CONSTITUTION OF NANSEMOND RIVER BAPTIST CHURCH OF SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA APPROVED ON DECEMBER 14, 2008
Amended March 16, 2025

PREAMBLE

This Constitution replaces and supersedes any and all prior Constitutions of the Nansemond River Baptist Church.

We, the members of the Nansemond River Baptist Church of Suffolk, Virginia, do ordain and establish the following Articles, to which we voluntarily and solemnly submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I: Name

The name of this church shall be known as “Nansemond River Baptist Church,” hereafter referred to as the “Church.”

ARTICLE II: Purpose

This Church is a nonprofit ecclesiastical corporation organized and operated exclusively to glorify God and exalt Jesus by reaching up through worship and prayer, reaching in through discipleship and fellowship, and reaching out through evangelism and ministry. To this end we are committed to proclaiming the whole counsel of God, especially His glorious Gospel of Grace in Jesus Christ throughout the world and to defending the "faith that was once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 3, ESV)

ARTICLE III: Articles of Faith

As a member of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Articles of Faith of this Church shall be the same as that of *The Baptist Faith and Message* adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention June 14, 2000, or as amended.

ARTICLE IV: Statement of Biblical Belief Regarding Marriage and Sexuality

We believe and affirm the term “marriage” has only one meaning: a single, exclusive covenantal union between one man and one woman, for life, sanctioned by God as delineated in Scripture.

We believe and affirm that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe and affirm from the teaching of Scripture that any other form of sexual conduct, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexuality, gender reassignment, bestiality, incest, pedophilia, polygamy, or pornography is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe and affirm that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the

community, it is imperative that all church members, those employed by the church, or those who serve as volunteers in any capacity, shall abide by and agree to this Statement of Biblical Belief Regarding Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly by the grace of God.

ARTICLE V: Church Polity

Ultimate authority lies in Christ as the head of the Church and in the Scripture as the basis for all faith and practice. This Church shall remain free and self-governing. The government is vested in its membership and administered by its officers. In function, final authority shall reside in the membership as led by the Holy Spirit. They shall approve and/or affirm Biblically qualified leadership, to carry out Christ's purposes.

ARTICLE VI: Membership

Any person who professes repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been baptized upon profession of their faith, who bears the fruit of conversion, who has read and expresses agreement with the Church Covenant,[1] and who is willing to submit themselves for consideration for membership according to the Constitution and By-Laws of this Church shall be eligible for membership.

ARTICLE VII: Officers

The officers of this Church shall be Elders and Deacons.[2]

ARTICLE VIII: Administrative Positions

The administrative positions under this Constitution are Clerk and Treasurer.

ARTICLE IX: Affiliation

A. Believing that the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia and the Southern Baptist Convention are in harmony and in the spirit of the Constitution and Articles of Faith of this Church, we agree to participate in these organizations.

B. This Church may withdraw its affiliation from the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia and/or the Southern Baptist Convention at a Special Members' Meeting. This meeting requires a 75% quorum of the eligible voting Church members. A three-fourths majority vote will be required for passage. This vote shall be by written ballot.

ARTICLE X: Property Holding

The securing and maintaining of real property, buildings and equipment of this Church shall be for the express purpose of providing facilities for public worship and for the engagement of the

[1] See By-Laws Appendix 1

[2] The office of Elder shall only be filled by biblically qualified men. The office of deacon shall be filled with biblically qualified men or women.

missionary, educational, benevolent and social interests of this Church. These purposes shall be carried out in the spirit and character of this Constitution.

ARTICLE XI: Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution may be made at any Special Members' Meeting when proposed amendments have been presented to the membership in writing and published for at least one month prior to the Special Members' Meeting as provided in C. Section 2 Special Members' Meeting of the By-Laws of this Church.

BY-LAWS
Amended September 20, 2026

These By-Laws replace and supersede any and all prior By-Laws of the Nansemond River Baptist Church, hereafter referred to as the "Church."

A. Membership

Section 1 - Qualifications

Any person who professes repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been baptized upon profession of their faith, who bears the fruit of conversion, who has read and expresses agreement with the Church Covenant,[1] and who is willing to submit themselves for consideration for membership according to the Constitution and By-Laws of this Church shall be eligible for membership.

