

**Bethlehem Original Free Will Baptist Church**  
**2106 NC 111 South Chinquapin, N. C. 28521**  
**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

**PREAMBLE**

Local churches are becoming increasingly concerned with efficient and orderly procedures. Through experience they have found that the business affairs of the church are too important to be handled without generally accepted guidelines. Church properties have been lost, misunderstandings created, quarrels agitated, ministries stalled, and the Gospel hindered because congregations did not have clearly defined and enunciated procedure as the basis for their organized life.

A constitution, code of regulations, order of procedure, or bylaws should be at the heart of the organized structure of every local church. Such a document should be carefully and prayerfully prepared, widely discussed, and in the end, adopted in a way that it truly represents the congregation's perception of God's will for the Church. Once adopted, the document should be incorporated in the permanent records of the Church, and its provisions should be followed with sincerity by all members of the Church.

We, the members of Bethlehem Original Free Will Baptist Church at Fountaintown Community in Duplin County, N. C., a congregationally governed body of believers in Christ, in order to promote the work of the Church in the Spirit of Christ and thus advance His kingdom, do set forth and adopt this constitution and these bylaws. This constitution and these bylaws, when adopted by the Church, shall supersede all other motions, rules, and resolutions heretofore passed by said Church.

**Article 1: NAME AND PURPOSE**

**Section A: Name**

The name of this organization shall be Bethlehem Original Free Will Baptist Church, affiliated with the Eastern Conference of the Original Free Will Baptists of North Carolina and other State bodies of the Original Free Will Baptist denomination and committed to the historic principles of doctrine and practices as set forth in the "Statement of Faith and Discipline" for the Original Free Will Baptists of North Carolina.

**Section B: Mission and Purpose**

The mission of this Church shall be:

1. To preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to lead the lost to a saving knowledge of Him.
2. To devise and execute measures for the extension of the Kingdom of God in this present age.
3. To edify the body of Christ, creating a spirit of love and fellowship among God's people, comforting, nurturing, exhorting, admonishing, visiting and ministering to the sick and needy.
4. To maintain a program of Christian education and discipleship, the officers and teachers of which should be acceptable to the Church and generally members of it.

Our purpose is:

- To Bring honor and Glory to God.
- To Lead People to Jesus.
- To Unite them into the family of God.
- To Empower them to serve Jesus in the world.

**Article 2: MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of this Church shall be composed of:

1. Those who unite with the Church by profession of faith in Jesus Christ and baptism by immersion in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost and agree to abide by the Free Will Baptist Church Covenant, not forsaking assembling for church conferences, public worship, the observance of the ordinances of the Gospel, nor fail to give according to their ability for the support of the church and all its benevolent work..
2. Those who, after such profession of faith and baptism by immersion, and agreement to abide by the Free Will Baptist Church Covenant, may transfer their membership to this body, in accordance with the Articles of Faith and Principles of Church Government for Original Free Will Baptists of the English General Baptist Heritage.

**Article 3: STANDING CHURCH OFFICERS, BOARDS AND DEPARTMENTS**

**Section A: Standing Officers, Boards and Departments**

The standing officers, boards and departments of this Church shall consist of:

1. The Pastor who is in good standing with the Eastern Conference and other bodies of the Original Free Will Baptists of North Carolina.
2. A Clerk and Assistant.
3. A Treasurer and Assistant.
4. A Youth Ministries Director and Assistant
5. A Nursery Coordinator and Assistant
6. A Christian Education Director and Assistant
7. VBS Director
8. A Children’s Church Director
9. A Music and Media Ministry Director
10. A Senior Fellowship Ministry Director
11. A Board of Deacons.
12. A Board of Trustees.
13. A Board of Ushers.
14. A Board of Finance.
15. A General Board, to be constituted as outlined in these bylaws.

Only active Church members who are qualified for the duty (Articles of Faith page 65) may serve as officers and board members. Other officers, boards, and committees may be elected or appointed as the Church deems necessary. Only elected and/or committee members may serve as Chairpersons. Their terms of office will begin January 1, at the beginning of the Church calendar year.

**Section B: ELECTION, QUALIFICATIONS, AND TERMS OF STANDING CHURCH OFFICER, BOARD AND DEPARTMENT MEMBERS**

All officers, board, department, and committee members shall be elected for their specified terms. They may be re-elected to succeed themselves if they have proven faithful to the duties of the office and desire to continue to serve in that capacity at the will of the majority of the Church body.

