

Olde Mount Vernon Baptist Church

Constitution and Bylaws

Article 1 – Name

This body shall be known as Olde Mount Vernon Baptist Church, hereafter referred to as “the church.” Its facilities will be located at 11610 Durant Rd., Raleigh, NC, 27614.

Article 2 – Purposes

Section 1

This church exists by the grace of God for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through:

- Worshipping Him
- Equipping the saints through biblical preaching, instruction, and study
- Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching, personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of the Scriptures
- Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work – local, domestic, and international
- Administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper
- Encouraging biblical fellowship among believers; and
- Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Section 2

No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers or other private persons, except to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purpose as set forth in the Articles.

Article 3 – Statement of Faith

We affirm and hold to The Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000. In addition, we hold the following statements to reflect our faith:

Restorative Church Discipline: We believe Christ has commanded the church to practice restorative church discipline to pursue wayward members and to preserve the purity of the church.

Plurality of Elders and Deacons: We believe the church should strive to maintain a plurality of biblically-qualified, gifted men serving in the offices of elder/pastor and deacon.

Article 4 – Church Covenant

Having, as we trust, been led by the Spirit of God to repent of our sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on God's gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with each other.

We will recognize the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ as Head over this church, and we will submit ourselves to His will as revealed in Scripture. Scripture, therefore, will occupy the place of ultimate authority in our doctrine and practice (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

We will seek to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, and remembering that, as we have been united with Christ in His death to sin, so also we have been raised with Him to walk in newness of life (Tit. 2:11-14; Rom. 6:1-4).

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves, others, and the return of our Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:23-25; Eph. 6:18-20; Phil. 4:6; Lk. 18:1-8; Rev. 22:20).

We will seek to worship God in Spirit and in truth, both in our personal lives and in our corporate assemblies (Rom. 12:1; Col. 3:16).

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We will walk together in brotherly love, rejoicing at each other's happiness, and endeavoring with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows (Eph. 4:1-3; Rom. 12:10-15).

We will exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other, and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require. We will submit ourselves to the church in matters of discipline and seek to restore those members caught in any trespass (Gal. 6:1; Matt. 18:15-18; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:5-11).

We will trust God by submitting ourselves to the leaders He has given us, who keep watch over our souls as those who will give an account, and we will follow their leadership inasmuch as they do not lead us contrary to Scripture (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13).

We will, by a pure and loving example and faithful gospel proclamation, seek the salvation of the lost. We will, by faithful instruction from the Scriptures, seek to present every believer complete in Christ (Rom. 10:14-17; Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Pet. 2:12; Col. 1:28; Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 2:2).

We will endeavor to cultivate marriages that display the relationship between Christ and His bride, the church, and to bring up our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 5:22-33; Eph. 6:4).

We will contribute cheerfully, regularly, and generously to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations (2 Cor. 9:6-8).

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word (Heb. 10:25).

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

Article 5 – Ordinances

The ordinances of the church are believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper. The ordinance of baptism shall be observed as often as necessary. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least eight times per year as determined by the elders.

Article 6 – Membership

Section 1 – Requirements for Membership

In order to be received for membership in this church, a person must: 1) be a believer in Jesus Christ, 2) demonstrate evidence of regeneration, 3) have received baptism by immersion, in obedience to Christ, following his regeneration, 4) wholeheartedly believe in and submit to the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible and summarized in the church's Statement of Faith, 5) pledge, by the grace of God, to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant, and 6) agree to submit to the church in all matters of government and discipline.

The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, along with other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate. The elders may contact a prospective member's previous churches in making this decision.

All persons uniting with this church shall be made acquainted with the Church Covenant and the Statement of Faith through a prospective members' orientation class prior to being received for membership. New members shall pledge themselves to fulfill their stewardship obligations as to worship, service, and giving, when they make public profession of faith and join the church.

Section 2 – Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission and accepted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of voting members present at any meeting of the members. Applicants shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches, and the elders will seek to notify the applicant's previous church of membership of this change.

Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the

church, consistent with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all business 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.

