

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS  
GOSPEL BAPTIST CHURCH  
BONITA SPRINGS, FLORIDA**

**ARTICLE I - NAME AND LOCATION**

The name of this church shall be the Gospel Baptist Church of Bonita Springs, Inc., located in Bonita Springs, Florida, Lee County.

**ARTICLE II - PURPOSE**

The exclusive general purposes of this church are Religious, Educational and Charitable. This includes the preaching and teaching of the Word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, evangelizing the unsaved by the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; educating believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of holy scripture, both in Sunday and weekday schools of Christian education; maintaining missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country; and ordaining and licensing men to the Gospel ministry.

Other notable purposes of this church are to secure by direct gift or through church contributions, real property. Further purposes are to build, maintain and equip suitable church and educational buildings as well as housing for its Pastors and Missionaries. These shall be for the benefit and use of the Church, its members, Pastors and Missionaries. A further purpose shall be to build, maintain and equip a Christian school and such other ministries as the church may desire for carrying on it's work.

**ARTICLE III - COVENANT**

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

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spreading of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to educate our children in the Christian religion and to give them a basic education; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all gossiping, backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling, and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage, that when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church of like faith and practice, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

#### **ARTICLE IV - STATEMENT OF FAITH**

**A. The Word of God**

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts preserved in the Received Text, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. (Romans 10:17; II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21; Hebrews 4:12).

**B. The Trinity**

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; Father, Son and the Holy Spirit; 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; I Peter 1:2; I John 5:7).

**C. God the Father**

We believe in God the Father, that He is an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 45:21, 22; Exodus 15:6, 11; Psalm 18:30; Proverbs 15:3; John 3:16; I John 4:7-16).

**D. Jesus Christ**

We believe in the deity of our Lord 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 through the shedding of His blood, in His bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people and

personal visible return to earth to reign in power and glory. (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18 & 20-25; John 1:1-14; II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; Acts 2:22; Acts 10:38; I Corinthians 15:3, 4; Mark 15; Luke 24; Acts 1:9,10; Titus 2:13).

**E. The Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person 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 on Jesus Christ. We believe that He moved men of God to write the Holy Scriptures called the inspiration of scripture. We believe that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is the work whereby He unites the believer to the body of Christ, the Church. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. (John 16:8, 11, 14, 16, 17; I Corinthians 12:12,13; Romans 8:11, 16-27; II Peter 1:21; Ephesians 1:13, 14).

**F. Creation**

We believe in the literal Scriptural account of creation; that God created out of nothing, the universe and all that is in it, including man. (Genesis 1:1, 26, 27; Genesis 2:7).

**G. Man**

We believe that man was created in the image of God, but fell from His original state through his disobedience to God in the Garden of Eden, and thus became a sinner in need of a Savior - through man's sin he lost his relationship and fellowship with God. We believe all succeeding members of the human race are sinners by nature and by choice and are therefore separated from God. (Genesis 1:26, 27; Genesis 3:6, 7; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12).

**H. Regeneration**

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of God's grace; that Christ died, was buried and rose again for the justification of sinners. We believe the blood of Christ alone cleanses from sin. We believe that all men are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, all under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in, or receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 3:10; John 3:18, 19; John 1:12, 13; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 4:4, 5; I Corinthians 15:3, 4).

**I. Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers**

We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 38-39; I Corinthians 1:4-8; I Peter 1:4-5)

We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15)

**J. The Church**

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the Head and that all regenerated persons are members.

We believe in the local Church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, Scripturally baptized (immersion), 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 and dying world. (Ephesians 5:20-32; Ephesians 1:22; Matthew 28:19; I Timothy 3:1-13).

We believe that there are two offices in the New Testament Church: Pastor and Deacon. The Church is the final authority on all matters of business.

**K. Christian Conduct**

We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well-being of his or her fellowmen; that his or her conduct would be blameless before the world; that each should be a faithful steward of all possessions, and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. (Luke 16:1-17; Ephesians 5:9-11; I John 2:15-17; Romans 6:1-13; I Corinthians 4:2; II Corinthians 6:17)

**L. The Ordinances**

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper, neither of which has any saving merit (not necessary for salvation).