**1. PASTOR**

The Pastor shall be elected by the Church as hereinafter provided:

Bethlehem Original FWB Constitution and Bylaws

- a. A Pulpit Committee shall be a temporary committee elected by the Church and shall be responsible for recommending a prospective Pastor to the Church.
- b. It shall be the policy of the Church to present only one prospective Pastor at the time.
- c. The recommendations of the Pulpit Committee must be accepted by at least a two-thirds majority of members present and voting in a regular or called business conference of the Church before a call can be extended.
- d. The Pastor's qualifications will be according to those set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5: 1-3.
- e. The term of the Pastor's ministry shall be for an indefinite period and may be terminated by either the Church or the Pastor upon ninety days notice. Upon mutual agreement, ninety-day notice is not required. A written statement setting forth the salary to be paid and other conditions of the call shall be made in duplicate, one copy for the Pastor and one for the Church.
- f. The Pastor shall not hold more revivals away from the Church than mutually agreed upon by him and the Church, the rule now being six per year.
- g. For the Pastor's duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 2 (page 8).

**2. CLERK AND ASSISTANT:**

The Church Clerk and Assistant shall be elected for a term of two years with staggered rotation. For their duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 3. (page 8).

**3. TREASURER AND ASSISTANT:**

The Church Treasurer and Assistant shall be elected for a term of two years with staggered rotation. For their duties, see Bylaws Article 1 Section 4. (page 9).

**4. YOUTH MINISTRIES DIRECTOR AND ASSISTANT:**

The Youth Ministries Director and Assistant shall be elected by the Church and serve a two-year term with staggered rotation. For their duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 5. (page 9).

**5. NURSERY COORDINATOR AND ASSISTANT:**

The Nursery Coordinator and Assistant shall be elected by the Church and serve a two-year term with staggered rotation. For their duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 6. (page 10).

**6. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT:**

The Christian Education Department officers will consist of:

- a. The Christian Education Director,
- b. The Christian Education Assistant Director.

Each shall be elected for a two-year term with staggered rotation. For their duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 7. (page 10).

**7. VBS DEPARTMENT:**

The VBS Department will consist of the director who is elected by the Church to serve a two-year term. The duties of this office are set forth in Bylaws, Article 1 Section 8 (page 11).

**8. A CHILDREN'S CHURCH DEPARTMENT:**

The Children's Church Department will consist of a director who shall be elected to serve a two-year term. The duties of this office are set forth in Bylaws, Article 1 Section 9 (page 11).

**9. MUSIC & MEDIA MINISTRY DEPARTMENT:**

The Music & Media Ministry Department shall consist of:

- a. Music, Media Director
- b. Worship Leaders
- c. Choir Directors
- d. Organists, Pianists and Instrumentalists
- e. Bethlehem Adult Choir
- f. Crossroads Fellowship Community Choir (occasionally)
- g. Bethlehem Youth Choir (occasionally)
- h. Bethlehem Ensembles, Quartets, Trios, Duets, Soloists and Narrators
- i. Invited Groups and Vocalists (occasionally)
- j. Media – Sound, Video, Light Technicians

They shall serve as available, making themselves available as needed for the Church.

For their duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 10. (page 11).

**10. SENIOR FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY:**

The Senior Fellowship Ministry will consist of the director who shall be elected to serve a two-year term.

The duties of this office are set forth in Bylaws, Article 1, Section 11. (page 11).

**11. BOARD OF DEACONS:**

A Board of Deacons shall be elected consisting of at least seven members that serve a four-year term on a rotating basis, with at least two members rotating off the board each year excepting an odd number rotation.

Qualifications for Deacons will be according to Acts 6:3, and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Ordination will be as set forth in Acts 6:6.

The Board of Deacons will nominate new candidates for Deacons. The Pastor and Chairman of the Deacon Board will contact and question new nominees.

Junior Deacon:

The Board of Deacons may select young men as potential candidates for deaconship and place them as Junior Deacons for training and mentoring for a two-year term.

For the Deacon's duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 12. (page 11).

**12. BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

A Board of Trustees shall be elected, consisting of four members that serve a two-year term on a staggered rotating basis with two members rotating off the Board each year.

For the Trustee's duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 13. (page 12).

**13. BOARD OF USHERS:**

A Board of Ushers shall be elected consisting of three members that serve a two-year term on a rotating basis with one or two members rotating off the Board each year.