Section 2 - Admission of Members

The Elders shall be responsible for evaluating each person's qualification for membership. Before being presented to the Church for covenant membership, the applicant shall attend a New Members Class in order to learn about the church's doctrines, practices, and responsibilities of membership. Upon completion of the New Members Class, the applicant shall meet with an Elder in order that he may ascertain the applicant's Christian experience, doctrinal beliefs, agreement with the Church Covenant, and serious intent to wholeheartedly support the total ministry of this Church.

To be admitted into covenant membership, applicants shall be presented by the Elders for admission and accepted by vote of the members at any Members' Meeting. The congregation shall then receive the applicant into membership by a three-fourths majority vote.

Section 3 - Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accordance with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the Church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time and material resources each has received from God. Only members shall be eligible to serve as officers or ministry team leaders. Non-members are eligible to serve on ministry teams. Additionally, non-members may serve the Church for purposes of support and professional consultation.[2] It is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all Members' Meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote. All persons who are accepted as members, shall be entitled to vote in person. Proxy voting is not allowed. At the discretion of the Elders, votes concerning sensitive matters of church discipline may be limited to members 18 years of age and older.

[1] See By-Laws Appendix 1
[2] See Article VI of the Constitution

Section 4 - On Church Discipline

The primary goal of Church Discipline is redemption and reconciliation. Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties, as outlined in A. Section 3, or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored and so opposing the welfare of the Church, shall be subject to the admonition of the Elders and the discipline of the Church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline should only be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Section 5 – Membership Termination

Membership shall only be terminated by vote of the Church. An individual's membership may be terminated, upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders, by vote of the members present at any Members' Meeting for the following reasons:

a) Voluntary request for his or her membership to be rescinded by members not currently under church discipline,

b) Transfer request upon joining from another gospel-preaching church,

c) As an act of Church Discipline by a two-thirds majority vote,

d) Willful negligence of the duties and privileges of membership as outlined in A. Section 3 by a two-thirds majority vote.

e) Six months after moving out of the Hampton Roads area for members who do not qualify for Associate Membership as outlined in A. Section 6.

Section 6 – Associate Membership

Members who temporarily leave our area as missionaries, students, or deployed military personnel may be granted associate membership status by the Council of Elders if they intend to return to regular membership status at the conclusion of their time away. Associate members are released from the duties and privileges of membership outlined in A. Section 3 during this period of time. The Elders shall return an associate member to regular membership status upon their permanent return.

Associate members are encouraged, whenever possible, to join a like-minded congregation in their temporary location which will not affect their associate membership status of the Church. These members shall not be counted in the total membership for the purpose of members' meeting quorum, shall not vote in members' meetings, and shall not hold any office of the Church.

Termination of an associate member of the Church shall follow the normal procedures for membership termination outlined in A. Section 5.

Section 7 – Homebound Membership

Members who become unable to attend service regularly due to long-term health concerns may be granted homebound membership status by the Council of Elders. Homebound members are released from the Duties and Privileges of membership outlined in A. Section 3. Special care for these members shall be provided by the Elders and/or Deacons of the Church. The Elders shall return a homebound member to regular membership status if they become able to fulfill the Duties and Privileges of membership outlined in A. Section 3.

These members shall not be counted in the total membership for the purpose of members' meeting quorum, shall not vote in members' meetings, and shall not hold any office of the Church.

Termination of a homebound member of the Church shall follow the normal procedures for membership termination outlined in A. Section 5.

B. Church Polity

Section 1 - Membership

Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the membership of the Church is the final authority. The membership exercises its authority through the election of officers to govern the Church. However, the vote of the membership at a properly called Members' Meeting, as provided in these By-Laws, shall be required to affect the following actions:

a) Accept members into the Church,
b) Elect Scriptural Officers of the Church,
c) Elect Corporate Officers of the Church and a Board of Directors,
d) Terminate an individual's membership in the Church,
e) Approve annual budgets of the Church,
f) Authorize any expenditure of the funds of the Church when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget, except as provided for in G. Budget and Finance,
g) Approve any transactions regarding real property,
h) Accept, reject or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the Church by the Council of Elders,
i) Adopt, amend or repeal the Constitution, By-Laws, and Covenant of this Church,
j) Approve the call and job description of the Lead Pastor, Associate Pastor(s), and Assistant Pastor(s),
k) Affiliate or discontinue affiliation with any denomination, convention, or association.

