CONSTITUTION OF BROOKSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

OF MYRTLE SPRINGS, TEXAS

**PREFACE**

In recognition of the necessity and goodness of a local assembly of Christ-followers uniting around specific Articles of Faith, a Covenant, and a Constitution for the assistance, maintenance, and advancement of the ministries prescribed to believers by our Lord, we the members of Brookside Baptist Church do, hereby, voluntarily set forth, submit to, and promise to uphold the following articles with utmost humility and in recognition of our need for the wisdom and guidance of our God, through the Holy Spirit, by His perfect Word, which is our final rule of faith and conduct, all for the glory of God, alone.

(Psalm 133:1; Romans 15:5-6; Philippians 2:1-2)

**PREAMBLE**

We the members of Brookside Baptist Church declare and establish this Constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This Constitution will also protect the liberties of each individual member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

On discontinuance of this organization by dissolution or otherwise, its assets are to be transferred to the Texas Area Association of Reformed Baptist Churches.

**Article I. NAME**

This body shall be known as Brookside Baptist Church of Myrtle Springs, Texas, (“Church”) located at 30487 TX-64, Wills Point, TX 75169. Should it become necessary for the business location to be changed, the elders will present the situation requiring the change to the Church body during the Sunday morning service announcements at least one week before the vote. A three-fourths vote of all voting members present will be necessary to approve a change of business location.

**Article II. NON-PROFIT STATUS**

This Church is organized and shall be operated exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended, unless any law shall be repressive in scope and/or nature, that is our duty to democratically oppose it on the basis of the right of free exercise of religious beliefs and peaceable assembly. This Church is formed for any lawful purpose or purposes under the laws of the State of Texas, including any purpose described in Section 2.002 of the Texas Business Organizations Code.

**Article** **III. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the church is to glorify the God of the Scriptures in promoting His worship, evangelizing sinners, and edifying saints. To this end, this Church is committed to proclaiming God’s perfect Law and His glorious Gospel of Grace in Jesus Christ throughout the world, to defend the “faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3), and to the pure and faithful celebration of the ordinances of the New Covenant. Its assets are pledged to carry out these commissions.

**Article** **IV. ARTICLES OF FAITH**

The Articles of Faith, the Church Constitution, and the Church Covenant are accepted by all current members and shall be voluntarily subscribed to and accepted by all future members.

We look to the fullest expression and summary of our historic faith—*The* *Second* *London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*—as an aid to us in controversy, a confirmation of what we believe, and as a means of growing together in grace. In this Confession, our members enjoy a body of Divinity in small compass and by means of Scriptural proofs will be able to give a reason for the hope that is within them (1 Peter 3:15).

We also affirm the “Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy” (1978), the “Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood” (1987), and the “Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel” (2018). The members of this Church recognize, uphold, and affirm that marriage is a biblical institution established by God as described by Scripture. The biblical ideal for marriage is the uniting of one biological man and one biological woman, in covenant commitment, for life. The New Testament, furthermore, only blesses and authorizes the church to support the union of two such people who are also Christians. Accordingly, this Church’s officers and staff will not officiate in same-sex unions or same-sex marriages or unions or marriages of two people who do not profess faith in Christ or evidence such a profession in their daily lives, nor will its property or resources be used for such purposes.

The ultimate authority, rule, and code of faith is the sufficient, inerrant, infallible, inspired Word of God, the Bible. Wherever any man-made document is found to be in conflict with Scripture, whether by reduction or expansion of God’s revealed will, it must be readily and clearly refuted in its error.

The ordinances of this Church will be Believer’s Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

**Article** **V. CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and 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 Spirit, we do now in the presence of God and his assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, to trust and obey the Word of God by acknowledging it as the supreme and final authority in all matters personal and corporate; to strive for the advancement of the church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and discipline; to actively participate in the life of the church; to give the church a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry—the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel to all nations.

We engage to walk together and watch over one another in Christian love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to promote and protect the unity of the church; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to avoid all gossip, backbiting, and sinful anger; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay; to submit to the leaders who have been given authority by Christ through the church, recognizing that they must give an account.

We engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment, remembering that we represent not only our brothers and sisters, but our precious Savior every time we speak or act.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will 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.

**Article** **VI. CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

This is a congregational church led by elders. Jesus Christ is Lord and Head of this Church. He has expressed His will authoritatively in the Old and New Testaments. He has vested His authority in the whole congregation of any true church and has prescribed that godly men (elders) be appointed to lead and oversee local congregations. The elders give spiritual direction to the church for the joy of each member, and the members submissively follow and obey the spiritual directions of the elders, so that the elders may do their work with joy. This loving relationship is maintained, insofar as the elders remain biblically qualified and insofar as their instructions are biblical. No man has authority in himself.

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to the elders and, therefore, be accountable to the church, unless otherwise specified by the church action.

Deacons gloriously serve the church in various capacities, by design of the Head, primarily in the realm of the physical needs of the church.

The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this Church. The membership likewise reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this Church and the conditions of such membership.

This Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches.

**Article VII. CHURCH CORPORATION**

In compliance with the laws of the State of Texas for nonprofit corporations, the Church shall, from its Elders or Deacons, first, then from its members in good standing (if there is not a sufficient number of Elders or Deacons), select at least three men to serve as Officers of the corporation. These same three (or more) men shall serve as Directors of the corporation. They shall serve until removed by majority vote of the Church, resignation, or death, and perform such services as are required by law. Any necessary election shall take place at a duly-convened business meeting. Those elected shall select a “President” and a “Secretary” (as outlined in our Articles of Incorporation) for purposes of carrying out their required services.

 BYLAWS OF BROOKSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

OF MYRTLE SPRINGS, TEXAS

**Article 1. MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1. Requirements for Membership:** Any person shall be eligible for membership in this Church, who professes repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:37-42, 5:14, 8:12), who manifests a life transformed by the power of Christ (1 Corinthians 1:1-2, 6:11), who has been biblically baptized upon profession of faith (Matthew 28:18-20), who expresses substantial agreement with the Articles of Faith, Constitution, and Covenant (1 Corinthians 14:40), who intends to give whole hearted support to the ministry of the church (Ephesians 4:3), and who is willing to submit to its government and discipline (1 Corinthians 1:10, Hebrews 13:17).

