired.
- i) The Trustees shall understand and endorse the proposed Annual Budget for final approval by vote of the Church.

Exhibit E - Historical Original Constitution and Bylaws of Second Baptist Church