1. Baptism: We believe that Baptism, as taught in the Scriptures, is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Triune God, and that it is an act of obedience in open confession of the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.
2. The Lord's Supper: We believe every baptized believer is to observe the Lord's Supper "in remembrance" of the Lord in His death and reminding us of His coming again. Observance should be preceded by self examination. (I Corinthians 11:28-32).

**M. Religious Liberty**

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone, in all matters of faith. Each church is autonomous and must be free from interference by an ecclesiastical or political authority. Therefore, Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling it's duties free from the dictates or patronage of the other. (Romans 5:1,2; Romans 13:1-7).

**N. Separation**

We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and

sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded of God (Romans 12:1-2; 14:13; II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; II Timothy 3:1-5; I John 2:15-17; II John 1:9-11)

**O. The Last Things**

We believe in "the blessed hope", the personal, imminent, pre-millennial and pre-tribulational return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for His Church, called "Rapture" by Bible believers today.

We believe in the second coming of Christ; the personal and visible return of our Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His Kingdom.

We believe in the resurrection of the body of the regenerate to eternal life and blessedness; furthermore that the unbeliever, the unregenerate, are destined to everlasting conscious suffering in a real and literal hell to be eternally separated from God. (John 14:3; Acts 1:2; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 15:51-57; Revelation 3:10; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-31).

**P. Satan**

We believe in the reality of Satan; a living personality who is the unholy prince; god of this world, author of all the powers of darkness and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the Lake of Fire. (Matthew 4:1-3; II Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:14, 15; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:1-11).

**Q. Civil Government**

We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: (1) the home; (2) the church; and (3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. (Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-24; Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 2:13-14).

**R. Human Sexuality**

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. Any employee of the church becoming pregnant or causing pregnancy as a result of consensual intercourse, outside of the marriage relationship, shall be terminated from employment. (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; I Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; I Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23).

We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:18; I Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12).

**S. Divorce and Remarriage**

We believe that God hates divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery according to the scriptures. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of Pastor or Deacon. (Malachi 2:14-17; Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 7:1-3; I Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).

**T. Abortion**

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Psalm 51:5; 139:14-16; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1,5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

**U. Lawsuits Between Believers**

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members.

We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (I Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32).

**ARTICLE V - GOVERNMENT**

The government of this church is vested in it's members and it's duly elected leaders. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligation of mutual counsel and cooperation which is common among Independent, New Testament Baptist Churches.

**ARTICLE VI - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

**A. The Membership**

The membership of this church, referred to in this constitution as the "church" consists of all persons whose names appear on the church membership roll and who are living in harmony with the principles, practices and Statement of Faith as set forth in the church covenant and this constitution.

**B. Admission to Membership**

Persons having professed faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and giving testimony and evidence of the new birth, and of having read and agreed to the Church Covenant, Statement of Faith, Constitution and By-laws, and having expressed a desire to serve the Lord through this local church by indicating this desire to the Pastor and church body, may be a candidate for membership. Every candidate for membership shall give testimony of his or her Christian experience before the Pastors and Deacons. Said Board, after due consideration, will decide whether or not to recommend them for membership to the church. Final acceptance to membership, shall be upon a vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting.

Membership recommendation by the Pastors and Deacons shall be further conditioned on the following:

1. Upon a public profession of faith in Christ as personal Savior and baptism by immersion; or
2. Upon receipt of a church letter of dismissal and the recommendation from some other Baptist Church of like faith and order and having been baptized by immersion.
3. Upon an applicant stating experience of faith in Christ and previous baptism by immersion subsequent to salvation.
4. In the case of request for reinstatement following expulsion: persons expelled from membership of this church on a previous occasion may be restored, by making due confession to God and the church and forsaking that which caused the expulsion and demonstrating genuine repentance, upon recommendation of the Pastors and Deacons and 75% vote of the members present at the meeting where considered.
5. Associate Membership. Certain persons, while members of a "home church" at their northern home, may become an associate member of Gospel Baptist Church of Bonita Springs. The qualifications for admission as an associate member shall be the same as those for admission of a general member, as set forth above in this Article. Provided, however, that:
  - a. The provision of Section C of this Article shall not be applicable in so far as they are inconsistent with associate membership status.
  - b. The provisions of Section D, Par 5 of this Article shall be modified as to associate members as follows: Upon failure of an associate to attend for the period of one full year and the church is unable to make contact to determine said associates intentions, said associates name shall be

recommended to the general membership for removal from this associate membership roll at the end of their 18th month of absence.

c. The provisions of Section E of this Article shall be modified for associates as follows:

- (1). They shall be unable to vote by proxy on any matters that come before the church.
- (2). When present in person, they shall be entitled to vote on all business except, purchase, sale, lease or transfer or mortgage of real estate; calling or dismissing of a Pastor; entering into debt for a building program, or the discipline of a full time general member of the church or amending of these constitution and by-laws.