**Section 2. Types of Membership**

**Paragraph A. Regular Membership:** Those who continue to satisfy the requirements for membership in Section 1. Requirements for Membership will be members of this Church; those who do not continue in the requirements of membership shall be removed (see Bylaws, Section 6. Termination of Membership).

**Paragraph B. Other:** Special consideration will be made by the elders on a case-by-case basis for those members who, for various reasons, are not able to fulfill the requirements of membership (e.g. sickness). Such individuals may continue to enjoy the benefits of membership at this Church, but shall not vote on Church business or hold any office. This is not to be understood as a punitive measure, but as a tender one, which upholds both the dignity of the individual as well as the good of the whole body.

**Section 3. Procedure for Accepting New Members**

**Paragraph A. Application:** A person who desires to be a member of this Church shall express that desire to one of the Elders, who will schedule a New Member Orientation.

**Paragraph B.** **New Member Orientation:** The New Member Orientation shall include an overview of the Articles of Faith, the Constitution, and the Church Covenant. It shall be conducted by one of the Elders of the church. Every applicant for membership will be expected to participate in the New Member Orientation.

**Paragraph C. Initial Elder Review:** Once the applicant has completed the New Member Orientation, the Elders will, as promptly as possible, schedule and perform an interview with the applicant. The Elders will determine whether to continue, postpone, terminate, or expedite the application process based upon the individual’s profession of faith, evidence of that profession bearing fruit in their lives, and their understanding of and willingness to submit to the Articles of Faith, the Constitution, and the Church Covenant. If the applicant was formerly a member of another church, the leadership of the former church may be contacted, in order to confirm that the applicant left that church in good standing.

**Paragraph D. Congregational Scrutiny:** Once the Elders have determined that the applicant for membership fulfills the requirements for membership (insofar as they are able), they shall notify the Church of the applicant’s desire for membership. This notification shall take place during a Lord’s Day service, no less than two weeks before the applicant is to be presented to the Church for membership. During the two weeks, it shall be the responsibility of the members of the Church to present any concerns they may have about the prospective membership of the applicant to the elders. If the Elders receive concerns that would biblically prohibit someone from becoming a member of a local church, they will carefully investigate those concerns and postpone or terminate the application process, as appropriate. If no such concerns are brought to the attention of the Elders, or the Elders determine that the concerns do not biblically hinder the applicant from becoming a member, the Elders will present the applicant as a new member during the Lord’s Day service, following the two-week period of scrutiny.

**Section 4. Rights of Members**

**Paragraph A. Voting:** Every member of the Church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the Church in conference, provided the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting.

**Paragraph B. Candidacy for Church Offices:** Every member of the Church in good standing is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices of the Church.

**Paragraph C. Ordinances:** Every member of the Church in good standing may participate in the ordinances of the Church as administered by the Church.

**Paragraph D. Familial Joy:** Every member shall have access to the joys that flow from being under the spiritual guidance of biblically qualified shepherds and from being in a loving, covenant relationship with other disciples of Christ/children of God. As God is not a respecter of persons, so the Elders should strive to give equal care to each member and reject preferential treatment (James 2:1-13).

**Paragraph E. Christian Freedom/Liberty:** Every Christian must strive to render in his daily life loyal obedience to all the moral precepts of God’s Word (Romans 8:3-4). If God has not condemned or forbidden, directly or in principle, in His Word a particular practice, a Christian is at liberty to participate in it. This liberty, however, must be at all times be governed by an earnest desire to walk in the fear of God and to glorify Him in all things (1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Peter 1:17), a loving regard for the consciences of weaker brethren (Romans 15:1-3; 1 Corinthians 8:9), a compassion for the lost and the honor of God’s name among them (1 Corinthians 9:19-22), and a zealous regard for the health of one’s own soul (Romans 13:14; 1 Peter 2:16).

**Section 5. Responsibilities of Members:**

**Paragraph A. Attendance at Stated Meetings:** Unless providentially hindered, every member is expected to attend all stated meetings. The stated meetings of the Church are all the Lord’s Day meetings (Sunday school, morning and evening worship), Wednesday evening worship, business meetings, and any special meetings that the Elders or membership may, from time to time, deem it necessary to call (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25).

**Paragraph B. Financial Support:** Scripture clearly teaches that Christians should financially support the work of the Lord by systematic, proportionate giving through the local church (Malachi 3:8-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8;9). Giving to other causes, while laudable in certain cases, does not fulfill or replace the member’s responsibility in this area. Financial giving to one’s church of membership is an expression of the member’s commitment to the church and its ministry. The tithe is not imposed upon God’s people as a tax, but is set forth as a general guide for basic giving. To this should be added gifts and offerings according to one’s ability and the willingness of his heart (Exodus 36:2-7; 2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 12; 9:7).

**Paragraph C. Promotion of Edification and Peace:** Inasmuch as the church is represented in Scripture as a body having many members, each of the members having its particular function and yet having concern for the health and protection of the whole (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:4, 11-16), the members of this Church must strive for the good of the entire body. Members must prayerfully seek to discover their gifts and talents and exercise them appropriately (Romans 12:3-8). Members must also seek to cultivate acquaintance with one another and maintain mutual transparency and honesty so that we may be better able to pray for one another, love, comfort, and encourage one another, and help one another materially as necessity may require (Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 4:25; 1 John 3:16-18). In addition, the members must discreetly confess their faults to one another (James 5:16), faithfully admonish and encourage one another (Matthew 18:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:24-25), and refrain from all backbiting and gossip (Psalm 153; Proverbs 16:28; 26:20-22). In pursuit of the peace and well-being of the Church, the Elders may determine that some matters of congregational business are so sensitive that the members will be expected to keep such matters confidential and not discuss them with persons outside this assembly (Proverbs 11:13).