For the Usher's duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 14. (page 12).

**14. BOARD OF FINANCE:**

A Finance Committee shall consist of two standing officers who are non-rotating voting members which shall be:

- a. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees,
- b. The Church Treasurer, and
- c. Three elected rotating members that shall serve a three-year term on a staggered rotating basis with one member rotating off the board each year, one of which shall be elected as chair.

For their duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 15. (page 12).

**15. GENERAL BOARD:**

The General Board shall consist of:

- a. The Pastor,
- b. The Church Clerk,
- c. The Church Treasurer
- d. The Youth Ministries Director,
- e. The Nursery Coordinator,
- f. The Christian Education Director,
- g. The VBS Director
- h. The Children's Church Director
- i. The Music, Media Ministry Director
- j. The Senior Fellowship Director
- k. The Chairman of the Board of Deacons,
- l. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees,
- m. The Chairman of the Board of Ushers,
- n. The Chairman of the Board of Finance,
- o. The Women's Auxiliary President.

This Board shall serve in an oversight and advisory capacity and keep the lines of communication open between all facets of the ministry of this Church. Their terms shall expire as their terms of Chairmanship, Directorship and Presidencies expire.

For their duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 16. (page 13).

**Section C: ROTATION, SUCCESSION AND VACANCIES OF OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS**

**Rotation:**

For beginning the order of rotation on each board or committee, the member having served the longest will begin the rotation, to be followed chronologically. Should there be two or more members having served the same length of time, alphabetical listing from A to Z will determine the first to rotate and so on. Should the various boards and committees see a need to change this arrangement, they are at liberty to do so with a unanimous agreement of all members within the board.

**Succession:**

A Church officer who desires to continue to serve, may succeed him/herself in any Church office providing that the duties and responsibilities of that office have been faithfully administered and upon the wishes of the Church body.

**Vacancies:**

Except for the Pastor and Deacons, vacancies in any church office will be filled for the unexpired term by the Nominating Committee. Action shall be approved or disapproved in the next quarterly conference. If any Church officer, after encouragement and loving admonition, does not attend to his or her duties with reasonable and faithful regularity, it shall be the responsibility of the Deacon Board to recommend to the Church that he or she be removed from office, and a successor duly appointed.

**Section D: OTHER COMMITTEES AND MINISTRIES**

**1. Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee shall be elected by the Church in its quarterly meeting in January of each year. The Committee shall consist of:

- a. The Chairman of the Board of Deacons,
- b. The Chairman of the Board of Ushers,
- c. The Christian Education Director,
- d. The Women's Auxiliary President,
- e. One elected member which serves a one-year term.
- f. For their duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 17. (page 13).

**2. Pulpit Committee:**

The Pulpit Committee shall be a temporary committee appointed by the Church body to serve until the Pastorate is filled. It shall consist of seven members, with at least one member being a Deacon who will serve as Chairman of the Committee.

For their duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 18. (page 13).

**3. Women's Auxiliary:**

The Women's Auxiliary shall consist of:

- a. A President,
- b. A Vice President,
- c. A Secretary,
- d. ~~A Treasurer,~~
- e. A Program Chairman.

All appointed at the discretion of the Auxiliary. Membership in the Auxiliary is open to any woman in the Church who desires to be involved in the ministry and programs of the Auxiliary.

For their duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 19. (page 13).

**4. Publicity Committee:**

The Publicity Committee shall consist of two members appointed by the Church body, who serve a two-year term with one rotating off the committee each year.

For their duties, see Bylaws Article 1, Section 20. (page 14).

**5. Other Boards and Committees:**

Other boards and committees shall be elected or appointed as the Church and Pastor deem necessary. Their term shall be one year unless otherwise stated.

## **Article 4: MEETINGS**

### **Section A: Meeting Schedule**

Regular meetings shall normally be held as follows:

1. **Business Conferences:**

An Annual Business Conference shall be held on the second Sunday evening in January each year. Quarterly Business Meetings shall be held on second Sunday evenings in April, July and October unless rescheduled and announced at least two Sunday meetings prior to the changed meeting. See OFWB Articles of Faith Pages 72-73.

2. **Communion Services:**

The Lord's Supper and Washing of the Saint's feet shall be observed on fourth Sunday nights in January, April, July and October unless rescheduled and announced at least two Sunday meetings prior to the changed meeting.