Section 2 - Church Offices

The Scriptural Officers of the Church shall be Elders and Deacons, who shall be members of the Church.

a) Elders

The leadership of the Church shall be vested in a plurality of ordained Elders, who are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this Church. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function.

b) Deacons

To ensure that the Elders are able to focus their primary attention on the ministry of the Word, prayer, and oversight of the Church, the Church shall elect Deacons to help meet the tangible, organizational, and mercy needs of the Church.

C. Meetings

Section 1 - Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day and may be held throughout the week as the Elders determine.

Section 2 - Members' Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in a spirit of mutual trust, openness and loving consideration, which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

An Elder designated by the Council of Elders shall preside as moderator at all Members' meetings of the Church. The Elders shall see that the stated meetings of the Church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the Church.

The moderator shall determine if the requirements of a quorum are met for all Members' Meetings. The Clerk shall record the minutes. In the absence of the Clerk for any Members' Meeting, the Council of Elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the Clerk. Meeting minutes shall be made available to the congregation prior to the following regularly scheduled Members' Meeting.

Meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, unless these By-Laws specify otherwise.

In the event of a government declared state of emergency that prohibits the membership from meeting, the Council of Elders shall be granted authority to suspend By-Law requirements and make appropriate decisions on behalf of the congregation until such a time as holding a members' meeting becomes feasible.

a) Annual Members' Meeting

There shall be an Annual Members' Meeting, at which corporate officers and a board of directors are elected, and a budget approved by the membership, no more than three nor less than one month prior to the start of the fiscal year. The fiscal year will commence on

January 1. For the Annual Members' Meeting, a quorum shall consist of 10% of the eligible voting Church members. The Elders shall present a meeting agenda to the Church no less than one week prior to the meeting. The agenda will then be approved at the start of the meeting.

b) Quarterly Members' Meetings

There shall be Quarterly Members' Meetings. For these meetings a quorum shall consist of 10% of the eligible voting Church members. The Elders shall present a meeting agenda to the Church no less than one week prior to the meeting. The agenda will then be approved at the start of the meeting.

c) Special Members' Meetings

Special Members' Meetings may be called as required by the Council of the Elders. Any member or ministry team may bring a request to the Elders to call a Special Members' Meeting.

In the event that the two parties are not able to come to agreement on the need for a Special Members' Meeting the requesting party may submit a written request, with the signatures of any 5% of the voting members, to the Elders. Upon receipt of the signatures, the Council of Elders will call a Special Members' Meeting.

The date, time and purpose of any Special Members' Meeting shall be announced at all public services of the Church beginning at least two weeks prior to the meeting. The agenda, which may not be amended, will be presented by the Elders one week prior to the meeting.

For Special Members' Meetings other than a meeting held for the purpose of amending the Constitution, Bs, or Church Covenant, changing the Church's affiliation with the Southern Baptist Convention, or dismissing an Elder or Deacon, a quorum shall consist of 10% of the eligible voting Church members. The agenda shall be approved at the start of the meeting.

i) Special Members' Meetings held for the purpose of amending the Constitution, By-Laws, or Church Covenant shall require a quorum consisting of 20% of the eligible voting Church members. A two-thirds majority vote will be required for passage. This vote shall be by written ballot.

ii) Special Members' Meeting held for the purpose of changing the Church's affiliation with the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia and/or the Southern Baptist Convention requires a 75% quorum of the eligible voting Church members. A three-fourths majority vote will be required for passage. This vote shall be by written ballot.

iii) Special Members' Meeting held for the purpose of dismissing an Elder or Deacon requires a 20% quorum of the eligible voting Church members. A

three-fourths majority vote will be required. This vote shall be by written ballot.

D. Officers

Section 1 - Summary

The Scriptural Officers of the Church are Elders and Deacons. The Corporate Officers of the Corporation shall be the President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 2 - Elders

The Elders shall be comprised of men, called by God, who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

Elders may be identified as Lead Pastor, Associate Pastor, Assistant Pastor, and Lay Elder. Lead Pastor, Associate Pastor(s), and Assistant Pastor(s) are vocational and Lay Elders are non-vocational.

A man must be a member for at least two years before being considered by the Church as a candidate for the office of Lay Elder.

The Church shall elect Elders, gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with E. Section 2 of these By-Laws. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His Church. Lay Elders shall be reelected by the Church triennially. After a Lay Elder has served two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be reelected to the office of Elder after a respite. The respite shall be for a minimum of 6 months.

The Lead Pastor shall be charged with the primary preaching and teaching ministry of the Church. The Lead Pastor, assisted by the Associate and Assistant Pastors, shall oversee the day-to-day operation of the Church.

An Elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members of the Church (1 Timothy 5:19) with reason to believe that an Elder should be dismissed should express such concern in writing to the Council of Elders. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Dismissal of an Elder may only occur at a Special Members' Meeting.

A Council of Elders shall be selected by the body of Elders to perform the responsibilities listed below. At least half of the Council shall be composed of Lay Elders, and no Elder shall hold the office of Deacon. The Council of Elders shall elect its own Chairman for the purpose of moderating elder meetings.

The Council of Elders shall be responsible for oversight of the ministry and resources of the Church by performing the following functions:

a) Examine, instruct, and present prospective members to the Church for consideration for membership,
b) Examine and present candidates for the offices of Elder and Deacon to the Church for consideration in accordance with E. Sections 1 and 2 of these By-Laws,
c) Appoint ministry team leaders, as needed, to assist them with carrying out the mission and vision of the Church,
d) Oversee the work of the Deacons, Church administrative positions, and ministry teams,
e) Oversee worship services,
f) Oversee the administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper,
g) Equip the membership for the work of the ministry,
h) Encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error,
i) Oversee the process of Church discipline,
j) Present individuals to the Church for termination of membership,
k) Coordinate and promote the ministries of the Church,
l) Mobilize the Church for world missions,
m) Ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions,
n) Ensure Members' Meetings are held in accordance with C. Section 2 of these By-Laws,
o) Present an annual budget to the Church in accordance with G. of these By-Laws,
p) Present annual nominations for corporate officers, board of directors, and administrative positions to Church in accordance with D. Section 4, E. Section 2, and F. of these By-Laws.

The Council of Elders may also propose paid staff positions, and the Council shall present a job description for each paid position to the membership for approval.

The Council of Elders shall have primary responsibility to hire, supervise and evaluate staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to the Deacons, other staff members or ministry team(s).

Section 3 - Deacons

Deacons shall be men and women who satisfy the qualifications for the office of Deacon set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8–13. The church shall recognize men and women who are giving of themselves in service to the Church, who possess gifts of leadership, and who are called to further service.

A nominee must have been a member of the Church for at least one year before being able to be considered as a Deacon candidate.

The church shall elect Deacons in accordance with E. Sections 1 and 2 of these By-Laws. These men and women shall be viewed by the congregation as blessings to the Church as they faithfully serve the body. Deacons shall be reelected by the Church biennially. After a Deacon has served three consecutive two-year terms, they may only be reelected to the office of Deacon after a respite. The respite shall be a minimum of 6 months.

The Deacons, with the agreement of the Council of Elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or ministry teams to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the Church.

A Deacon's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members of the Church with reason to believe that a Deacon should be dismissed should express such concern in writing to the Council of Elders. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17. Dismissal of a Deacon may only occur at a Special Members' Meeting.

Section 4 - Corporate Officers and Board of Directors

The Council of Elders shall nominate the corporate officers annually to be elected by the members of the church at its Annual Members' Meeting. Corporate officers will perform tasks as assigned by the Board of Directors.

The Council of Elders shall recommend to the members no less than three Elders or Deacons to serve as a board of directors, to be elected by the church at the Annual Members' Meeting. The board of directors shall be called upon to perform the legal and business transactions specifically designated to them by the Laws of the Commonwealth. In the discharge of their duties, they shall act only at the direction of the Council of Elders and of the Church.

E. Elections

Section 1- Principles

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

a) Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process,
b) Nominations should proceed with the support of the Elders,
c) All candidates for Church office should be treated with the grace, kindness and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members,
d) The election process shall express a spirit of mutual trust, openness and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2 - Election of Officers

The initial election of an Elder shall be held at a Special Members' Meeting of the Church. The reelection of a Lay Elder or the election or reelection of a Deacon may occur at any Members' Meeting. Names of nominees to serve as Lay Elders and Deacons shall be presented by the Council of Elders and made known to the Church at least one month prior to their initial election and two weeks prior to their reelection. Church members who believe God is calling them to serve as a Lay Elder may nominate themselves in writing to the Council of Elders for consideration. Church members shall be given the opportunity to nominate Deacons for consideration by the Council of Elders when existing Deacon ministry positions become available or when new Deacon ministry positions are created by the Council of Elders.