### **C. Termination of Membership**

Membership may be terminated for the following reasons:

1. Upon death of the member, or
2. Upon issuance of a church letter of transfer and recommendation for membership in some other Baptist Church; the letter being mailed directly to the church named in the request; or
3. Upon a member's joining a church of another denomination, a letter of dismissal may be granted and the member will automatically be removed from membership; or
4. Upon written request by the member that his name be removed, only after efforts have been made to retain such member if such member remains in the area; or
5. In the case of a permanent moving from the community or area and the member fails to apply for letter of transfer within six months after moving, his or her name shall automatically be excluded from membership. The Pastors and Deacons shall mail notice of such action by certified or registered letter, if address is known, and instruct the church clerk to remove his name from the membership roll, upon vote by the members. This does not include those who are in service of the country or away at school, or those whom the Pastors and Deacons would recommend to the congregation that they be excluded.
6. In order to sustain membership, a person shall attend services and meetings on a regular basis. In the case of a member who does not attend services more often than once per month for a period of six months, such member shall be called upon to discuss their membership. If such inactivity continues after the Pastors and Deacons have made such efforts to reconcile said member, he or she shall forfeit the privilege of voting on any matter before the church upon vote of Pastors and Deacons and shall be notified of this forfeiture by a certified or registered letter. The church clerk shall be so instructed by the Pastors and Deacons. This does not include those who are in the service or away in school, or those whom the Pastors and Deacons would recommend to the congregation that they be excluded.

If said members absence continues or is very irregular for an additional six months, the Pastors and Deacons may take action to remove said person from membership. Notice of such action shall be sent by certified mail if address is known.

**D. Discipline of Membership**

1. Since the Pastors, together with the Deacons, are to supervise the spiritual ministry of the church, they shall serve as the discipline committee. They shall endeavor to settle differences that arise between members which affect the fellowship. They shall make recommendations to the church on such matters as they deem necessary and best, using Matthew 18:15-16 as a guideline.
2. When the Pastors and Deacons determine that a member is living an inconsistent Christian life, and failing to live up to the Church Covenant, Statement of Faith or the Constitution of this Church, they shall seek his restoration.
3. If a member is charged with an offence which requires discipline, it shall be the duty of the Pastors and Deacons to inquire into the matter thoroughly. The offending member shall be notified of the specific written charges against him or her and a notice of the time and place when they wish he or she to appear to examine the charges and make their defense. Following which the joint Board shall decide the appropriate action, if any, and recommend same to the membership, which will vote, by majority, on the action to be taken. In the event the said member refuses to appear or fails to appear without satisfactory reason, the Pastors and Deacons may proceed on their knowledge of the facts. After prayer and deliberation, if disciplinary action seems Scriptural and wise, the Pastors and Deacons will recommend such action to the church.
4. In as much as the harmony of the members of the local church is so important to the cause of Christ and to it's testimony in the community, we expect the Covenant of the Church to be observed as to our relationship to each other. The slandering or spreading of gossip concerning the character of any member of the church, the Pastors, or any officer, is considered unscriptural and grounds for discipline. The calling of secret meetings for the purpose of hindering the work of a Pastor, Officer or Deacon will be considered divisive and subject to discipline according to the New Testament. (Romans 16:17, 18).
5. No member shall bring accusation to the church against any of the Pastors or any member without going to that person with two or more witnesses present according to Matthew 18:15-17. (I Timothy 5:19 "Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses"). It must first be presented to the accused party, and if reconciliation is impossible, then to the Board of Deacons with the accused present. They shall recommend to the church according to the demands of this constitution.

**E. The Voting of the Membership**

On any matter coming before the church for its determination, each member present shall be entitled to one vote; and all such matters shall be determined at a regular or special business meeting of the church called for that purpose, held in accordance with this

constitution and by-laws, by the vote of a majority of members present and voting, or as indicated otherwise in this constitution and by-laws.