Other commemorative Communion Services may be called at the pleasure of the Church, Pastor, or Board of Deacons.

3. **Board of Deacons:**

The Board of Deacons shall meet monthly.

4. **General Board:**

The General Board shall meet at least four times a year, and at the discretion of the Pastor or the Chairman of the Board of Deacons.

5. **Other Board, Committee and Department Meetings:**

Other board, committee and department meetings may be called by the Pastor, by the Chairman of the Board of Deacons, or by the Chairman of that board, committee, or department, who is under moral obligation to call meetings when necessary.

6. **Open Meetings:**

All meetings shall be open to all Church members. Visitors will not vote in said meetings. All boards and committees have the authority to call executive sessions.

7. **Rules of Order:**

All Business meetings of the Church and advisory boards shall be governed in accordance with the Statement of Faith and Discipline for Original Free Will Baptists of North Carolina, and Robert's Rules of Order. All members shall conduct themselves according to that which becomes a child of God as set forth in the Scriptures.

## **Article 5: Amendments**

This Constitution may be amended at any quarterly or called business meeting of the Church by a two thirds vote of the members present and voting on the amendment, provided that the proposed amendment has been introduced at the previous quarterly business meeting or a called business meeting, and written notice has been provided at least two weeks before the vote is taken.

Proposed amendments shall be read from the pulpit on the Sunday prior to the scheduled vote. If passed, the amendment shall be read from the pulpit again on the Sunday succeeding the vote.

## **Bylaws**

### **Article 1: Standing Church Officers, Boards, Departments and Committee Duties**

#### **Section 1: GENERAL DUTIES**

It is expected that the Pastor, each officer, and member should conduct their lives in conformity to the Scriptures. We believe that the Pastor, board, department, committee members and teachers are under close observation by the world, and therefore it is imperative that they conduct themselves in ways that they are above reproach.

Each officer, department or board is responsible to report in writing to the Finance Committee by September 1<sup>st</sup> each year their recommendations for items to be considered as the budget is being prepared. A report should be prepared to be submitted at each business meeting summarizing their activities involving their aspect of the ministry.

All receipts/invoices should be signed by the ministry director and submitted immediately following purchase to the church treasurer for proper disposition.

All officers are to be in regular attendance and be actively involved in Church activities. As leaders, they are expected to be examples to the flock, and those outside the Church. Failure to be in regular attendance at Church services, business meetings, department, and board meetings, excepting providential hindrance, shall result in that officer's vacating his or her position.

#### **Section 2: PASTOR**

The Pastor of this Church shall perform the duties which usually pertain to that office, as outlined in the Statement of Faith and Discipline for Original Free Will Baptists of North Carolina, and as spiritual leader and administrator of the Church. His qualifications shall be as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. He shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees.

#### **Section 3: CLERK AND ASSISTANT**

a. The Church Clerk shall:

1. Attend all business meetings to keep an accurate record of all business transactions and read the minutes at each business meeting.
2. Keep an accurate roll of the Church membership, the dates and the methods of admission and dismissal, change in name, and as much as possible, correct mailing addresses.
3. Keep an updated roster of officers and committee members and their terms.
4. Prepare baptismal certificates to be presented to candidates.
5. For voting purposes, a record of attendance shall be kept. Therefore, the Clerk shall provide a ledger at each business meeting for each member to register.
6. Sign all legal documents as necessary.
7. Prepare reports for the various conferences.

All Church Clerk records are the property of the congregation, and the Clerk shall relinquish all such records to his or her successor.

b. The Assistant Clerk shall:

1. Assist the Church Clerk as necessary at the Clerk's request.
2. Be knowledgeable in all areas of the job.
3. Assume the responsibility of the Church Clerk during any absence.



**Section 4: TREASURER AND ASSISTANT**

A. The Church Treasurer shall:

1. Keep an accurate account of all money received and paid out.
2. Make a report at each General Board meeting, and a detailed report at Quarterly Business meetings.
3. Pay all bills as provided for in the budget for the current year. All other finances disbursed must be voted upon by the Church.

All records of the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer are the property of the congregation and are open to inspection by the members upon reasonable request, except in the case of the records of individual contributions, which are to be kept in confidence by the Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer.

All records, at the election of a new Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer, or at the direction of the Finance Committee, are to be submitted for a financial audit. The Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer shall relinquish all records and all funds to the successor.