**Paragraph D.** **Support of and Submission to Leadership:** Members are expected to support and submit to the leadership of the Church. Supporting God’s servants necessitates praying for them and their labors (Ephesians 6:18-19), cultivating personal acquaintance with them, loving them, and esteeming them highly for their work’s sake (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13), standing by them and not forsaking them in all their afflictions and in all their good causes (2 Timothy 1:15), and defending rather than prejudicing or damaging their good name (Acts 23:5; 1 Timothy 5:19). Submitting to God’s servants necessitates imitating their Christian graces, faith, and godly principles as they also imitate Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1; Hebrews 13:7; 1 Peter 5:3); receiving their teaching with all readiness of mind and teachableness of spirit, yet with ultimate allegiance to the Word of God (Acts 17:11; James 1:19-21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13); humbly heeding their Scriptural rebukes and warnings as from those appointed to watch over our souls and committed to present us complete and mature in Christ (Colossians 1:28; Hebrews 13:17); seeking and carefully considering their counsel as from those counted faithful by the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:1, 25); and cheerfully embracing and abiding by their decisions regarding corporate policy in God’s house, which is His church (1 Timothy 3:5, 15; Hebrews 13:17), without gainsaying, even when personally differing with their judgment (Romans 10:21; Jude 8-10).

**Paragraph E. A Godly Christian Life:** All who come into the membership of this Church are expected to walk worthily of the Lord, that His name not be blasphemed but rather His excellencies be displayed among us (Romans 2:24; 1 Peter 2:9), and that the good name of the church be not damaged but rather enhanced. Therefore, every member is expected to cultivate godliness in the following ways:

1. **Personal Devotions:** Each member is expected to walk personally with the Lord, making use of all the private means of grace available to him, including daily and habitual secret prayer (Psalm 55:17; 88:9; Daniel 6:10; Matthew 6:5-11; Colossians 4:2), daily and habitual reading and meditating on God’s Word (Psalm 1:2; 119:11, 97), continual maintenance of a good conscience with judgment day honesty (Acts 24:16; 1 Timothy 1:19; Hebrews 10:22; 13:18), periodic and wholesome self-examination, prayerfully conducted by the standard of God’s Word (Psalm 13; 9:23-24; 2 Corinthians 13:5; 2 Peter 1:10-11; 1 John 5:13), and careful and spiritual observance of the Lord’s Day (Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Isaiah 58:13-14; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10).
2. **Family Life:** The Church expects its members to obey the teachings of the Scriptures with respect to family life and government of the home. As the God-appointed head of the family, the husband must rule over the household with gentleness and love, but also with wisdom and firmness (Ephesians 5:22f; 1 Timothy 3:4-5). He is to provide for and protect the family (Ephesians 5:23, 28; 1 Timothy 5:8) and provide personal nurture to his wife (Genesis 18:6-8; Ephesians 5:25-26; 1 Peter 3:7). The wife must be in subjection to her husband in all things lawful, according to the rule of Scripture (Ephesians 5:22-24; 1 Peter 3:1). Her primary role is that of helper to her husband (Genesis 2:18f), and her basic (though not necessarily exclusive) sphere of labor is domestic (Proverbs 31:10-31; 1 Timothy 5:14; Titus 2:4). Her estate as wife and mother is most noble and honorable. The husband with the wife must nurture their children in the chastening and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:2), by setting a godly example before them, by leading them in family worship, by instructing them consistently in the Scriptures (Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 6:7), by praying for them (1 Chronicles 29:19), and by wise and firm discipline, including corporal punishment when it is needed (Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 29:15; Hebrews 12:7).
3. **Personal Evangelism:** Not all Christians have the same God-given ability to communicate the Gospel (1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11, 14-20, 27-30), nor the same opportunity (Acts 4:33). At the same time, evangelism is not restricted to professionals or experts (Acts 11:19; 2 Corinthians 4:13). All Christians should be deeply concerned for the glory of God, the eternal welfare of lost men, and the prosperity of the church (Psalm 90:16-17; Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 9:1-3; Ephesians 3:20-21). Therefore, members are expected to pray for the advancement of the Kingdom of God throughout the entire world (Ephesians 6:18-20; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2; 1 Timothy 2:1-8), and to seek to recognize and seize every opportunity to bear witness to his faith in Christ both by consistent Christian conduct and by the testimony of the lips (Romans 1:16-17; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Peter 3:14-16).
4. **Separation from the World:** Christians have been liberated from the bondage of sin in order that they might be a people distinct from this wicked world and set apart to God (Leviticus 18:1-30; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Peter 1:14-15). Accordingly, they are to detest rather than love godless society (Proverbs 1:10-19; Romans 12:1-2; James 1:27) and to separate from the wicked attitudes, practices, and unwholesome influence of the same, without forsaking all contact, which would require leaving it (1 Corinthians 5:9-10). Members are, therefore, expected to resist the worldly attitude that the things of this life are of primary importance (1 John 2:15-17). Members are not to become so absorbed with work, material possessions, politics, recreation, television, sports, or any other person or thing that would rival our primary attachment to Christ (Matthew 6:24). Members are not to adopt the distorted values of the world, such as: considering self-worth to be rooted in intelligence, wealth, usefulness to society, beauty, sex-appeal, or athletic skill; or considering that our personal peace and happiness should be pursued as our ultimate goal. Members are not to adopt the moral relativism of the world, especially regarding the sanctity of life and truth. Members are not to indulge in any of the vices which surround us: drunkenness, drug abuse, pornography, fornication, homosexuality, and other such sins. Similarly, members are to be careful to discern and resist the wicked influences of the world toward such sins as they are commonly exerted by means of television, movies, music, literature, schools, or by any other means (Romans 12:1-2).