Such duties may be waived in the case of temporary non-resident members, who, because of military or employment obligations, are temporarily unable to attend the church's meetings or participate in its ministries. Those members who are relocating to another area for an extended period of time are encouraged to join a church of like belief and practice in that area and contribute to its ministry. Exceptions may be made in the event that such a church is not available.

Section 4 – Voting Privileges

Voting privileges are restricted to members who are in good standing, that is, not under the church's discipline, and who have reached their eighteenth (18) birthday.

Section 5 – Associate/Watchcare Membership

Students and others temporarily residing in the greater Wake Forest area, who are members in good standing of an evangelical church, may apply for associate (also called "watchcare") membership. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership as set out above, except that home church membership must be retained. A letter of commendation will be required from the applicant's home church.

Duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for other members except that: 1) when absent from the Wake Forest area for extended periods of time they are released from the responsibility to attend our church services, and 2) while they will be encouraged to participate in business meetings they will not be eligible to stand for any office or to vote.

Removal from associate membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other members, except that the elders shall notify the pastor or elders of the home church of that termination. Associate membership will normally terminate immediately upon the ending of the period of temporary residence in the Wake Forest area.

Section 6 – Removal from Membership

A person shall be removed from membership following his death or voluntary resignation of membership. A person may also be removed from membership as an act of church discipline at the recommendation of the elders and with the vote of two-thirds (2/3) of voting members present at any business meeting. No member may voluntarily resign his membership while under the church's discipline.

a. Members in good standing who have fulfilled their obligations to the church shall upon request be granted a letter of transfer to unite with such church as they may designate. Such letter of transfer shall be sent to the pastor or the clerk of the church the member intends to join. Members who shall unite with another church without such letter shall be dropped from the church roll.

b. Members who move from the Wake Forest area shall supply the church with their new address and apply for a letter of transfer within one year, provided there be a church of like faith and practice in the place to which they move. In case there is no such church in the place, or there are circumstances which render it inadvisable to change membership, the member shall report to the church at least once a year, in person or by letter. Furthermore, such a member will be expected to continue to support the ministries of the church by prayer and contribution. All non-resident members who do not so report within one year shall be subject to removal from membership by the church after appropriate efforts have been made to contact the member and remind him of his duties.

Section 7 – Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his duties or guilty of sinful 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 discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and the example of Scripture. The steps of restorative church discipline will involve: 1) individual private admonition, 2) admonition by the original witness along with one or two others, 3) admonition by the congregation, and finally, 4) removal from membership. In the event that the sinning member’s repentance is ascertained during any point in the discipline process, subsequent steps will not be carried out. Prior to congregational admonition, the witnesses should inform the elders of the member’s sin and his response to their admonition.

Church discipline can include suspension from communion and removal from office, as determined by the elders.

The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, restoration, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined; for the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them; for the purity of the church as a whole; for the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians; and supremely, for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.

Article 7 – Church Government

Section 1 – Church Government

1. This church is to be recognized as an elder-led, congregationally-ruled church in accordance with the principles of the New Testament. We believe that while elders provide necessary leadership for the church, final human governing authority, under Jesus our Head, resides with the congregation.
2. The elders are to engage in the oversight and shepherding of members. They are also responsible to lead the church in matters of direction, doctrine, and the discipline of

members. The elders are to oversee and evaluate the direction of all ministries and committees of the church.

3. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of voting members present at a business meeting will be required to appoint elders, deacons, and ministerial staff members and to amend the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant (Articles 3 and 4 of this document). A two-thirds (2/3) vote of voting members present at a business meeting will be required to establish a yearly budget, remove members through an act of church discipline, admit members, sell or buy property, borrow money, determine indemnification, elect members to serve on the stewardship committee, dismiss an officer from office, or amend the Constitution and Bylaws (with the exception of Articles 3 and 4). Any motion not specified herein will require a simple majority vote of voting members present at a business meeting for its approval.

Section 2 – Officers

The biblical offices in the church are 1) elders, alternately called in Scripture pastors and overseers, and 2) deacons. As noted in the Statement of Faith, this church will strive to maintain a plurality of biblically-qualified elders and deacons at all times. The church shall set apart those men that will serve it as elders or deacons by the act of ordination, with the exception of those men who have already been ordained by the church during a previous term serving in the same office. Only men may be nominated, elected, or serve as elders or deacons, and no man may hold both offices simultaneously.