B. The Assistant Church Treasurer shall:

1. Assist the Treasurer in maintaining accurate records.
2. Remit statements
3. Acknowledge special gifts.
4. Assume the responsibility of the Church Treasurer during any absence.

In case of an emergency caused by the incapacitation or unavailability of both the Church Treasurer and Assistant Church Treasurer, The Chairman of the Finance Committee shall be authorized to fulfill the duties of the Treasurer.

**Section 5: YOUTH MINISTRIES DIRECTOR AND ASSISTANT**

The Youth Ministries Director shall:

1. Support and encourage the Youth Leaders in the ministry to the various Youth Groups.
2. Assist the coordination and scheduling of activities.
3. See that educational and recreational materials and supplies are available as necessary and feasible.
4. Assist the Youth Leaders to:
  - a. Lead young people toward the Church.
  - b. Call for life commitments.
  - c. Promote summer activities that promote spiritual growth.
  - d. Encourage participation in church activities and outreach.
  - e. Plan study courses for young people.
  - f. Provide adequate literature.
  - g. Secure workers for youth ministries positions

The Assistant Youth Ministries Director shall:

1. Assist the Director as necessary and requested.
2. Serve in the Director's capacity in the Director's absence.

**Section 6: NURSERY COORDINATOR AND ASSISTANT**

The Nursery Coordinator shall:

1. Enlist, schedule, and oversee volunteers for the Nursery Department.
2. Ensure that adequate staff is available for each function of the Church.
3. Ensure that adequate facilities, appropriate educational material, and supplies are available for the department.
4. Assist the Sunday School Superintendent in the selection of Sunday School Nursery teachers.

The Assistant Nursery Coordinator will assist the Coordinator as necessary and assume the duties of the Coordinator in any absence.

**Section 7: CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

**A. Director and Assistant Director**

The Director and Assistant Director shall:

1. Have general oversight of the entire school and shall administer its affairs in cooperation with the Pastor and the other members of the Sunday School Department.
2. He/She shall ensure that Sunday School teachers or substitutes are available as required and see that necessary supplies are available for each class.
3. It shall be his/her duty to counsel with his/her teachers and officers in the work of the school, giving advice and receiving suggestions from his/her co-workers.
4. See that a full and accurate report is made of the Sunday School at each quarterly business meeting.
5. Set up a yearly training session for his/her department.
6. If any teacher, assistant, or aide, after encouragement and loving admonition, does not attend to his/her duties with reasonable and faithful regularity, it shall be the responsibility of the Director to appoint a replacement.

The Assistant Director shall assume the responsibilities of the Director during any absence, and assist the Director as requested.

The Assistant Director shall:

1. As much as possible, keep an up-to-date roll of members.
2. Keep a record of Sunday School attendance.
3. Keep an up-to-date report for the Sunday School Department.

Any offerings made to the Sunday School Department are deposited into the General Fund of the Church.

**B. Teachers and Assistants or Aides**

The Sunday School Teacher shall:

1. Be one who feels the desire to teach and train students in the Word.
2. Be prompt, arriving prior to the arrival of the students and prepared to teach the lesson.
3. If unable to be present, the teacher shall give adequate notice so that the assistant or substitute has adequate time to prepare for the lesson.
4. Maintain accurate attendance records and addresses of students attending the class.
5. Any offerings or collections taken in class should be placed in the offering during Worship Service to be included in the general fund.

If a teacher or assistant is not present at least 75 percent of scheduled classes, he/she shall by their absence vacate the teaching position and a replacement shall be appointed.

Assistants and Aides shall assist the teacher in the presentation of the lesson as necessary and assume the teacher's duties during absence.

**Section 8: VBS DEPARTMENT:**

The director shall research and select appropriate curriculum, plan, and coordinate the scheduling of VBS week each year, soliciting the necessary staffing for teachers, assistants, crafts, and support volunteers.

**Section 9: CHILDREN'S CHURCH DEPARTMENT:**

The director will solicit and coordinate the scheduling of Children's Church staffing necessary for the Children's Church ministry. The director is responsible for curriculum and materials needed for Children's Church ministry.