**Section 6. Termination of Membership**

 **Paragraph A. Reasons for Termination**

1. **By Physical Death** (Hebrews 12:23)
2. **By Transfer:** When it is so requested, the Elders may grant a departing member in good standing a letter of transfer to the fellowship of another church (Acts 18:27). No such letter may be given to a member who is at that time under the corrective discipline of the Church. The Elders may refuse to grant a letter of transfer to any church which is in their judgment disloyal to the faith which was once delivered to the saints (Jude 3), or which does not exercise godly care over its members.
3. **By resignation:** Membership at Brookside Baptist Church is entered and initiated jointly by voluntary commitment from the individual applicant and acceptance by the church, expressed in terms of the procedure described in Section 3 of this Article. It follows, then, that members cannot terminate their membership unilaterally under all circumstances. As a general rule, a member may voluntarily resign from membership at Brookside Baptist Church. However, a resignation offered by a person guilty of sin which calls for corrective discipline is not valid, and the church may proceed with public censure, imposition of strictures, or excommunication, as is appropriate to the circumstances and in accordance with the procedures outlined in Article 2. CHURCH DISCIPLINE (Acts 15:24; 1 John 2:18-19; 2 John 7-11).
4. **By Exclusion:** If a member habitually absents himself from or ceases to attend the stated meetings of the church without showing just cause, or if upon relocation a member ceases to maintain vital contact with the church, such a one may be excluded from membership at the direction of the Elders (1 John 2:19). In such cases, the Elders shall attempt to contact the person and to rectify and resolve the situation (Ezekiel 34:4). If these efforts are ineffective, the Elders shall inform that person (when feasible) and the congregation that the individual is no longer a member. If a member not guilty of heresy, scandalous immorality, or divisiveness either renounces his commitment to keep any of the requirements of membership (Psalm 15:4; 24:4; Matthew 5:37) or ceases to practice them as a pattern of life (Ecclesiastes 5:1-5; Matthew 21:28-30; 23:3), and yet wishes to remain in membership, refusing to resign voluntarily, he may be excluded, but only after repeated admonitions from the Elders (2 Timothy 2:24-26). In such cases, the Elders shall announce to the congregation at a stated meeting of the church their intention to exclude the person. Two weeks will be allowed for the Elders to hear any objections, concerns, or questions from the members. If no objection is raised or such objections are not considered by the elders to be biblically valid, the person shall be excluded. The congregation and the excluded individual shall be notified of the church’s decision.
5. **By Excommunication:** According to the teachings of Scripture, a congregation must cut off from its fellowship and visible membership any person who teaches or insists on holding to false and heretical doctrine, who blatantly and impenitently conducts himself in a manner inconsistent with his Christian profession, or who persists in disturbing unity, peace, or purity of the church (Matthew 18:15f; Romans 16:17-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1f; Titus 3:10-11). The procedures for excommunication are set forth in Article 2. CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

**Article 2. CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

**Section 1. Formative Discipline:** Every disciple (follower) of Christ must be under His discipline (His instruction and correction), which He administers to each one, both personally (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 11:30-32; 1 Thessalonians 4:6; Hebrews 12:5-11; Revelation 2:22-23) and through the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-17; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Hebrews 3:12-14). Mutual submission to one another and to the overseers whom the Lord has set over His church (Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5) will result in sanctification of each member individually and of the whole body of the church collectively. There are occasions, however, when formative discipline alone is insufficient and corrective discipline becomes necessary.

**Section 2. Corrective Discipline**

**Paragraph A. General Statement:** Corrective discipline becomes necessary when heretical doctrine or disorderly, immoral, or scandalous conduct appears among the members of the Church. As a general rule and whenever feasible, an effort must be made to resolve the difficulty, correct error, and remove offense through counsel and admonition before more drastic steps are taken (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20). Those involved should remember that it is folly and shame for an answer to be given to a matter before it is fully heard, and that the first person to report an offense often seems right until he is cross-examined (Proverbs 18:13, 17). The principles of Matthew 18:15-17, Romans 16:17-20, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15, 1 Timothy 5:19-20, and Titus 3:10 must be carefully and appropriately applied to each case of corrective discipline. In some cases, public admonition may be warranted (Matthew 18:17; 1 Timothy 5:20). In other cases, some of the privileges of membership in the Church may need to be suspended and appropriate strictures imposed (Romans 16:17-20; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15). In the most extreme cases, excommunication from the membership of the Church may be necessary (Matthew 18:17; Romans 16:17-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 3:10).

Since the church is a spiritual and religious institution, the corrective disciplines imposed by the Church are also spiritual (2 Corinthians 2:6-7; 10:4). They include public, verbal reproof (Matthew 18:17; 1 Timothy 5:20), social avoidance (Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14), and the withdrawal of distinctive Christian fellowship (Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:13; 2 John 10), and are intended to effect repentance through a sense of shame and sorrow (2 Corinthians 2:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:14). The church has no right, however, to confiscate goods, revoke conjugal rights, or inflict corporal punishment of any kind. Nevertheless, a member guilty of criminal actions may be delivered to civil authorities according to the rule of Scripture (Romans 13:1-5; 1 Peter 4:15). The goals of corrective discipline are always the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the church (1 Corinthians 5:6), and the restoration and spiritual growth of the offender (1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 2:5-8; 1 Timothy 1:10).

**Paragraph B. Public Reproof or Censure:** If a member has publicly sinned, but shows hopeful signs of repentance, including submission to the admonitions of Church officers, then severe discipline, such as excommunication, would be improper. Nevertheless, serious offenses must not be overlooked, either, lest God’s enemies multiply their blasphemies, lest other saints be emboldened to sin, and lest the offender be harmed by failure to test his own soul and appreciate the gravity of the offense. Therefore, at the discretion of the Elders, less severe terms may be imposed upon the offender—such as public reproof or suspension of membership. Public reproof consists of a pastoral effort, before the gathered church, to call an impenitent church member or church members to repentance for sin too serious to be merely covered by love. Public misconduct (Galatians 2:11-14; 1 Timothy 5:20), patterns of sin (Titus 1:12-13), and serious doctrinal error (Titus 1:10-13) may require public reproof. Those who humbly receive the word of public reproof, own and confess their sin, and manifest a transformed life (Proverbs 28:13) shall afterword be publicly commended for their godly repentance (2 Corinthians 7:7-11). If the reproof is not heeded, further discipline may be imposed.

**Paragraph C.** **Suspension of Privileges and/or Membership:** Some misconduct on the part of a member is so detrimental to the unity, holiness, and testimony of the church that the Lord requires public reproof to be accompanied by the suspension of some or all of the privileges of membership according to the nature or gravity of the offense (Romans 16:17-20; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15). Suspension of membership consists of a temporary suspension of partaking of the Lord’s Table, serving publicly or officially in the church, and voting on congregational matters. In all cases of suspension, the offending person is still regarded as a brother in Christ and as a member of this Church, and not as a wicked man cut off from distinctly Christian fellowship (Matthew 18:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:15). In addition, the Lord wills that this severe reproof be expressed and enforced by the entire church (Matthew 18:17; Romans 16:17-20; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15). Therefore, the Elders shall, at a regular or specially called congregational meeting, recommend to the congregation that the offending brother be suspended, specifying the grounds for the discipline, the privileges to be revoked, and the strictures to be imposed. To be valid, an act of suspension must have the approval of at least two-thirds of the members in good standing, present and voting. The Elders, in the interest of the well-being of the erring member and the security of the church, have the right to impose a temporary suspension during the brief interval between their determination to recommend suspension and the congregational vote. Those who humbly submit to the imposed discipline shall afterward be forgiven, have their privileges restored, and be publicly and joyfully received back into the full fellowship of the Church (Matthew 18:15; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