1. Absentee ballots: Absentee ballots for election of church officers shall be made available prior to the annual business meeting and may be used by members who, on the evening of the annual business meeting will, by necessity, be out of town or who may be sufficiently ill to be under a physician's care. Absentee ballots shall be available from the church clerk and must be returned and in the hands of the church clerk by the time of the annual business meeting. Absentee ballots shall include only church officer nominees.
2. Only members of eighteen years of age shall be entitled to vote on matters concerning the transfer or lease or mortgage of real property; the calling or dismissing of a Pastor; amending this Constitution and By-laws; or on a building program or matters of church discipline.

#### **F. The Meetings of Membership**

1. Worship Services: Public service for worship, Bible study, prayer and fellowship shall be held on Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening of each week. Other public services may be held at such other occasions as are deemed best for the cause of Christ by the direction of the Pastors or Deacons or as determined by the action of the church, including daily meetings of classes for the educating of the children of the church and other of like faith in Christian school of academic and Biblical training.
2. Regular Business Meetings: Regular business meetings for the transaction of the business affairs of the church shall be held on a monthly basis.
  - a. Monthly business meeting of the church shall be held on the third Wednesday evening of the month.
  - b. Annual business meetings of the church shall be held on the first Sunday of April for the purpose of:
    - (1). Election of Officers
    - (2). Hearing Annual Reports
    - (3). Annual Church Budget
    - (4). Conducting Necessary Business of the Church
3. Special Business Meetings:
  - a. The church may be called into conference for handling of its business and affairs by oral announcement from the pulpit at a public service on the Lord's Day immediately preceding such meeting and the purpose of the meeting being clearly stated. Such meeting may be called by the Pastors or Deacons or by a majority of the members present at any service. In the following exceptions a special business meeting can be called when the time and purpose of such meeting shall be announced at three (3) regular church services prior to said meeting including two consecutive Sundays.
    - (1). In case of transfer of property or building enterprise involving a sum in excess of \$5,000.00.

- (2). In case of financing or refinancing any indebtedness in excess of \$5,000.00.
  - (3). In case of any purchase, sale, mortgage or lease of real property.
  - (4). In case of call or dismissal of a Pastor or Staff member.
- b. Special Business Meetings of the Church may also be called at any other time than that herein before provided, by the Pastor; a simple majority of the Deacon Board; by written request to the Pastors and Deacons and agreed to by them; by not less than one-tenth of the membership entitled to vote. Any special business meeting called in accordance with this sub-paragraph (2) shall be held after ten (10) days notice thereof and purpose has been mailed to each member at his address as shown on the records of the church.
- 4. Quorum of the Membership
    - a. A quorum at all meetings of the membership to consider the calling or the dismissal of a Pastor, buying, selling or mortgaging church property or the amending of the constitution shall be sixty (60%) percent of the resident voting membership, a 2/3 majority of which is necessary to carry a motion, except the calling of a Pastor when a 3/4 majority is necessary. Only members of legal voting age are entitled to vote.
    - b. The quorum for all other business of the church will be 20% of the resident voting membership and a simple majority vote will carry the motion, except as otherwise provided herein.
  - 5. Moderator of Meeting - The Pastor shall be the moderator of the church and shall preside at it's business meetings except:
    - a. In the case of pastoral vacancy, at which time the chairman of the Board of Deacons shall preside as moderator.
    - b. Where the Pastor may request the Chairman of the Board of Deacons to preside as moderator.
    - c. In a case where the church body, by 2/3 majority vote, consisting of at least 40% of the active voting membership request the Pastor to step aside as moderator, at which time the Chairman of the Board of Deacons or any Deacon may be delegated by the church to preside as moderator.

**G. The Stewardship of the Membership**

- 1. The church accepts the Biblical method of finance as final authority in all matters of faith and practice. Necessary finances for conducting the church and its missionary out-reach shall be obtained through voluntary tithes and regular offerings. Additional freewill offerings may be taken as deemed advisable by the Pastors and Deacons.
- 2. No entertainment, suppers, bazaars nor other projects shall be held at or by the church or auxiliary organizations for profit.
- 3. Each member has covenanted to "contribute cheerfully" to the support of the ministry and expenses of the church, according to his ability.