**Section 10: MUSIC AND MEDIA MINISTRY DEPARTMENT**

This department shall be headed by the Music, Media and Website Director who should:

1. Prepare Worship Leaders to assist the pastor when requested to lead the congregation in corporate worship.
2. Be responsible for and encourage instrumentalists to develop and offer their talents as an aide to worship and ensure that they are available as necessary for each service.
3. Encourage, assist, and coordinate with the directors of the Adult Choir, Youth Choirs, Ensembles and Soloists to see that special music is provided as requested by the Church.
4. Oversee the development, operation, maintenance and security of the audio and video equipment, Sound Ministry Department offering encouragement and training as necessary to the audio and video Sound Technicians and ensure the proper upkeep and security of the equipment.
5. See that these services are available for each function of the Church as necessary. He/She is encouraged to draw from the laity of the Church to assist in accomplishing these duties occasionally and during any absence.
6. Develop and maintain current website presence for Bethlehem.

**Section 11: SENIOR FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY DEPARTMENT**

This department shall be headed by the Senior Fellowship Ministry Director who will plan events and activities for fellowship and interaction among seniors of our fellowship and the surrounding communities; and offer opportunities for them to remain involved as mentors in the lives of younger generations to foster active involvement in various areas of ministry where they are called.

The Director will solicit appropriate staff to assist with planning and coordinating the various activities of this ministry.

**Section 12: DEACONS**

Deacons must comply with the duties as outlined in the Statement of Faith and Discipline for the Original Free Will Baptists of North Carolina, which are:

1. To serve at the Lord's Table.
2. To distribute of the bounty of the Church among its needy members.
3. To visit the sick.
4. To assist the Pastor in promoting order in services and meetings.
5. To promote attendance by loving exhortation and by example.
6. To see that an efficient scriptural discipline is enforced in the Church.
7. To conduct religious services in the absence of the Pastor except weddings and baptisms.
8. To coordinate the planning and scheduling of revival services.

Should a deacon transfer his membership, his office thereby shall be terminated. If, for any reason, a Deacon should become inactive, it shall be the duty of the Church to replace him, because the work of the Lord is too important, and the office of Deacon is too holy to be brought in reproach by inactivity on the part of one elected, ordained and set aside for such sacred work

**Section 13: TRUSTEES**

The Trustees shall:

1. Act as legal agents of the Church in all legal matters, under the direction of the Church.
2. Hold legal title to all Church property.
3. Be responsible for keeping all properties in a good state of repair.
4. They shall not encumber the Church property with any indebtedness without approval by a two thirds majority vote of those present and voting in a regular called business conference of the Church. The terms of the indebtedness shall be announced and explained two weeks before the vote is taken.

**Section 14: USHERS**

The Ushers have one of the most important ministries of the Church in that they meet not only the members upon arrival at the services, but visitors and strangers, some of whom are attending the services for the first time. Therefore, they make the first impression of the Church and its congregation upon strangers and visitors.

The Board of Ushers will:

1. Designate, train, and oversee ushers.
2. Make out a schedule for service.
3. Ensure that ushers and greeters are present at special functions and have outside attendants when necessary.

The Ushers will:

1. Be at the Church ahead of all others for each service, be neatly dressed, be cordial, friendly and make all visitors welcome.
2. Assist the Deacons in keeping order and a spirit of reverence in all services.
3. See that hymn books and offertory envelopes are in their proper place.
4. Be responsible to see that heat, air conditioning and lighting are provided adequately for each use of the facility and ensure that same are turned to proper settings or off when meetings conclude.

**Section 15: BOARD OF FINANCE**

The Board of Finance shall:

1. Prepare and submit an operating budget in cooperation with the various officers, boards, departments, and committees for each ensuing year to the quarterly business meeting in October in order to become effective in January.
2. Meet at least quarterly to consider the financial requirements of the Church and its organizations.
3. Give attention to the level of church giving and establish priorities for the expenditure of funds for budgeted items.
4. See that the financial requirements of the Church are met through regular tithes and offerings through the Church, the Sunday School and other contributing groups.
5. Be responsible for the audit of Church financial records and see that the Church runs a unified budget.
6. Make known to the Church when tithes and offerings fall short in meeting the budget requirements and direct such campaigns and solicitations as may be necessary to meet requirements.
7. Have responsibility of promoting Christian stewardship.

8. Aid the treasurer in the maintenance of competent records.

Any officer and/or member of this Church requesting funds over and above that annually budgeted or funds for which there are not provisions included in the annual budget, shall direct his/her request to the Finance Committee three weeks prior to bringing the request to the Church body.