**The general grounds and generic categories of sin which require suspension are as follows:**

1. **A stubborn private offender** (Matthew 18:15-17): When a private offense remains unresolved, even after the method prescribed by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-16 has been graciously and prayerfully followed, it is considered an aggravated offense. The brethren involved shall bring the matter to the Elders who, if the evidence is sufficient for them to judge the matter, they determine it is serious enough, and they cannot persuade the offending brother to repent, shall report the situation to the Church and recommend that the stubborn brother be suspended (Matthew 18:17). If even after suspension, the offending brother remains adamant in his sin, excommunication will be enacted according to the procedure outlined in Paragraph D of this Article (Matthew 18:17).
2. **Divisive teachings or behavior** (Romans 16:17-20; Titus 3:10): When a member deliberately persists in the propagation of serious doctrinal error contrary to Scripture and our Articles of Faith, or attempts to sow discord among us, he may be suspended as a factious man. The Elders are to meekly and patiently confront such a member according to the Word of God (1 Corinthians 1:10-4:21; Titus 3:10). If, after receiving repeated admonition from the Elders, the member persists in such behavior, the Elders shall report the situation to the church and recommend that the divisive brother be suspended. If, even after suspension, the person remains adamant in sowing discord or in spreading serious doctrinal errors, excommunication shall be enacted according to the procedure outlined in Paragraph D of this Article.
3. **Disorderly behavior** (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15): When a member deliberately persists in conduct which displays flagrant or public disregard for either the order appointed by God for all mankind in the creation ordinances, namely, work and Sabbath (Genesis 2:1-3, 15; Exodus 20:8-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15) and marriage (Genesis 2:18-24; 1 Corinthians 7:1-17, 39; 1 Timothy 5:8; Titus 2:5) or the order established by Christ for His church in Scripture (1 Corinthians 11:17-34; 14:37-40; 1 Timothy 3:14-15) and adapted to our congregation by this Constitution, he may be suspended as a disorderly man (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, 14-15). If, even after suspension, the person remains adamant in his disorderliness, excommunication may be enacted according to the procedure outline in Paragraph D of this Article.
4. **Contempt of church discipline:** If a person is suspected of or accused of gross sin and absents himself from the congregation, refusing to meet with the Elders that the matter may be investigated, such a person may be suspended from the all privileges of membership (Numbers 16:12, 20, 23-27; Matthew 18:17). The elders may recommend at a later date to the congregation that this person be either excluded or excommunicated.

**Paragraph D. Excommunication:** Some types of conduct must be categorized as “immoral” (1 Corinthians 5:9, 11; 6:9-10), and a member blatantly and impenitently guilty of such conduct must be cut off from the fellowship of the church (Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:3-5, 13). Likewise, some wrong opinions regarding doctrines of Scripture are so serious that they must be categorized as “heretical” (Galatians 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 4:1). In such cases, the Elders shall make earnest efforts to bring the offender or erring member to true repentance and reformation. If, however, these efforts fail, they shall report the same to the congregation at a regular or specially called meeting of the Church and recommend excommunication. This must be done, according to Scripture, by the action of the entire Church (Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:4). To be valid, an act of excommunication must have the approval of at least two-thirds of the members in good standing, present and voting.

**Paragraph E. Restoration:** It is the joyful duty of the church to forgive and restore to membership those persons who give satisfactory evidence of being repentant (2 Corinthians 2:6-8; 7:11). The Elders shall strive to meet with and seek the restoration of those who have been suspended, excluded, or excommunicated when the aims of the discipline have, according to the judgment of the Elders, been accomplished. Recommendation for restoration will be made by the Elders at a regular or special meeting of the church. In order for the restoration to be valid, at least two-thirds of the members in good standing, present and voting must approve.

**Article 3. CHURCH OFFICERS**

**Section 1. General Statement:** Jesus Christ alone is Head of the church (Colossians 1:8), and He governs His church through office-bearers whom He appoints (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11) and who are endowed by His Spirit with the gifts and graces needed to accomplish their work (1 Corinthians 15:9-10). There are two offices in Scripture: Elders (also called pastors, or bishops) and Deacons (Acts 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:1-13). It is the duty of the church to seek and discover among its members those to whom Christ the Lord has imparted the desire and the necessary gifts for the office-bearing, and after formally recognizing them, to set them apart by united prayer and then to submit to their authority (Luke 10:16; John 13:20; Acts 6:3-6; 14:23; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:5).

**Section 2. Elders**

**Paragraph A. General Statement:** The Elders are all equal in office and authority (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17), but diverse in gifts and function. Each Elder must be able to teach, be engaged in private instruction and admonition, and be engaged in the administration and government of the church. Each Elder should be prepared to share in the duties of preaching on the Lord’s Day, administering the ordinances of baptism and communion, and such other duties as they pertain to the office or are set forth in this Constitution. Some, however, will be more gifted, experienced, involved, or proficient than others. Such men should be recognized and set apart for full-time ministry. Insofar as it is possible, the same should be adequately maintained in material necessities, so as to be disentangled from the cares of additional vocation. (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17-18). As many of the Elders as possible should be supported by the Church.

**Paragraph B. Qualifications of Elders:** Each Elder must meet the spiritual qualifications of the office set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. In humble recognition of Christ as the Head, no additional qualifications will be recognized or demanded, and a consistent hermeneutic will be applied to the lists of qualifications in Scripture. Any man called to this office must be able to conscientiously affirm his agreement with the Articles of Faith and the Constitution of this Church. Should he at any time move from this position, he is under spiritual and moral obligation to make this fact known to the Church.