Any member with reason to believe that a nominee is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the Elders in writing. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the Elders at least two weeks prior to the Church Members' Meeting. If a candidate is not presented by the Council of Elders to the Church, the Council of Elders shall meet with the candidate to convey the reasons for their decision.

The election of Corporate Officers and a Board of Directors shall be held at the Annual Members' Meeting of the Church.

The moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a three-fourths majority of all votes cast for any office.

The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

Section 3 - Calling of the Lead Pastor

In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the Church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential Lead Pastor, and before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the Elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Articles of Faith, Church Covenant, Constitution, and By-Laws of this Church. The election of the Lead Pastor shall be held at a Special Members' Meeting as provided in C. Section 2 of these By-Laws.

Section 4 - Calling of Pastor

In the calling of any man to the position of a Pastor, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the Church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the spiritual gifts of any potential Pastor, and before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the Elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Articles of Faith, Church Covenant, Constitution, and By-Laws of this Church. The election of the Pastor shall be held at a Special Members' Meeting as provided in C. Section 2 of these By-Laws.

Section 5 - Ordination

All Elders shall be considered ordained ministers[3] of the Church as long as they are serving in the Office of Elder. After the initial election of an Elder not previously ordained by a gospel-preaching church, the Church shall ordain him by the laying on of hands in a corporate worship service.

Former Lay Elders of the Church shall not be considered ordained ministers of the Church.

[3] "Minister" is not a term the Church regularly uses to describe those in the office of pastor/elder. However, both the state of Virginia and the Internal Revenue Service of the Unites States of America use this term to describe those ordained by the church. Therefore, the Church will only use this term in reference to ordination.

Deacons shall not be considered ordained ministers of the Church.

F. Administrative Positions and Ministry Teams

Section 1 – Administrative Positions

The administrative positions under the Constitution and these By-Laws are Clerk and Treasurer. All persons holding these positions must be members of the Church.

The Church, upon nomination by the Council of Elders, shall elect at the Annual Meeting members to the positions of Clerk and Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be bonded by the Church in a suitable amount. The Elders shall provide a written description of duties to the Clerk and Treasurer.

Section 2 – Ministry Teams

The Council of Elders shall have the authority to create and assign ministry teams to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility. Every ministry team shall be led by an Elder, a Deacon, or a ministry team leader appointed by the Council. The Council shall have the authority to dissolve any ministry team or position which it created.

In addition to any ministry teams created by the Council, the Church shall have two standing ministry teams established by these By-Laws– a Finance Team and Personnel Team. These teams shall be chaired by a Deacon and vice-chaired by an Elder. The other members of these teams shall be made up of members of the Church appointed by the Council of Elders. The Treasurer shall serve as a nonvoting member of the Finance Team. The Lead Pastor, or other vocational pastor designated by the Council, shall serve as a nonvoting member of the Finance Team and Personnel Team. These teams shall meet at least twice annually to ensure the ongoing functions of the church as assigned to them by the Elder Council. Among other responsibilities assigned by the Elders, the Finance Team shall recommend to the Council of Elders a proposed annual ministry budget. Among other responsibilities assigned by the Elders, the Personnel Team shall recommend to the Council of Elders an annual personnel budget including salaries and benefits for all paid staff positions.

The Council of Elders shall set the responsibilities and parameters of all ministry teams. Any ministry team that desires to place a recommendation before the Church in any Members' Meeting must first submit the recommendation to the Council. If the Council declines to approve the recommendation, then the recommendation shall not go before the church except as provided by C. Section 2. c) Special Members' Meetings of these By-Laws.

G. Budget and Finance

Ministry team leaders shall present an itemized budget of their assigned ministry areas to the Council of Elders and Church Finance Team at least two months preceding the Annual Members' Meeting. With the approval of the Council of Elders the proposed budget shall be

presented to the Church at least two weeks preceding the Annual Members' Meeting. This budget shall be presented for discussion at that time and called up for a vote at the Annual Members' Meeting.

Once a fiscal year has begun the Church Finance Team, with the approval of the Elder Council, may reclassify up to $2,500.00 of budgeted amounts from one budgeted line item to another budgeted line item. The members of the church shall be notified of reclassification of funds by the Church Finance Team at the next scheduled Members' Meeting following the change.

The Council of Elders and Church Finance Team shall maintain a Charitable Giving Policy, which shall govern all gifts, both undesignated and designated, to the church.

