



**Constitution
&
Bylaws**

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

Trusting in the Lord Jesus for our salvation, accepting the teachings and practices of the Baptists and the distinctives for which they have ever stood and looking to the New Testament as our sole and perfect rule of faith and practice, we therefore voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ for a more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the eternal Word of God, in the adoption and establishment of this constitution of our government, the affirmation of faith as a guide to our doctrines, and the membership covenant as a guide for living.

OUR AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

- 1. THE WORD OF GOD** - We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. (*John 17:7; Romans 15:4; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21*)
- 2. THE TRINITY** - We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption. (*Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-4; I John 5:7*)
- 3. GOD THE FATHER** - We believe in God, the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of each person, that he hears and answers prayer, that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (*John 3:16-17; John 4:24; John 17:5*)
- 4. JESUS CHRIST** - We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death on the cross, bodily resurrection from the grave, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. (*Isaiah 7:14; John 1:14; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 1:2-3; I John 1:7*)
- 5. THE HOLY SPIRIT** - We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. (*John 14:26; John 16:7-15; Romans 8:14-17; Ephesians 1:13-14*)
- 6. HUMANITY** - We believe God created humankind immutably as male and female to reflect and bear His image. As such, human beings of every ethnicity, age, ability, as well as the pre-born deserve dignity, protection, honor, respect, and Christian love. Because of Adam and Eve's free choice to sin, God's image in all humankind has become distorted and relationship with God has become disrupted. (*Genesis 1:27; Genesis 3:16-19*)

7. **REGENERATION** - We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. (*John 1:12-13; John 3:3, 16-17; Acts 20:21; Ephesians 2:1-9; Titus 3:5*)
8. **THE CHURCH** - We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world. (*Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 2:38-41; Ephesians 2:19-22; Ephesians 5:25-27*)
9. **CHRISTIAN CONDUCT** - We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well being of others; that their conduct should be blameless before the world; that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions; and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. (*II Corinthians 9:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 2:14-16; Colossians 3:17-23; I Thessalonians 5:17-18*)
10. **THE ORDINANCES** - We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. (*Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-42; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-32*)
11. **RELIGIOUS LIBERTY** - We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by an ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.
12. **CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE** - We believe that Christian marriage is a sacred institution ordained by God for the well-being and propagation of humankind. It is a covenant representing the spiritual and physical union into which one man and one woman may enter for the glory of God, symbolizing the relationship of Christ to his church. As the sign of this covenant, sexual activity is reserved exclusively for the marriage relationship. According to the scriptural ideal, marriage requires sacrificial love and faithfulness to each other for life. (*Genesis 1:28, 2:24; Matthew 19:4-5; Ephesians 5:32-33*)
13. **CHURCH COOPERATION** - We believe that local Churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in an association of churches. Such an organization, whether it is Converge Worldwide (formerly known as the Baptist General Conference) or one of its regional districts, exists and functions by the will of the Churches. Cooperation in the association is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary independent basis.

14. **THE LAST THINGS** - We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His Kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal joy of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked. (*John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:1-15; Matthew 25:31-46*)

OUR MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

With great delight in the grace of God, who has called us out of darkness and into the light of His Son, Jesus Christ, as God's holy people

- having been born again to a living hope through the gospel,
- having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, upon profession of our faith,
- and having found a home with the faith, mission, vision, ordinances, doctrine, and discipleship of this church,

we do now affirm our covenant together.