**Paragraph C.** **Duties of Elders:** Elders are responsible for the spiritual ministry of the Church. The Eldership, as a body, is responsible to give comprehensive oversight to the church, including: prayer (Acts 6:4), the preaching and teaching of the whole counsel of God, both publicly and privately (Acts 20:17; 20-21, 27; Titus 1:9), the watching out for the welfare of the soul of each member of the Church (Ephesians 4:11-16; Colossians 1:28; 1 Thessalonians 2:11; Hebrews 13:17), and the direction of the Church in its tasks by setting general policy and by making specific decisions (1 Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-2) by the procedures set forth in this constitution. The Elders must always exercise authority with sensitivity to the consensus of the congregation (Ezekiel 34:4; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; 1 Peter 5:3). They should maintain the posture of servants and examples to the congregation, willing to yield to the congregation in matters involving large projects or expenditures when appropriate (Acts 15:22; 19:30; 21:11-14). In addition, the Elders must maintain oversight over one another and must give mutual counsel regarding the stewardship of one another’s gifts (Acts 20:28; Galatians 2:9).

The Elders are responsible for examining and instructing prospective members, examining and recommending all prospective candidates for offices and positions, overseeing the work of the Deacons and appointed church committees, equipping members for the work of the ministry, encouraging sound doctrine and practice, admonishing and correcting error, overseeing the process of church discipline, mobilizing the Church for world missions, and ensuring that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, teach in accordance with the Articles of Faith.

When the Church is too small to maintain both offices, the Elder(s) will function as both Elders and Deacons. In such cases where the Elder(s) function in the capacity of both Elders and Deacons, ALL REFERENCES IN THE CONSTITUTION OR BYLAWS TO EITHER ELDERS OR DEACONS WILL APPLY TO THE ELDER(S).

**Paragraph D. Plurality of Elders:** Although in new or small congregations only one man may have the gifts requisite for the office of Elder, the Scriptures indicate that normally there should be a plurality of Elders in the church (Acts 20:17; Philippians 1:1). The church should endeavor to discover and formally recognize all the men whom the Holy Spirit has endowed with the requisite gifts and graces for the office, but only such men.

Should it come to pass, in the providence of God, that Brookside Baptist Church has only one man qualified for the office of Elder, the Church must wait upon God with fervent prayer that He might remedy this abnormality (Matthew 9:37-38). In such cases, the sole Elder is urged to seek spiritual oversight for himself and his family from an eldership of another church. He should seek counsel for matters of importance and guard against being self-willed or tyrannical in his attitude or rule (Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:3-5). The sole Elder bears full authority and responsibility for those duties outlined in this Article.

Should it come to pass, in the Providence of God, that Brookside Baptist Church is without any Elders, a steering committee shall be formed, consisting of five male members of the Church in good standing, nominated and chosen by majority vote at a business meeting of the Church (1 Corinthians 14:40). This committee shall make arrangements for pulpit supply, search for Elders, and conduct other necessary business of the church. This committee shall seek constant counsel from the eldership of another like-minded church. This committee shall be disbanded as soon as a man is called to the office of Elder.

**Paragraph E. Number of Elders and Length of Term:** The number of Elders shall not be fixed. These may all continue as long as they remain qualified, able, and willing to serve. The length of their term of office shall not be fixed by the Church.

**Paragraph F.** **Chairmanship of the Elders:** The Elders shall choose one of their number to be Chairman. They shall also select a Vice-Chairman to serve as chairman in the Chairman’s absence (1 Corinthians 14:40).

**Section 5.** **Deacons**

**Paragraph A. Qualifications of Deacons:** Each Deacon must meet the spiritual qualifications of the office outlined in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. In humble recognition of Christ as the Head, no additional qualifications will be recognized or demanded, and a consistent hermeneutic will be applied to the lists of qualifications in Scripture. Any man called to this office must be able to conscientiously affirm his agreement with the Articles of Faith and the Constitution of this Church. The Church shall recognize, in accordance with the provisions for appointment outlined in this Constitution, such men who are giving of themselves in service to the church. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to this Church and set apart as Deacons. Should a Deacon at any time move away from this position, he is under spiritual and moral obligation to make this fact known to the Church.

**Paragraph B.** **Duties of Deacons:** Deacons are responsible to administer the ordinary business, secular affairs, and benevolence concerns of the Church and care for the temporal needs of the members so that the Elders may devote themselves without distraction to the more spiritual matters (Acts 6:2-4). They must fulfill their duties in cooperation with and in subjection to the Elders.

The ministry of mercy in our Church and community is a special responsibility of the Deaconate. The Deacons shall see that the sick, the sorrowing, the aged, etc. receive spiritual and physical comfort. They shall minister the Word of God, administer this Church’s benevolence funds, and render counsel to those in need of assistance. They shall be vigilant for opportunities to do good, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

The Deacons shall have general executive powers to administer the business affairs of this Church. It shall be the Deacons’ responsibility to work with the elders in preparing the Church budget before presenting it for adoption each year. When the congregation has approved the budget, it will be the Deacons’ responsibility to oversee the administration of it. The duty of caring for and maintaining the Church’s properties shall belong to the Deacons.

The Deacons shall not encumber, lease, transfer, sell or purchase any real estate or movables to, by or for the Church except by the express authorization conveyed by a majority vote of the membership present and voting at a duly called congregational meeting. No obligation shall be incurred to spend over $3,000.00 of the annual budget without the special approving vote of the congregation.

The Deacons shall communicate with the Elders about their planned meetings so that a representative may be present.

**Paragraph C.** **Number of Deacons and Length of Term:** The number of Deacons shall not be fixed. These may continue in office as long as they remain qualified, able, and willing to serve. The length of the term of office shall not be fixed by the Church.

**Paragraph D.** **Chairman of the Deacons:** The Deacons shall choose one of their number to be Chairman. They shall also select a Vice-Chairman to serve as chairman in the Chairman’s absence (1 Corinthians 14:40).

**Section 6. Recognition, Installation, and Confirmation of Church Officers**

**Paragraph A. The Task of Recognition:** The appointment of men to the office of Elder or Deacon is the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ alone (Ephesians 4:11). However, He has ordained that the local church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, exercise the responsibility of recognizing, in its midst, men whom He is so appointing (Acts 6:3). Elders and Deacons are ordained to office by the laying on of hands by the Eldership (Acts 6:6; 1 Timothy 4:14). Since this is an expression of approval for which the Elders alone are responsible, each officer must have the approval, not only of the Church as a whole, but of the leadership in particular (1 Timothy 5:22; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). Christ’s appointment of a man to either of these offices is recognized when a man possesses an inward conviction that the Lord is calling him to serve in a particular office and when the Church observes, in that same man, evidence of the gifts and graces required by Scripture for that particular office (1 Timothy 3:1-7; 15). The recognition of office bearers is a matter of such gravity that it should be accompanied by much prayerful waiting upon God for guidance, a careful consideration of the relevant passages of Scripture, and an objective evaluation of each man nominated (Acts 6:6; 14:23). These activities are the responsibility of each individual member of the Church as well as the Church as a whole (Acts 6:3, 5).