The congregation may, at any business meeting, appoint additional elders or deacons as it sees fit, upon the recommendation of the elders. All officers must be resident members of this church for not less than eighteen (18) months prior to assuming their responsibilities. Exceptions to the 18-month requirement may be made with the unanimous recommendation of the elders and a three-fourths vote of the voting members present at any business meeting.

In addition, the church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of clerk and treasurer.

Section 3 – Elders

The elders shall be comprised of men 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 in the paid employment of the church, although this is not necessary.

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

An elder may be removed from office by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the other 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. Any of the elders may be dismissed

from office by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present at any business meeting of the church.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. The elders are to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

The elders may establish unpaid ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid ministerial staff and church employee positions to be voted upon by the congregation. The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members.

The elders shall not transfer, sell, or purchase any real estate for the church except by the express authorization conveyed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of voting members present at a business meeting. No non-budgeted money shall be petitioned for by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders. No obligation shall be incurred to spend over \$1,000.00 on one item without the special vote of the congregation, unless that item already appears in the adopted budget. Exceptions may be made in the case of repairs to the church's facilities that must be completed before a business meeting can be called if the church is to carry out its normal activities. In the case of such exceptions, the elders may authorize such an expense.

Section 4 – Ministerial Staff

The church may hire additional ministerial staff to assist with ministry. These shall be nominated by the elders and appointed by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of voting members present at any business meeting. Ministerial staff members will be required to have character that is above reproach, as Scripture demands of both a deacon and an elder (1 Tim. 3:2, 10). Ministerial staff members will not automatically be considered as elders, and a man may not hold a ministerial staff position while serving as a deacon.

Section 5 – Deacons

The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 and Acts 6:1–7. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men who meet the qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service.

Deacons shall be elected to a term of three years. Generally, deacons will only serve another term after a period of at least one year has elapsed. However, a deacon may serve consecutive terms if he is willing and elected according to the procedure outlined in Article 8, Section 3. Whenever possible, deacons' terms will be staggered, so that the terms of all current deacons do not expire simultaneously.

A deacon may be removed from office by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that a deacon should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17. Any of the deacons may be dismissed from office by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of voting members present at any business meeting of the church.

The deacons shall be responsible to assist the elders with the needs of the church body and to conduct the business of the church under the direction of the elders. The duties of deacons may include caring for the temporal needs of members; attending to the accommodations for public worship; serving in areas of finances, visitation, building operations, assistance to the fatherless and widows, and relief to the poor and sick; and any other areas which the elders and congregation may deem necessary. Deacons shall provide their service to the body so that the elders may devote themselves to the ministry of the word of God and to prayer.

It will be the deacons' responsibility to work with the stewardship committee in jointly preparing an itemized church budget each year and submitting it to the elders for approval. The elders will then present it to the congregation for discussion at a regular business meeting and for a congregational vote at the following business meeting. When the congregation has approved the budget, it will be the deacons' responsibility to oversee the administration of it.

The deacons shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only. Deacons may disburse no more than \$500 per benevolence gift without the special permission of the elders.

Section 6 – Other Church Employees

In addition to vocational elders and other ministerial staff, the church may employ additional personnel. The monies for such personnel must be approved by the congregation at a properly called business meeting. The elders shall be responsible for determining the duties of and recommending such personnel for congregational vote.

Section 7 – Stewardship Committee

Each year the stewardship committee will convene, along with the deacons, for the purpose of jointly preparing an itemized budget for the following fiscal year, as described in Section 5 above. Members of the stewardship committee will be nominated by voting members present at a called business meeting. The names of the five (5) leading nominees, whose willingness to serve on the committee has been ascertained, will be presented to the congregation at a subsequent business meeting, and the moderator shall declare elected those members that receive a two-thirds (2/3) vote of voting members present. Stewardship committee members will serve a term of three years. Whenever possible, their terms will be staggered, so that the terms of all current stewardship committee members do not expire simultaneously.