(*Ephesians 2:8-10; I Peter 2:9-10; John 3:3, 16; Acts 2:38; Titus 1:9, 2:1*)

Humbly seeking God's help by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will protect the testimony and unity of this church by acting in love toward one another, refusing to gossip or slander one another, and graciously following those who lead us. (*Ephesians 5:18; Romans 14:19; I Peter 1:22; Ephesians 4:29; Hebrews 13:17*)

Our sincere desire is to contribute to the health and vitality of our church by praying regularly for its growth, warmly inviting others to attend, and joyfully welcoming all who visit. We will apply the truth of the gospel in our homes, teaching our children to love the gospel, God's word, and prayer. (*Colossians 4:2; James 2:1-4; Luke 14:23; Romans 15:7; II Timothy 1:5*)

We will serve this body in the strength which God supplies, discovering and using our spiritual gifts and talents, actively sharing the gospel, entering into the discipleship and growth of others, and cultivating the heart of a servant. We will joyfully sit under the preaching and teaching of God's word, desiring by it to grow stronger, deeper, and more devoted in our faith and service to Christ. (*I Peter 4:10-11; I Thessalonians 2:7-8; II Timothy 3:14-16*)

With God as our witness, we will endeavor to faithfully attend worship services, live a life pleasing to our Father in heaven, humbly confess when we have failed to do so and receive His discipline. We will lovingly care for others in their spiritual journey and share the Christian life with them. As God provides, we will happily give our resources so that the needs of this church and its wider kingdom ministry are met. Together we long to see our city, region, nation, and world reached with the gospel, and confident of God's promises we will labor side-by-side until this great work of grace is accomplished. (*Hebrews 10:24-25; Philippians 1:27; Hebrews 12:7-11; I Corinthians 16:2; Philippians 4:14-20; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8*)

To God be the glory, Amen.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME AND ORGANIZATION

1. **NAME.** The name of this organization shall be “FAITH BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP”
2. **ORGANIZATION.** The organization took place on the 9th day of August, 1979.
3. **INCORPORATION.** This organization was incorporated under and pursuant to the provisions of the South Dakota Nonprofit Corporation Act on the 18th day of December, 1979. The Church shall be authorized to exercise the general powers granted to such non-profit corporations by the South Dakota Non-Profit Corporation Act, as amended. The Elder Council shall be deemed to be the Board of Directors for the Church as by South Dakota Law.
4. **AFFILIATION.** This church shall maintain affiliation with the Heartland Baptist District (a.k.a. Converge Heartland) and the Baptist General Conference (a.k.a. Converge Worldwide).

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purposes of this church shall be:

1. To preach the Gospel, administer the ordinances of the New Testament, minister to the spiritual needs of its members and all people everywhere, to train Christian workers for the Lord’s work, and further the evangelization of the world by converting men, women and children to a living faith in Jesus Christ.
2. To take, secure, hold or acquire, by gift, purchase, legacy or otherwise, real and personal property, whenever it may deem the same proper, necessary and expedient in the work and purpose for which this body was organized and incorporated; and to hold, lease, encumber, give, exchange or sell and transfer and dispose of the same, in part or in whole, when it deems such action expedient, necessary or beneficial in promoting and advancing the work and purposes for which this corporation is formed; and to do or accomplish such acts as this body shall deem necessary or incidental thereto, all such acts to conform to the laws of this State.

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, elders, officers or other private persons, except that the corporation may pay for services rendered and make payment and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II hereof. Upon the dissolution of the corporation, the elder council shall, after paying and making provisions for the payment of all the liabilities of the corporation dispose of all of the assets of the corporation in such a manner, or to such organization or organizations regained and operated exclusively for charitable, educational and religious purposes, as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) as the elder council shall determine.

3. To extend the ministry of this congregation through assisting in the establishment of new congregations within our ministry area.

ARTICLE III - DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY

Section 1. Division. In case of organic division of the church membership, the church property shall belong to those members who abide by this constitution. Should any controversy arise as to who is abiding by this constitution, the question shall be submitted to the overseers of the Heartland Baptist District and their decision shall be final.

Section 2. Dissolution. Should conditions arise when, for any reason, the church work cannot continue, the church property shall be transferred to the Heartland Baptist District or its successor.

ARTICLE IV - GOVERNMENT

The government of this church is vested in the body of members who compose it. Thus the final authority for decision shall be the congregation to whom the elder council and staff are responsible.

ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP

1. **Qualification and Admission.** Any person confessing faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord and giving evidence of regeneration and who accepts the views of faith and practice held by this church and in accordance to the procedures for membership in the church bylaws may be a candidate for membership. All applicants for admission to membership in this church shall be recommended by the elder council and shall be voted on by the church.

- a. **Admission:** Any person confessing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and giving evidence of regeneration by means of a satisfactory testimony, who has been baptized by immersion in water upon profession of their faith in Christ, and who accepts the views of faith and practice held by this church, may be admitted into the membership of the church.
- b. **Restoration:** Former members of this church whose membership has lapsed because of their own delinquency may be restored into the membership of this church by giving a testimony of their Christian experience and assuring the church that they are now living a consistent, godly life by faith in Jesus Christ.

2. Responsibilities and Rights

- a. Every member of the church is expected to attend its meetings, to work for its growth, to fittingly represent their Lord and church in the community, and to contribute regularly and according to his ability.

- b. Members shall strive with God’s help to keep their church obligations. They shall hold their pastors and elders in esteem and pray for them, as well as other officers of the church, and work with them in carrying out the ministry of the church. They shall endeavor to preserve the unity of the church and, if at any time they find themselves opposed to the fundamental doctrines of this church, they shall not seek to disrupt its fellowship but shall quietly withdraw from its membership.
- c. All members in good standing shall have equal rights, except that those under legal age shall be ineligible to vote on corporate matters. Members of this church have no property rights and upon termination of membership shall be entitled to no interest in the assets.

3. Dismissal of Members

Any member desiring to sever membership shall be dismissed upon request. Such dismissal, if so requested, may be accomplished by a letter of commendation or transfer to another Baptist church. Any member who joins another church will be dismissed from membership in this church. Dismissal shall be effected only after approval by a quorum majority vote of members present at a business meeting convened in accordance with the church bylaws. Removal of deceased members from the membership list does not require congregational approval.

4. Discipline of Members

Members who persist in living contrary to biblical truth and our membership covenant may be removed from membership. The elder council shall maintain an elder policy outlining a disciplinary procedure. The elder council shall seek to meet with all such persons in order to restore them to fellowship, but failing to see satisfactory evidence of repentance and reformation, the elder council may dismiss the member and report these actions, when taken, at the next business meeting.

In all cases of grievances between members, the offenders shall be dealt with in accordance with the scripture set forth in Matthew 18:15-20. No public charge shall be made until such reconciliation has been attempted. If reconciliation is not successful, formal charges shall be written and submitted to the elder council for further action. Such written charges shall be confidential but available for private inspection by members, who shall agree to keep confidential such charges.

ARTICLE VI - OFFICES

1. Positions

- a. Senior and associate pastors – called by the church by ballot.
- b. Elders and church officers – elected or ratified by the church by ballot.
- c. Others by elder council appointment.

ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution must first be presented for discussion and consideration of adoption by majority vote at a quarterly or special business meeting of the church held at least three months prior to an annual meeting, and at which a quorum of members is present.

Amendments must be adopted at an annual meeting of the church at which a quorum of members is present, and approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present, age eighteen and above.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

1. Admission

- a. The candidate for membership shall be interviewed by an elder and/or pastor.
- b. The candidate shall be presented to the assembled church at any regular meeting by an elder or pastor. The church shall subsequently vote upon a recommendation from the elder council regarding the candidate.
- c. The candidate shall:
 - express their personal experience of faith in Christ. This may be done by interview, personal testimony or other method approved by the elder council.
 - be baptized before the assembled church or declare to the satisfaction of the church that they have been baptized by immersion as a believer.
- d. The candidate shall be welcomed into the membership of the church at any regular worship service or business meeting by the hand of fellowship extended by an elder or pastor.

2. Dismissal

- a. Active membership status of all members shall be reviewed annually. Elder council recommendation regarding dismissal of any member shall be effective upon a quorum majority vote at any business meeting.
- b. The elders may dismiss a member if that member is living a life contrary to biblical truth and refuses to change their way or show repentance. Prior to dismissal actions, the member will be given a written basis for the dismissal and provided opportunity for a rebuttal and due process. The elders would report such dismissal actions, if taken, at the next business meeting.