4. Envelopes will be distributed for regular weekly giving and a record kept by the financial secretary. A quarterly statement will be available and distributed to recorded contributors.

## **ARTICLE VII - CHURCH OFFICERS**

### **A. Pastor**

1. Qualifications: A Pastor shall be a Baptist Minister having been born again and fulfilling the qualifications as set forth in I Timothy, Chapter 3 and Titus, Chapter 1. He shall be a Bible believing man of God, giving evidence of a Holy walk and intimate fellowship with God. He and his wife shall become members of the church. If he is not ordained, he must agree to an ordination council as soon as he readies himself.
2. Responsibilities of a Pastor:
  - a. Feed the flock of God: His people.
    - (1). Preaching of the Word of God: II Timothy 4:2
    - (a). Reprove-to convict and confute
    - (b). Rebuke-charge, demand action
    - (c). Exhort-encourage, comfort, beseech
  - (2). With longsuffering and sound doctrine
  - b. Pray for the work of the ministry: Acts 6:4
  - c. Oversight of the spiritual work of the ministry. Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24; I Peter 5:1-3. (Note: the titles "elder", "overseer", "bishop", "pastor", "shepherd", are all representative of this office).
3. Calling of a Pastor
  - (a). A pulpit committee shall seek out and present one (1) candidate at a time. Said candidate shall have read this constitution and declared himself to be in harmony with it. Said candidate shall speak at a minimum of two (2) services as a candidate for the pastorate and shall be willing to answer questions in an open meeting.
  - (b). See Article VI, A, 4, a, concerning quorum on calling a Pastor.
  - (c). Termination of a Pastor
    - (1). If a Pastor determines that his call as a Pastor of this local church has been fulfilled and announces his resignation, he will give a written 30 day notice and serve until the 30 days are completed or the time can be shortened by mutual agreement of the Pastor and the people.
    - (2). If the church wishes to dismiss a Pastor due to doctrinal differences or immorality or due to other problems or divisions created within the church, by the said Pastor, it may do so by a call for a vote of confidence at which time a (3/4) three-fourths majority is necessary for the Pastor to be retained in accordance with Article VI, Section F, 4, Quorum. If the vote of confidence does not carry, the office shall be declared immediately vacant and

the remaining Pastoral staff together with the Deacon Board shall become responsible for the ministry and administrative duties of said office during the interim period between Pastors. The Pastor will be given a month's severance pay.

- (d). The call of a Pastor shall be for an indefinite period. In the course of the pastorate, if at any time the Pastor is not fulfilling the office and/or the work is not growing, the Pastors and Deacons shall determine the course of action to be taken. In case a Pastor is causing members to leave, then a special meeting shall be called as stated in Article VII, A, 3, c, Termination of a Pastor.

## **B. Deacons**

1. Qualifications - The office of Deacon shall be as set forth in I Timothy, Chapter 3 and Acts 6:3.
2. A Deacon shall be elected for a period of three years and can succeed himself if there is no acceptable nominee to fill said vacancy. Said Deacon may serve for as many continuous terms as the membership decides.
3. The Deacons shall be responsible for the administrative, and business work of the church and shall assist the Pastors in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church such as provided in Acts 6:1-4.
  - a. The Deacons will be given advance notice of special speakers which the Pastors deem necessary for the health and welfare of the church which will be subject to a simple majority of approval by the Pastors and Deacons.
  - b. To assist the Pastors through calling and discipleship programs.
  - c. They are to assist the Pastors in their duties and serve the members of this Body of Believers.
  - d. To periodically up-date the membership rolls and interview prospective members.
  - e. The Deacons comprise the pulpit committee and shall, with the Pastors, be the Church's Disciplinary Board.
  - f. Deacons are to review the Pastors' and staffs' salaries before each annual meeting and make recommendations for the coming year.
  - g. A Deacon's fund may be established; monies to be collected periodically and to be disbursed as needs arise, as approved by the Pastors and Deacons. Chairman of the Board of Deacons is to over-see the account.
  - h. The Pastors and Deacons shall serve as the School Board with all authority to appoint teachers and officers to handle the day to day operation of the Church's Christian School.
  - i. They shall also serve as the Corporate Board of Directors for all Local, State and Federal requirements and filings and shall keep a written record of all such actions.

- j. The Pastors and Deacons shall also have emergency powers in any emergency, to act as they determine in the best interest of the Church, without approval of the membership.