Section 8 – Clerk

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

The clerk shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year. In the absence or incapacity of the clerk the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk. For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of North Carolina, the clerk shall serve as the secretary of the corporation. The church clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members.

Section 9 – Treasurer

The treasurer, who shall not be an elder or ministerial staff member, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the church. The responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church. The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of three years. Every three years an independent audit of the church's finances will be conducted.

Article 8 – Nominations and Elections

Section 1 – Selection of Officers

The election of officers shall be held at a business meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, clerk, or treasurer shall be presented by the elders at the previous business meeting, and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

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

Section 2 – Nomination and Election of Elders

a. Nominations for the office of elder will come from the current elders. These nominees, whose willingness to serve as elder has been ascertained, will be announced to the church at a scheduled business meeting.

b. Following this announcement a two-week period will be given for any member who has concerns about a nominee's qualification to make these known to the other elders privately. Anyone expressing such concerns will accompany the elders in discussing the

matter with the nominee. If the member's concerns are alleviated or the other elders decide that the concerns are either groundless or fail to disqualify the nominee, then the nomination will stand. If the member's concerns appear to indicate failure on the part of the nominee to meet the biblical qualifications for the office, the nominee will be removed from consideration until the concern is resolved. Following this two-week period, if the nomination still stands, another business meeting will be held at which the congregation will vote to elect the nominee to the office.

c. The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a three-fourths (3/4) vote of voting members present at the business meeting.

Section 3 – Nomination and Election of Deacons

a. Nominations for the office of deacon will come from the congregation by ballot at a business meeting. The elders will review the list of nominees to make certain each meets the scriptural qualifications contained in Acts 6:1-7 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The elders shall have authority to remove the names of any candidates whom they deem do not meet these scriptural qualifications. The leading nominees, whose willingness to serve as deacon has been ascertained, will be announced to the church, and the process will proceed according to the steps listed above in Section 2 b. and c.

b. Deacons shall be elected to a three-year term. Whenever possible, their terms will be staggered, so that the terms of all current deacons do not expire simultaneously. The deacons shall elect annually their own chairman. In the event of vacancies, a new nomination and election process will take place, as outlined in Section 3a above.

Article 9 – Meetings

Section 1 – Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

Section 2 – Business Meetings

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

A member designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all business meetings of the church. The elders shall see that the required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present. Abstentions do not count as a cast vote.

A budget shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of voting members present at a business meeting no more than three months nor less than one month prior to the start of the fiscal year.

At any business meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

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

1. The moderator shall preserve order, state and put all questions, take the vote and shall cast the deciding vote in case of a tie. In all cases of order, the moderator shall decide, but an appeal may be made to the church and two-thirds (2/3) of voting members present at the meeting may reverse the decision.
2. No committee shall bring any recommendation to the church unless such recommendation has been acted upon by a majority of that committee.
3. All matters of parliamentary law and practices not provided for shall be decided in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.
4. All questions shall be brought before the church by motion and seconded before they shall be discussed and voted upon.
5. All motions, resolutions, and reports of committees shall be submitted in writing.
6. Only one member shall speak at a time and preference shall be given to the members first addressing the moderator.
7. Every member wishing to speak shall raise his hand and respectfully address the moderator.
8. No member may speak more than once upon the same subject until every member wishing to speak shall have the liberty to do so, nor more than twice without the consent of the church.

Article 10 – Peacemaking and Reconciliation

Our church is committed to building a “culture of peace” that reflects God’s peace and the power of the gospel of Christ in our lives. We realize that bitterness, unforgiveness, and broken relationships are not appropriate for the people whom God has reconciled to himself through the sacrifice of his only Son. Therefore, we look to the Scriptures and the

Holy Spirit for guidance on how we can respond to conflict in a way that will honor God, promote justice, reconcile relationships, and preserve our witness for Christ. As God gives us his wisdom and grace, we are committed to actively teaching and encouraging one another to live out the following principles of peacemaking and reconciliation.