**Paragraph B.** **The Process of Recognition**

1. **Nominations**: Nominations to the office of Elder or Deacon shall be made by the Elders (Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23), who may, at any time during the year, call a special congregational meeting for this purpose. Periodically, the elders shall survey the membership of the Church to determine whether there exists a groundswell of support for any individual(s) for office (Acts 6:2-3). At any time, a member in good standing may be recommended for nomination to the Elders by another member in good standing. Upon the recommendation of any individual for office, the Elders will prayerfully and with biblical objectivity consider whether the individual recommended should be nominated (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 5:22).
2. **Congregational Approval:** There must be a minimum period of one month from the time of a man’s nomination until the meeting called for his public examination and congregational vote (1 Corinthians 14:40). During this period, the members have the solemn obligation to prayerfully assess each nominee in the light of the relevant passage of Scripture (Acts 6:2-3, 6). Any member who has reservations concerning a nominee’s fitness for office should contact him or one of the Elders (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; w/ 1 Timothy 5:22). Failure to resolve the reservation to the Elders’ satisfaction may warrant either termination or postponement of the congregational vote (1 Timothy 5:22). If no reservations are expressed or the Elders determine that any reservations that were expressed should not prohibit the presentation of the nominee before the Church for vote (due to their lack of biblical warrant), congregational voting shall take place. While it is desirous that the vote of the congregation be unanimous, a three-fourths majority vote in the affirmative shall be sufficient for the appointment of a nominee to his office.

**Paragraph C. Installation:** Following the recognition of an office-bearer by vote of the congregation, he shall be publicly installed in his office at a regular worship service by the prayer of the whole Church and the laying on of hands by the Elders.

**Paragraph D.** **Confirmation:** Office-bearers are subject to the same rules of discipline as are other members of the Church. They shall hold office as long as they desire, are faithful to their calling, and have the confidence of the congregation and the Elders. The Church shall reconfirm (or express withdrawal of) confidence in each of its office-bearers at a business meeting three years following the date of an individual’s date of installation, and every three years thereafter, in the manner designated in Paragraph B2 of this Section.

**Section 7:** **The Discipline and Resignation of Officers**

**Paragraph A: The Warrant for the Discipline of Officers:** While Elders are overseers of the flock, they are themselves members of the flock. Therefore, each Elder as an individual is under the oversight of his fellow Elders and is subject to the same discipline as are all the members of the church. Church officers are subject not only to the same rules of discipline as the other members, but in addition are subject to public reprimand by the Elders (Galatians 2:14; 1 Timothy 5:20) and/or removal from office (1 Timothy 3:20) if they no longer are qualified for their office of if their behavior is disorderly or scandalous, thereby bringing reproach upon Christ and His church, and setting the stumbling block of bad example before the brethren. The true reason for removal shall not be hidden from the congregation.

**Paragraph B: Procedure for the Discipline of Officers:** The process of discipline may be initiated by the Elders or by individual members of the congregation. Any member who is offended by the behavior of any Church officer should first approach that officer privately and express his concerns. If the concerns are not resolved, the member should inform the Elders of the situation and wait upon them in their determination of the matter (Matthew 18:15t). Since this is such a delicate and serious matter, the Elders should proceed with due caution and earnest prayer (1 Timothy 5:19). The matter shall be objectively investigated, without partiality. An office-bearer’s tenure, for example, shall not influence the determination of the Elders in the specific matter. If the Elders judge discipline to be necessary, they shall inform the congregation of the basis for the proposed discipline in principle and in fact. If he so desire, the officer accused shall have opportunity to speak in his own defense. The removal of an officer shall require congregational approval at a duly called congregational meeting. In order to retain his office in such circumstances, the officer must receive a vote of confidence by no less than three-fourths majority of the members present and voting.

**Paragraph C.** **The Resignation of Officers:** An officer may resign his office without prejudice if for good and valid reasons he feels he is no longer able to discharge the duties of it.

**Article 4. Church Clerk, Treasurer, and Other Staff and Volunteer Positions**

**Section 1. Church Clerk:** The Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall choose a Clerk. The choice shall be confirmed or denied by a congregational vote, a majority affirmation being necessary for appointment. The Clerk of the church shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the Church, except as otherwise herein provided. The Clerk is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismission~~s~~, or death, together with a record of baptisms. The Clerk shall issue letters of dismissal or transfer voted by the Church, preserve on file all communications and official written reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these By-Laws. The Church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All Church records are Church property and should be filed.

**Section 2. Church Treasurer:** The Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall choose a Treasurer to serve as a custodian of the funds of the Church. This choice shall be confirmed or denied by a congregational vote, a majority affirmation being necessary for appointment. The Treasurer shall be a member in good standing whom the Chairman of the Board of Deacons has, to the best of his abilities, determined is trustworthy in, among other things, his or her own financial affairs. He or she shall, as authorized and in the manner designated by the Church, receive, preserve, and pay out monies ~~or~~ given to the Church and shall keep an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year and its acceptance and approval by the Church, the records shall be delivered by the Treasurer to the Church Clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as part of the permanent records of the church.

**Section 3. Other Staff and Volunteer Positions:** The Church shall call or employ such staff members and/or volunteers as its needs may require for the efficient operation of its program.

The Church policy on vacations paid Church staff is to be: two(2) weeks’ vacation after one(1) year of service.

**Section 4. Church Committees:** The Church reserves the right at any time and in such manner as it may determine to appoint any new committee which shall be considered a Church Committee. Each such Committee shall be appointed by the Elders and shall have such duties and responsibilities as directed to it by the Elders. The membership of each such committee and the term of office of its members shall be determined by the Elders.

**Section 5. Church Program Organizations:** The Elders shall distribute directorship responsibilities for Church programs and organizations among their number or by designating willing members who are in good standing, as the Elders determine the need for such. All teaching materials shall be approved by the Elders. The Church shall provide the physical and financial resources for the appropriate advancement of any programs. Directorship responsibilities and program organization shall be designed and instituted by the Elders in the Church Policies and Procedures.