**C. Trustees**

1. Elected for three years and can succeed themselves one term, after which he must be off the board for a year; provided that, they may continue to succeed themselves if no one is qualified to fill their vacancy.
2. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the real and personal properties of the church (care and maintenance).
3. No expenditures shall exceed \$2,500.00 in any area, except by resolution of the church body.
4. It shall be the responsibility of the Trustees to receive and count all monies coming into the church and to turn it over to the Church Treasurer for deposit.
5. The church janitor shall be ex-officio of all trustee meetings.

**D. Other Officers**

1. The Church Treasurer - Shall be appointed by the Pastors and Deacons upon due diligence concerning background and character checks. A unanimous joint board vote will confirm the position on a specific person. Notice of the decision is to be given to the church body at general election time. The Church Treasurer shall deposit all monies in a local bank and sign checks on the church accounts. He shall keep the books of the church which are to be audited yearly before the annual meeting, by the Pastors and Deacons or whom they appoint.
2. The Financial Secretary - Shall assist the Treasurer in record keeping and reporting and shall also be appointed annually by the Pastors and Deacons with due diligence.
3. Church Secretary - Shall be appointed by the Pastors and Deacons with due diligence. He/she is to keep the minutes of all membership meetings and transactions of the Church plus an up-to-date record of the church membership rolls as determined by the Pastors and Deacons. All records are to be turned over to the successor upon appointment.
4. Sunday School Superintendent - shall be appointed and replaced by the pastors and deacons and will be responsible for the general oversight of the Sunday School. He, the Pastors, and the departmental Superintendents, shall work together concerning the teaching staff. All teachers and officers must be members of the Church.
5. Shall be appointed by the Pastors and Deacons and will be responsible to review all the missionary obligations, to keep a close oversight on the missionaries supported by the church as to their doctrinal position and practice, to make recommendations concerning missionary giving and to keep posted and broadcast the support letters and /or e-mail sent by each missionary.
6. Other officers may be elected as approved by the Church body.

## **ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEES**

**A. Nominating Committee**

This committee shall consist of the Pastors and Deacons.

**B. Missionary Committee**

This committee shall consist of the Pastor, one Deacon, one Trustee, the missionary secretary, a representative of the Ladies Ministry and one member at large per every 25 missionaries supported by Gospel Baptist Church. The church members who sit on this committee will be responsible to aid the missionary committee secretary in carrying out his/her various duties of the job. The term for this office shall last one year.

**C. Youth Committee**

This committee consists of a Pastor, one Deacon and one Trustee. They shall recommend youth leaders to the Pastors and Deacons for their approval. The committee shall assist in all programming and policies in the best interest of the Youth of this church body.

**D. Budget Committee**

This committee shall consist of the Pastors, Deacons and Trustees and its duty shall be to prepare a budget for presentation at the annual meeting for church consideration and approval.

**E. Financial Audit Committee**

This committee shall consist of three members from the church body. These people will be appointed by the pastors and deacons and shall serve a three year term.

The function of this committee will be to monthly audit the financial records of the Gospel Baptist Church. This will include all records of the church, missions and school programs. After each audit, a report will then be given to the pastor and deacon board with a semi-annual presentation to the church.

## **ARTICLE IX - USE OF THE CHURCH**

The church buildings and church properties may not be used by any secret society. Any use of the church buildings or properties must be at the approval of Pastors and Deacons.

## **ARTICLE X - DISSOLUTION**

The Corporation shall have perpetual existence with the Board of Directors consisting of the duly elected Deacons; provided, however, that should the corporation at any time be dissolved for any purpose, the Board of Deacons shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all the assets of the corporation exclusively to such an organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, religious or educational 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) or to the Federal Government or to a state or local government for public purposes as the Board of Deacons and Trustees determine upon confirmation by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting, in person and by proxy, at a meeting called for that purpose.

#### **ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS**

This constitution and By-laws may be amended at any business meeting according to Article VI on Quorum, Section 6, Par 4.

#### **ARTICLE XII - ADOPTION**

This Constitution and By-laws was duly adopted April 4, 2004, and supersedes all previous Constitutions and By-laws of the Gospel Baptist Church of Bonita Springs, Florida.

Roberts Rules of Order, revised, shall be used for all meetings, except as modified by this Constitution and By-laws.