Section 1 – Personal Peacemaking

- Whenever we are faced with conflict, our primary goal will be to glorify God with our thoughts, words and actions (1 Cor. 10:31).
- We will try to get the “logs” out of our own eyes before focusing on what others may have done wrong (Matt. 7:3-5).
- We will seek to overlook minor offenses (Prov. 19:11).
- We will refrain from all gossip, backbiting and slander (Eph. 4:29). If we have a problem with others, we will talk *to* them, not *about* them.
- We will make “charitable judgments” toward one another by believing the best about each other until we have facts that prove otherwise (1 Cor. 13:7).
- If an offense is too serious to overlook, or if we think someone may have something against us, we will go promptly to seek reconciliation (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15).
- When we offer a word of correction to others, we will do so graciously and gently, with the goal of serving and restoring them, rather than beating them down (Prov. 12:18; Eph. 4:29; Gal. 6:1).
- When someone tries to correct us, we will ask God to help us resist prideful defensiveness and to welcome correction with humility (Ps. 141:5; Prov. 15:32).
- When others repent, we will ask God to give us grace to forgive them as he has forgiven us (Eph. 4:32).
- When we discuss or negotiate substantive issues, we will look out for others’ interests as well as our own (Phil. 2:3-4).

Section 2 – Assisted Peacemaking

- When two of us cannot resolve a conflict privately, we will seek the mediation of wise people in our church and listen humbly to their counsel (Matt. 18:16; Phil. 4:2-3). If our dispute is with an elder, we will look to our other elders for assistance.
- When informal mediation does not resolve a dispute, we will seek formal assistance from our elders or people they appoint, and we will submit to their counsel and correction (Matt. 18:17-20).
- When we have a business or legal dispute with another Christian, we will make every reasonable effort to resolve the conflict within the body of Christ through biblical mediation or arbitration, rather than going to civil court (1 Cor. 6:1-8). If the other party attends another church, our leaders will offer to cooperate with the leaders of that church to resolve the matter.

- If a person coming to our church has an unresolved conflict with someone in his former church, we will require and assist him to make every reasonable effort to be reconciled to the other person before joining our church (Matt. 5:23-24; Rom. 12:18).
- When a conflict involves matters of doctrine or church discipline, we will submit to the procedures set forth in Article 6, Section 7 of these bylaws.
- If we have a legal dispute with or within our church and cannot resolve it internally through the steps given above, we will obey God's command not to go into the civil court (1 Cor. 6:1-8). Instead, we will submit the matter to the Institute for Christian Conciliation, a division of Peacemaker Ministries, for mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration, in accordance with its *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation* (www.Peacemaker.net).¹ In the event that the Institute for Christian Conciliation ceases to exist or declines this role, we will submit the matter to another Christian conciliator who will conciliate our dispute in accordance with the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation*.

Section 3 – Division and Arbitration

In the event of a division of this church, from which may God in His mercy save us, the property of this church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest portion of the church membership before recognizing a division therein, provided such group is loyal to this constitution; otherwise it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this constitution though it may not be the largest group in such division. Should any controversy arise as to whether such loyalty exists, the question shall be submitted to the Institute for Christian Conciliation for arbitration, and its decision shall be final. In the event that the Institute for Christian Conciliation ceases to exist or declines this role, we will submit the matter to another Christian conciliator who will conciliate our dispute in accordance with the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation*.

Section 4 – Dissolution of the Church

Should a condition arise at any time in the future when for any reason, the church work cannot continue, the church property shall be transferred to the Southern Baptist Convention, with the preference that the property or its sale proceeds be used toward church planting.

Article 11 – Indemnification

Definition: Security against hurt, loss, or damage; exemption from incurred penalties or liabilities

Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he is or was acting as an officer, employee, or agent of the church carrying out the mission of the

¹ Adapted from Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* (Baker Books, 3rd Ed. 2004). These Relational Commitments [Article 10, Sections 1-2] are adapted from *The Peacemaker Church*. Used by permission of Peacemaker[®] Ministries (www.PeacemakerChurch.net).

church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the congregation determines, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of voting members present at a business meeting, that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was sinful.

Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification

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

Article 12 – Amendments

The Statement of Faith and Church Covenant (Articles 3 and 4) may be amended by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of voting members present at a business meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous business meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

The remainder of the constitution and bylaws document (with the exception of Articles 3 and 4) may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of voting members present at a business meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous business meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.