### **Section 16: GENERAL BOARD**

It shall be the duty of the General Board to:

1. Consider and recommend policies to the congregation.
2. Promote all aspects of education in our Church program.
3. Establish and maintain an annual Church calendar of dates and events.
4. Assist and support scheduling and fees for use of Church facilities as stipulated in Bylaws, Article 4.
5. Assist and support music programs, library, Vacation Bible School, the Christmas program and other events.
6. Perform all the duties according to the authority granted in the Constitution or designated to it by the Church.

All recommendations of the General Board must be voted upon by the Church in a regular or called business conference.

### **Section 17: NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Nominating Committee will:

1. Be responsible for making prayerful consideration and inquiry for potential nominees to fill the various offices and positions due to expired terms excepting the positions of Pastor and Deacon.
2. Fill any vacancy that occurs with a temporary officer and make a recommendation for approval at the next business meeting.
3. Make personal contact with each nominee to ascertain their commitment to fill the position to which they are being nominated.
4. The Nominating Committee will be chaired by the Chairman of the Deacon Board.

### **Section 18: PULPIT COMMITTEE**

The Pulpit Committee shall investigate all prospective candidates. Upon completion of their investigation, one candidate will be recommended to the Church for consideration. If that candidate is selected, the committee is dissolved. If that candidate is not selected, the committee continues investigation and submission of one candidate at the time until the Pastorate is filled.

### **Section 19: WOMEN'S AUXILIARY**

The Women's Auxiliary serves to offer opportunities for the women in the Church to work together as a group in various ministries adopted by the auxiliary that result in spiritual growth and development of its members and the Church body in general.

They will:

1. Organize and facilitate social functions of the Church.
2. Send flowers to the funeral of deceased members, their spouses, parents, and children.
3. Coordinate the provision, preparation, and serving of meals to bereaved families in the community.
4. Organize and preserve materials of historical value and interest of the Church.

**Section 20: PUBLICITY COMMITTEE**

The Publicity Committee shall

1. Publicize special Church meetings, revivals and special occasions.
2. Coordinate and prepare messages that will minister God's Word to those who pass our way. The message should be Biblical, thought provocative, and according to our doctrinal beliefs. Any Church activities to be announced on the sign should be coordinated through this committee.

**ARTICLE 2: CHURCH VOTING**

**Section A: Voting**

All members in good standing in the Church are entitled to make, second and discuss motions and vote except for the following reasons:

Any member of this Church who misses four consecutive regular quarterly business conferences, unless providentially hindered, must attend one regular quarterly business conference before he or she can vote at the next business conference or conferences during the church year.

This means that a member must attend at least one regular church business conference during the church year and not miss four successive conferences.

**Section B: Majority Rule**

A simple majority of members of all Boards and Committees shall constitute a sufficient quorum to be organized for business.

**ARTICLE 3: AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended by any quarterly or called business meeting of the Church by a two thirds vote of the members present and voting on the amendment, provided that the proposed amendment has been introduced at the previous quarterly business meeting or a called business meeting and written notice provided at least two weeks before the vote is taken.

Proposed amendments shall be read from the pulpit on the Lord's Day prior to the scheduled vote. If passed, the amendment shall be read from the pulpit again on the Lord's Day succeeding the vote.

**ARTICLE 4: USE OF THE CHURCH FACILITIES**

It is the desire of the membership of this Church body to willingly extend the use of the Church Sanctuary, its Baptistry, Family Life Center, and Educational Building, and Resource Center to any God-fearing church body who desires and needs its use for holy purposes. The premises, being dedicated to the worship and study of God and fellowship of His believers, was constructed, and is maintained for that purpose alone and is not to be used for activities which are irreverent and in opposition to the principles of our Articles of Faith and Discipline and Church Covenant.

Approved activities may include but are not limited to weddings, wedding receptions, bridal showers, baby showers, family celebrations, funerals, Church related meetings, and Church sponsored recreational events.

The facilities and property of Bethlehem Original Free Will Baptist Church shall only host weddings between one biological male and one biological female. This policy further restricts the Pastors and/or staff of Bethlehem Original Free Will Baptist Church from participation in, as well as forbids the use of the Church facilities for, any sort of ceremony and/or activity honoring or celebrating same-sex, polygamist, transgender or any other union inconsistent with biblical doctrine.

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The on-premises use of alcohol or illicit drugs by the membership or anyone visiting the facilities is strictly forbidden.