3. Responsibilities

Members that are qualified to vote will have the authority and opportunity to perform the following in accordance with the appropriate bylaw articles:

- 1) Vote on matters of church membership and dismissal.
- 2) Vote on the selection of officers; vote on financial review and nominating committee members.
- 3) Vote on the pastoral selection committee and the call and terms for a pastor.
- 4) Submit names of possible nominees for open positions to elders or nominating committee members prior to elections.
- 5) Propose action for the removal of an elder or dismissal of a pastor.
- 6) Request special business meetings.
- 7) Vote on the annual budget and any expenditure thereafter greater than three percent (3%) of the budget and not originally provided for in the budget.
- 8) Vote on any conveyances, sale, mortgage, encumbrance or easement of church real estate.

ARTICLE II - OFFICERS

1. Qualifications

- a. **Pastors:** The qualifications of pastors are set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7. Pastors shall be sympathetic and cooperative with Converge Worldwide (Baptist General Conference) and its district affiliate, Converge Heartland, and in agreement with the faith and practice of this church.
- b. **Board Members:** Board members serve as an elder council and consist of elders who meet the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13. Each elder shall be a man who has been a Christian for at least five (5) years, a church member for at least two (2) years and has attained the age of twenty-five (25) years. Senior and associate pastors serving as elder shall be excluded from the two-year membership requirement.
- c. **Other Officers:** All other officers shall be members of the church, committed to the fulfillment of the aims and purposes of the church.

2. Duties

- a. **Pastors:**
 - i. **Senior Pastor:** The senior pastor shall preach the Gospel, administer the ordinances, exercise a concern for the spiritual needs of the church and organize and develop its strength for the best possible service. He shall be the chief administrative officer of the church, and elder on the elder council, and shall be an ex-officio non-voting member of all ministry groups and teams of the church.
 - ii. **Associate Pastors:** The associate pastors are responsible to the senior pastor and elder council for ministries as per their job description. In addition, they assist the senior pastor in the ministries of preaching, administering of ordinances and in the organization and administration of the church. Associate pastors shall be elders on the elder council subject to a one (1) year acclimation period at the start of their service.
- b. **Elder Council:**
 - i. The elder council shall be made up of vocational elders and non-vocational elders.
 - 1. The vocational elder designation is for the senior pastor and associate pastors.
 - a. Upon the congregation's call, vocational elders shall be automatically added to the elder council and required to attend elder meetings.
 - b. Associate Pastors serving as vocational elders shall not have voting rights during their initial year acclimation period. The initial year acclimation period begins with the associate pastor's date of hire. The senior pastor shall have voting privileges immediately upon hire.
 - c. Due to life and/or ministry circumstances a vocational elder may request a leave from the council. Leave shall be granted subject to the approval of the majority vote of the elder council.
 - d. Vocational elders shall be removed from the elder council upon termination of employment or resignation.
 - e. Vocational elders shall be excused from discussion and decisions regarding their salaries or other matters as deemed appropriate by a majority vote of non-vocational elders.