H. Amendments

Amendments to these By-Laws may be made at any Special Members' Meeting when proposed amendments have been presented to the membership in writing and published for at least one month prior to the Special Members' Meeting as provided in C. Section 2 Special Members' Meeting of the By-Laws of this Church.

By-Laws Appendix 1

NRBC Membership Covenant

Church membership is a covenant made between an individual and a local congregation. Members of Nansemond River Baptist Church agree to participate in the mission and vision of the church, affirm the core beliefs and core values of the church, and to seek to live a life that reflects the core competencies of the church. Likewise, the congregation commits to accepting the individual into the life of the church, equipping the individual for service within the church, and holding the individual accountable in his or her walk with Christ.

❖ We promise to actively participate in the **Mission** of NRBC:

- Our Mission is to make disciples that make disciples.

❖ We promise to actively participate in the **Vision** of NRBC:

- We exist to glorify God and exalt Jesus by reaching up through worship and prayer, reaching in through discipleship and fellowship, and reaching out through evangelism and ministry.

❖ We affirm six **Core Beliefs** which summarize our statement of faith contained in the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. These six Core Beliefs are:

1. We believe the Bible is God's Word. Because the Bible is God's Word, it is completely true, wholly authoritative, and must be proclaimed.

2. We believe there is one, true living God. He is one God in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He is the creator and sustainer of all creation, perfect in His being and purposes, and deserving of all worship and praise.

3. We believe all people are created in the image of God. God loves all people as the crowning work of His creation. However, everyone is born separated from God by sin. The sin nature that we all possess prevents us from doing anything on our own that could restore that relationship.

4. We believe salvation is by grace through faith in the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ alone. Salvation makes sinful man right with God, brings us into his family, and continues throughout the believer's life to make him or her into the likeness of Christ. All true believers will persevere to the end and will be rewarded with eternal life.

5. We believe the church is both universal and local. All believers are placed by the Holy Spirit into the universal church upon coming to faith in Christ. The local church is an autonomous, local expression of God's family with a clear mission. The local church is led and served by the Biblical offices of

pastor/elder and deacon. The two ordinances of the church are believers. baptism and the Lord's Supper.

6. We believe God established the family as the foundational institution of human society. Marriage between one man and one woman for life is the cornerstone of God's design for the family. Children are a blessing from the Lord and should be taught the Word of God in the home by example and instruction.

❖ We affirm six **Core Values** which serve as guiding principles for what we value and prioritize. Each Core Value is driven by one of our six Core Beliefs. These six Core Values are:

1. We value expositional preaching in our corporate gatherings, the systematic teaching of God's Word in small groups, and the personal study and application of Scripture by all believers.

2. We value worship and prayer and seek to glorify God both corporately and individually.

3. We value every human life and will demonstrate God's love to all people at all times while giving special support to those in need including the unborn, the orphan, and the widow.

4. We value the gospel and its centrality to the life and mission of all believers and the unifying message of our church as we seek to proclaim the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus in our community and around the world.

5. We value a diverse, multi-generational congregation, led by a plurality of elders and served by faithful deacons, which is driven to accomplish the mission of making disciples together.

6. We value marriage and family; we will work to honor marriages, support families, partner with parents to disciple their children, and encourage singles in their commitment to Christ.

❖ We promise to actively seek Christian growth by evaluating our lives according to six **Core Competencies** to see if they are marked by faithfulness and growth in each area. These six Core Competencies are:

1. In WORSHIP through passionate participation in corporate singing, cheerful and sacrificial giving to support the ministries and mission of the church, and active learning when the Bible is being preached.

2. In PRAYER through consistent intercession for the needs of fellow believers as well as the lost in our community and around the world and heartfelt praise and thanksgiving to God.

3. In DISCIPLESHIP through significant engagement in a small group, learning to read, study, and obey the Bible, and identifying my spiritual gifts and using them to strengthen the church.

4. In FELLOWSHIP through developing meaningful relationships and partnering together to care for and love others within my church.

5. In EVANGELISM through growing in compassion for those who do not know Christ and cultivating relationships with the lost and intentionally seeking opportunities to verbally share the gospel.

6. In MINISTRY through caring for and participating in meeting the tangible needs of those in my community and around the world.

❖ Should our lives not reflect the above commitments, we promise to respond in repentance and Christian character to the biblical practice of church discipline by other church members, the elders, or the congregation. Also, we promise that if we leave NRBC, we will diligently seek to unite with another Church where we can continue to carry out the mission of God.