Anyone who wishes to use the Church facilities for approved activities who are not in the Church family or children of the Church family, is permitted use of the facilities conditioned upon the following:

1. That a \$250.00 fee is paid to the Church for each building used in the scheduled activity.
2. Alcohol or illicit drug use, or anyone impaired by such, is not allowed on the premises.
3. No indecent or irreverent music and lyrics are used while on the premises.
4. No indecent attire will be allowed.
5. A member or officer of the Church will be present.
6. That the facilities are clean and arranged as they were found.

The Clerk of the Church will keep a calendar for the scheduling of all Church facilities activities and collect all fees. Any question the Clerk might have concerning dates or activities for scheduling of the Church facilities should be brought before the General Board.

### Article 5: Marriage

The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. While we will always seek to reflect the compassion and love of Christ to all people and believe that God's grace and forgiveness is extended to anyone who will turn to Him in genuine repentance and faith, we find it Biblically necessary to adopt the following...

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it in the Bible as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, Bethlehem Original Free Will Baptist Church will only recognize marriages between a biological male (at birth) and a biological female (at birth). Further, a Pastor, staff of Bethlehem Original Free Will Baptist Church, or any officiant, shall only officiate and/or participate in weddings or otherwise solemnize marriages that are between one biological male (at birth) and one biological female (at birth).

### **Addendum 1:**

Commentary and scriptural support Policy on Marriage and Human Sexuality  
What We Believe About Marriage and Human Sexuality

We believe, based on the teaching of the Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments, that marriage is an institution ordained by God from the foundation of the world, and intended as a lifelong union of one man and one woman. This idea is supported by the account of creation in Genesis chapters 1 and 2.

Genesis 1:26-28 provides that God created man in His own image, both male and female. The passage implies that a unity of one man and one woman is in some way necessary to fully represent the image of God in mankind.

Genesis chapter 2 provides a more detailed account in which God created the first man, Adam, and decided that it was not good for him to be alone. (Genesis 2:18). God indicated that He would make "a suitable helper for him." God brought all the animals to Adam, but none of them was a suitable helper for him, so God then created Eve, the first woman, from part of Adam himself. God did not create a second man to be Adam's helpmate, or an assortment of multiple women, but rather one woman. Together they were man and wife and had "no shame" or sin in their union with each other. (Genesis 2:15-25).

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Jesus Christ reaffirmed the teaching of the Old Testament when He said, as recorded in Matthew 19:4-6, "Haven't you read, he replied, that at the beginning the creator made them male and female and said for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

The Apostle Paul states in Ephesians 5:22-32 that marriage is not merely a human institution, but is a special divine metaphor that is supposed to illustrate the union of Christ and the church. For this reason also, only a union between a man and a woman can be a proper marriage because a union between two men, two women, or one man and multiple women or any collection of people could not properly illustrate the relationship between Christ and His church.

I Corinthians 6:9-11 condemns a variety of lifestyles including those associated with adultery, prostitution, and homosexuality. The Bible condemns all forms of sexual immorality and encourages Christians to flee from it because of its destructive effects, and because the body of the Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit. (I Corinthians 3:16 & 6:12-20).

Romans 1:18-32 makes it clear that it is not only sinful to engage in homosexual unions, but also to approve of such sins in others or encourage their practice. As a result, in order to maintain our consistent Christian witness, we cannot sanction, approve, or promote in any way adultery, fornication (a sexual relationship between an unmarried man and woman, i.e. "living together"), pornography, pedophilia, polygamy, bestiality, or homosexual unions. This is made clear also by countless other verses throughout the Old Testament as well as by these and other passages in the New Testament.

Our church follows what the Bible reveals as the "sure foundation" of the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles (Matthew 7:24-29 and I Corinthians 14:37). The church is called to teach and practice these teachings and is not at liberty to depart from them for a different authority if it is to authentically bear the name "Christian." Though we strive to live peaceably with all people and to obey legitimate government authority, in instances involving matters as foundational as marriage we must ultimately obey God rather than man if the two come into conflict (Acts 4:18-22).

Sexual activities outside of marriage, including but not limited to fornication, adultery, incest, homosexuality, pedophilia, polygamy, and bestiality are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the church. Lewd conduct, transgender behavior, and the creation or distribution or the viewing of pornography are incompatible with God's intention.

### **Note:**

This Constitution and these Bylaws were adopted 5-15-96.

Bylaws Article 4 revision adopted 1-26-05; Revised at 7-20-14 Business Meeting; Revised at 8-20-23 Business Meeting.