2. The non-vocational elder designation is for elders who are not employed by the church and meet the requirements as defined in the elder's qualifications section.
 - a. Non-vocational elders shall be excused from discussion and decisions where conflicts of interest exist as deemed appropriate by a majority vote of the other elders.
 - ii. The elder council shall elect its chairman from the non-vocational elders. He shall serve as the moderator of the church.
 - iii. The elder council shall elect its vice chairman from the non-vocational elders. He shall serve as the vice moderator of the church.
 - iv. The elder council shall have responsibility for the teaching, shepherding and oversight of the church.
 - v. The elder council shall bring any conveyances, sale, mortgage, encumbrance or easement of church real estate to the church for approval by quorum majority vote at a business meeting. The elder council shall also bring expenditures to the church that are greater than three percent (3%) of the budget and not originally provided for in the budget. The expenditures must be approved by quorum majority vote at a business meeting, except in the case of emergencies.
 - vi. The elder council will delegate and request elements of their responsibilities to be performed through ministry groups and teams to ensure alignment and the proper focus on the church's overall disciple-making process in support of the mission and vision statements.
 - vii. The elder council shall be responsible for the regular services of the church in the absence of the senior pastor and associate pastors.
 - viii. The elder council will serve as the board of directors for Faith Baptist Fellowship as a South Dakota non-profit organization.
- c. **Treasurer:** The treasurer shall keep an accurate account of all monies deposited in the bank by the financial secretary or assistant(s) and shall make payments of all obligations incurred by the church, by check drawn or debit on such account, as provided by the church budget or upon approval by the church or elder council.
- d. **Financial Secretary and/or Assistant(s):** The financial secretary and/or assistants shall keep an accurate account of all monies received and deposit same in the name of the church in a bank as directed by the elder council. The financial secretary shall provide the members with contribution envelopes and send statements of account to each contributor.
- e. **Clerk:** The clerk shall keep a record of proceedings of the church, take charge of all records, issue letters of transfer or dismissal as directed by the church or elder council and keep a register of the names of all members of the church. The clerk shall make a report to the membership of the preceding year at the annual business meeting and shall deliver all documents and records kept to successor.
- f. All officers shall serve under the direction of the elder council and shall be responsible to the elder council, as well as to the church and shall render reports as either may direct.
- g. Resignation of any officer shall be in writing to the elder council and will be effective on the date specified.

3. Terms of Office

- a. **Senior and Associate Pastors:** Pastors shall serve for an indeterminate term.
- b. **Elder Council:** All non-vocational elders shall serve four (4) year terms and take office the day after the annual business meeting. One quarter (1/4) of the elders will begin service each year. After one (1) year off, an elder may serve again. Due to resignation, death or removal of an elder, a replacement may fulfill the term remaining for that member. If an elder serves in that manner and performs only a portion of a term rather than the full four (4) year term, he would be eligible to move into a new four (4) year term without a year off. Non-vocational elder candidates will be identified by the elder council in consultation with the nominating committee and will be subject to a selection and interview process deemed appropriate by the current elder council. Candidates will require ratification by quorum majority vote at a business meeting to become an elder. The senior pastor and associate pastors will serve indeterminate terms and will coincide with the same term as identified in the preceding section 3.a.
- c. **Other officers:** All other officers shall serve for the term of one (1) year beginning the day after the annual business meeting or until the successors have assumed office.

ARTICLE III - ELDER COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES

1. Number of Elder Council Members

- a. The elder council membership shall consist of elders to include the senior and associate pastors.
- b. Nine (9) elders will typically serve and as the membership of the church increases or decreases, their numbers may increase or decrease as necessary. The elder council will determine the number of elders needed, but the number will never be less than three (3) elders.
- c. At least a 2:1 ratio of non-vocational to voting vocational elders will be maintained. In the situation where the 2:1 ratio is not being met due to insufficient non-vocational elders, the associate pastor last hired shall not vote.
- d. Representation of elders on the elder council by each campus¹ shall be part of the elder council's duties. Each campus shall have a minimum of two (2) non-vocational elders under normal circumstances. It is the elder council's responsibility to maintain a proportionate number of elders representing each campus's attendance, whenever possible.

¹ Faith Baptist Fellowship operates as one church in multiple locations. The unique locations are referred to as campuses.

2. Removal of Elder Council Members

An elder shall be presumed to have vacated his office if he ceases to be an active church member. An elder may also be removed from office for failure to attend meetings of the elder council without reasonable cause or for conduct impairing his efficiency. If removal is deemed advisable by vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the other elders, the elder council may so recommend to the church. A quorum majority vote at a business meeting can then remove the elder. Action to remove an elder may be initiated by the church by providing a written request signed by twenty percent (20%) of the active membership to the elder council. The reason for removal must be clearly documented in the written request. The elders will review the request and come to a final decision regarding the request within sixty (60) days. Information about the decision and any associated actions will be presented by the elder council to the church at the next business meeting.