**Article 5. ORDINANCES**

**Section 1. Baptism:** This Church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

1. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.

2. The Elders, or whomever they may authorize, shall administer baptism. The Deacons shall assist in the preparation for and observance of baptism.

3. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the Church.

**Section 2. The Lord’s Supper:** The Church shall observe the Lord’s Supper monthly unless otherwise scheduled by the Church. The Elders and Deacons shall administer the Lord’s Supper, the Deacons being responsible for the physical preparations. The Church practices close communion for all baptized believers.

**Article 6. CHURCH MEETINGS**

**Section 1. Worship Services:** The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening for the worship of the Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The Elders shall direct the services for all the Church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

**Section 2. Special Services:** Any other Church meetings essential to the advancement of the church’s objectives shall be placed on the church calendar.

**Section 3. Regular Business Meetings:** There shall be quarterly meetings and an annual business meeting of the Church for the hearing of reports, the confirmation of officers, and the transaction of such other business as may be brought before the meeting.

**Section 4. Special Business Meetings:** Special business meetings may be called at other times at the discretion of the Elders. Members of the congregation may also call a meeting by submitting their request in writing, such request clearly articulating the matter to be discussed and having affixed to it the signatures of at least a third of the regular members.

**Section 5. Notice of the Meetings**

**Paragraph A.** Notice of all the congregational meetings shall be given at regular worship services. A minimum of seven days’ notice shall be given for any meeting at which official Church business is conducted. However, in cases of emergency, a meeting may be called on shorter notice by notifying each member in good standing by mail or telephone of the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting. It is the responsibility of the members to ensure that contact information is up to date.

**Paragraph B.** Meetings for the hearing of special reports or for seeking counsel of the congregation may be called on shorter notice, but no vote may be taken or other business transacted at such meetings.

**Section 6. Quorum:** The quorum consists of those members who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

**Section 7. Chairmanship:** As a general rule, the Chairman of the Board of Elders shall preside at business meetings. In the cases of his absence or inability to serve, the Elders shall appoint another member of the church to preside, whether from among the Elders, Deacons, or congregation.

**Section 8. Parliamentary Rules:** Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure to be followed in all business meetings of the Church.

**Article 7. CHURCH FINANCES**

**Section 1. Budget:** The Deacons shall prepare and submit to the Elders and then the Church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and other expenses. Offering envelopes will be provided for members use.

**Section 2. Gifts and Bequests:** Any gifts and bequests presented to the Church shall become the property of the Church to be used and disposed of at the Church’s discretion.

**Section 3. Accounting Procedures:** All funds received by the Church for any and all purposes, excluding monies for class projects, shall pass through the hands of the Church Treasurer, and be properly recorded on the books of the Church. A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Church Treasurer.

**Article 8. COUNCIL OF APPEAL**

Any matter involving controversy within this Church, within the officers, or between the congregation and the officers, if it threatens to cause dissension and injury to the welfare of the Church, must be called to the attention of the Elders. If the Elders fail to resolve the difficulty so as to allay dissension, any such matter may be taken to a Council of Appeal.

A Council of Appeal shall be formed at the request of the Elders or by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a duly called congregational meeting. The Council shall consist of the officers and an equal number of other members in good standing to be chosen by the congregation. The congregation shall also appoint a chairman from those on the Council to preside at its meetings.

If a member of the Council is unable to attend a meeting after the judicial process has begun, he may thereafter sit and hear the case, but will be disqualified to vote on the final issue of the case.

The resolution of any matter shall require a two-thirds vote of the Council of Appeal. When a final decision of the Council of Appeal is announced to the congregation, that decision is final and the case is ended.

**Article 9. AMENDMENTS**

Changes in the constitution and by-laws may be made at any duly-convened business meeting of the Church, providing such amendments shall have been presented in writing at a previous regular business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment(s) have been distributed at the morning service on the Lord’s day following such proposal. Amendments to the Constitution shall be by a three-fourths vote of the church members present. Amendments to the By-Laws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.

These By-Laws shall become effective as of the first day following the adoption by the Church.

This Constitution and By-Laws repeal, supersede, and make void all former or similar documents adopted by the Brookside Baptist Church of Myrtle Springs, Texas.

Notes

Adoption: 8/2/2020

Amendment: 1/16/2022, Article VII. Church Corporation, added:

In compliance with the laws of the State of Texas for nonprofit corporations, the Church shall, from its Elders or Deacons, first, then from its members in good standing (if there is not a sufficient number of Elders or Deacons), select at least three men to serve as Officers of the corporation. These same three (or more) men shall serve as Directors of the corporation. They shall serve until removed by majority vote of the Church, resignation, or death, and perform such services as are required by law. Any necessary election shall take place at a duly-convened business meeting. Those elected shall select a “President” and a “Secretary” (as outlined in our Articles of Incorporation) for purposes of carrying out their required services.

 Amendment: 10/9/2022, Preamble:

Original: On discontinuance of this organization by dissolution or otherwise, its assets are to be transferred to the Van Zandt Baptist Association or the Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America or both.

Amended: On discontinuance of this organization by dissolution or otherwise, its assets are to be transferred to the Texas Area Association of Reformed Baptist Churches (TAARBC).

Amendment: 10/9/2022, Article IV. Articles of Faith:

Original: The Articles of Faith, *The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)*, the Church Constitution and Church Covenant are accepted by all current members and shall be voluntarily subscribed to and accepted by all future members.

Amended: The Articles of Faith, the Church Constitution, and the Church Covenant are accepted by all current members and shall be voluntarily subscribed to and accepted by all future members.

Amendment: 10/9/2022, Section 8, Article 6 removed:

**Section 8. Messengers:** Through its voluntary giving to the Cooperative program, Brookside Baptist Church is a member of the Van Zandt County Baptist Association and the Southern Baptist Convention. Annually, the Elders of Brookside Baptist Church will seek to send messengers to these conventions.

Amendment: 10/9/2022, removed from Article VI:

Insofar as is practical, this Church will cooperate with and support the Van Zandt County Baptist Association, the Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Amendment: 10/23/2022, language adjusted for clarity in Article 1, Section 3, Paragraph D of the By Laws to reflect a two-week period of congregational scrutiny of an applicant for membership. Previously, parts of this section seemed to indicate a one-week period, while others presented a two-week.