3. Ministry Groups

The church and elder council shall carry out their work through ministry groups comprised of ministry teams. Ministry groups will be defined by the elders in a manner to fulfill the church's mission and vision statements. The elders will present their plan for ministry groups and ministry teams to the church at a business meeting at least once annually.

4. Membership of Ministry Groups

Church membership is required to serve as a ministry group leader or ministry team leader; these leaders will be selected and appointed by the elders. Church membership is preferable, but not required for ministry team members.

5. Financial Review Committee

A financial review committee of three (3) members shall be nominated by the nominating committee, agreed to by the elder council and ratified by a quorum majority vote at a business meeting. They will review the books of the financial secretary and of the treasurer once a year and at such other times as the elder council may request. They will submit a written report to the elder council at the completion of their annual review or any other requested review.

6. Nominating Committee

The nominating committee shall nominate the church clerk, treasurer, financial secretary/assistant financial secretaries, financial review committee members, nominating committee members at large, and other positions as identified by the elder council. They will also be in consultation with the elders regarding elder candidates. This committee will consist of five (5) members. The senior pastor, one (1) elder identified by the elder council, and three (3) members at large to be elected by the church.

7. Terms

Financial review and at large nominating committee members shall serve three (3) year terms with one third (1/3) of each committee to begin service the day after the annual business meeting. Members of the financial review and nominating committees can serve one (1) term and be eligible for re-nomination to the same committee after one (1) year off. Ministry group leaders and team leaders serve at the appointment and discretion of the elders.

ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS

1. Worship

- a. The church shall meet every Sunday for worship and may schedule other meetings as deemed necessary.
- b. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once every two (2) months. The first Sunday of each month shall be the normal time of observance.

2. Business Meetings

- a. Any ordinary matter of business requiring action by the church may be presented and acted upon at any scheduled meeting of the congregation.
- b. Special business meetings of the church may be held at any time by order of the elder council, the senior pastor, or upon written request of a quorum. Such requests shall be submitted to the elder council. The time and place of the meeting and the nature of the business to be acted upon shall be read at the regular services for two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to the day of the meeting.
- c. The annual business meeting shall be held following the second Sunday in January and on or before the first Sunday in February.
- d. Quarterly business meetings shall be held in the months of April, July and October.

3. Quorum

A quorum consisting of at least twenty percent (20%) of the active membership and qualified to vote is required in order to act on a matter of business.

4. Qualification of Voters

A member must be of legal age (18) to be qualified to vote on matters of business.

ARTICLE V - ELECTIONS

1. Time

The selection of officers and committee positions requiring either church ratification or election shall be held as part of a business meeting. Annual elections will be conducted at the October business meeting whenever possible.

2. Procedure

- a. The names of the nominees shall appear on the ballot. Votes shall be cast for the specified number of positions. All elections shall be by written ballot. Election of an at large nominating committee member shall be conducted between a minimum of two church members.
- b. Prior to elections, members are encouraged to submit names of possible nominees to elders or nominating committee members for their consideration.

3. Vacancies

Vacancies occurring during the year may be filled by the elder council until the next election.

4. Quorum

A quorum consisting of at least twenty percent (20%) of the active membership and qualified to vote is required in order to conduct an election.

5. Qualification of Voters

A member must be of legal age (18) to be qualified to vote in an election.

ARTICLE VI - PASTORAL STAFF

1. Establishment of the Relationship with the Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor(s)

- a. Selection and Duties of the Pastoral Search Committee:** When it is necessary to call a pastor, a representative pastoral search committee consisting of at least five (5) members, including one (1) or more elder council members shall be appointed by the elder council and ratified by a quorum majority vote at a business meeting of the church. This committee shall seek a suitable candidate for pastor and shall arrange for the church to become acquainted with him. In seeking a suitable candidate, the committee shall consult the leaders of Converge Worldwide (Baptist General Conference) and its district affiliate, Converge Heartland, and also take suggestions from the members of the church. It shall investigate the merits of a candidate, giving consideration to his personal character, education, ministerial record and abilities. The committee will recommend to the elder council its candidate for senior pastor or associate pastor for their approval.
- b. Extension of the Call:** The recommendations of the elder council concerning (a) the call of a pastor and (b) the terms of such call shall be presented to the church at a specially called business meeting, notice of such meeting and its purpose having been read at the regular services for two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to the day of the meeting. A quorum vote of three-fourths (3/4) majority shall be necessary to extend a call to anyone under consideration. A quorum majority vote is required to approve the terms of the call. Only one (1) candidate shall be presented to the church at one (1) time. The votes for the call and for the terms of the call shall be by written ballot. When the call has been approved by the church, it shall be sent to the candidate by the church clerk. The candidate's written acceptance of the call shall establish the pastoral relationship as of the date agreed upon by the church and the candidate.

2. Working Arrangements with the Pastor

The pastor's salary and other benefits (i.e., housing, utilities, insurance, travel, retirement, etc.) as well as provisions for his vacation and participation in opportunities for service or professional growth shall be fixed at the time of the call and shall be reviewed by the elder council at least yearly when preparing the annual budget.

3. Dissolution of the Pastoral Relationship

- a.** When a pastor resigns, the letter of resignation shall be read to the elder council. The elder council shall announce the resignation to the church, provide the effective date of resignation, and make recommendation to the church regarding the financial terms for dissolution of the pastoral relationship at a regular or special business meeting. The date of dissolution shall be no more than sixty (60) or less than thirty (30) days after the effective date of the acceptance of the resignation by the church unless recommended differently by the elder council. If, in the judgment of the elder council, the continuance of the pastor's ministry shall be undesirable, the elder council shall recommend to the church that the relationship be discontinued immediately, but the salary shall be continued for a minimum of thirty (30) days.

- b. Any proposal to dismiss a pastor shall be referred to the elder council for consideration and counsel with the pastor if necessary in an attempt to correct the grievances. If the grievances are not or cannot be corrected, the church may dissolve the pastoral relationship upon recommendation from the elder council and carried by a quorum majority written ballot vote at a business meeting. The elder council shall be required to present to the church any written request for the dismissal of a pastor when signed by twenty percent (20%) of the qualified voting membership of the church. Such action shall be taken at a special business meeting and a quorum majority written ballot vote shall be necessary to carry the motion for dismissal. In the event that such petition fails to carry the majority vote, all elder council members signing such a petition shall automatically relinquish their office.

ARTICLE VII - OTHER EMPLOYEES

1. Employment and Duties

Any other church employee may be called or dismissed by the elder council. Employees shall be under the general supervision of the elder council, but the elder council may have the employee report to someone other than an elder. The elder council shall present to each employee a written description of his or her duties and responsibilities.

2. Working Arrangements with the Employee

Salaries, other benefits, and vacations shall be fixed at the time of employment, presented to the employee in writing, and may be changed upon recommendation of the elder council. Compensation arrangements shall be reviewed by the elder council at least yearly when preparing the annual budget.

ARTICLE VIII - FINANCES

Finances necessary for supporting the church and its mission shall be obtained through voluntary tithes, gifts and offerings. Additional appeals for funds, budgeted or non-budgeted, may be made as deemed advisable by the elder council. Church approved programs will be financed out of the treasury of the church. The annual budget will be approved by a quorum majority vote and all fund designations shall be honored unless changed by congregational approval.

ARTICLE IX - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order Revised shall be followed by the church in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with the constitution or the special rules of order of this church.

ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended at a business meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a quorum provided that notice of such amendment shall have been read at the regular services for two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to the day of the meeting and a copy of the proposed amendment shall have been posted in a conspicuous place.