



CHRIST CHURCH
of Gunterville

**Constitution
& Bylaws**



INTRODUCTION

There are many good reasons why a New Testament Church should have a Constitution and Bylaws. Together they can greatly assist us in the efforts of biblically organizing and conducting the ministries which have been entrusted to us by our Head, Jesus Christ. It must be readily acknowledged, however, that these documents, despite their usefulness and precision, will avail nothing apart from the presence and power of the Spirit of God in a Church. It is with this keen awareness of our absolute dependence upon our great God, that these articles are set forth.

The Church Constitution and By Laws are accepted by its present members and shall be accepted voluntarily by becoming a new member.

Christ Church is comprised of followers of Jesus Christ, who have united under His Lordship in covenant commitment to one another and to our God. We joyfully and wholeheartedly submit to His authority as it is revealed to us in His holy, inerrant, and infallible written Word.

Having carefully examined the Scriptures regarding the nature and purpose of the church, and the principles whereby it is to be governed, we, the members of Christ Church set forth the following articles:

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Constitution





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ARTICLE I

Name

The name of this church shall be “Christ Church of Guntersville.”

ARTICLE II

Mission

Christ Church exists to worship, glorify, and enjoy God above all else, to pursue the mutual edification of our fellow believers in Christ, and to proclaim the Gospel of the glory of Christ to all peoples.

Scripture: Isaiah 44:6; Psalm 8:1; 96:4; 97:9, 1 Samuel 2:2; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Psalm 16:11; 37:4; 73:25-26; Isaiah 43:7; John 13:34-35; 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; Romans 14:19

Explanation of Our Mission Statement

The Bible teaches that the church has a threefold mission: worship, edification, and evangelism. These three elements of the church’s mission represent a comprehensive account of the church’s relationships: God, other believers, and those who do not believe in Christ.

There is an order of priority among the church’s relationships.

- **Worship** describes the church’s relationship to God, and it is the most important of the church’s relationships and, therefore, it is the most important element of the church’s mission. The other elements of the church’s mission all serve the goal of worship.
- **Edification** describes the relationship of church members to one another. Believers edify one another in the church that they might faithfully worship the one true God.
- **Evangelism** describes the relationship of believers to those who do not believe.

Believers evangelize unbelievers, so they might become worshippers of the one true God. Consider each of the three elements of the church's mission:

God-Centered Worship: The Lord Jesus Christ must be the center of Christian worship. We seek to honor God in worship. We sing hymns and songs that declare God's glorious person and works. We pray as children seeking to express our love to our Father, and we hear His perfect Word read and explained in order to bow to it in our lives. We strive to do all things decently and in order, and we believe the acceptable way of worshipping the one true God is instituted by Him and limited by His own revealed will in the Holy Scriptures.

God-Centered Edification: When Christ saves sinners, He calls them to join local churches for the purpose of mutual edification. Christians gather together, not for selfish ends, but to serve one another in love. Christians are to pray for one another, to bear each other's burdens, to live in harmony with one another, to regard one another as more important than themselves, to meet each other's needs, to rebuke and correct one another when necessary, to exercise their spiritual gifts toward one another, and to glorify God together with one voice, in love and unity that Christ may be all in all.

God-Centered Evangelism: God-centered evangelism focuses on the greatness of God as our sovereign Creator. He is the righteous Judge who opposes our sins, the merciful Savior who rescues us from our sins, and the wise King, who commands our lives in this world. God-centered evangelism calls people to repent of their sinful ways, to believe in Jesus Christ as the only way to escape from the wrath to come, and to obey God's commandments in every part of our lives, all for His glory.

ARTICLE III

Church Covenant

In response to the Father's eternal love, the Son's accomplishment of our redemption, and the Spirit's sovereign application of this great work to our own lives, we covenant together before the Eternal God, that by His grace, and for His glory we will strive to do the following:

To give ourselves daily to our God, so that whether we eat or drink, live, or die, we wish to do all for the God who loved us and saved us, who has become our portion now and for eternity.

To give ourselves to each other as fellow heirs, born from above into the family of God, made alive in Christ, and sealed by the Spirit. We desire to meet together faithfully in order to stir each other to love Christ and follow Him in careful obedience. We desire to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ, laboring together under God's help in order to bring each other to the full measure of the stature of Christ.

To give ourselves as light and salt in this dark world, striving to live in such a way that those who are strangers to God may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. We look to God for our sufficiency, to be faithful ambassadors of His gospel, to be a distinct aroma of the knowledge of His Son in every place, and to be humble and reverent witnesses to the hope that dwells within us.

We beg God to hear us in this covenant and to give daily the desire and ability to walk in these biblical principles, aiming at His pleasure in our individual and corporate lives. May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering. All our hope is in Him, who is our life.

ARTICLE IV

Articles of Faith

We do hereby adopt as the fullest expression of our faith the **1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith**. We believe that this historic document is an excellent summary of the fundamental truths of God's Word. We accept it, not as an authoritative rule or code of faith, but as an aid to us in controversy, a confirmation of what we believe, and a means of growing together in grace.

We also affirm the "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" (1978), the "Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood" (1987), and the "Nashville Statement on Human Sexuality" (2017). Copies of these statements are made available upon request.

Summary of Doctrinal Affirmations

God the Father. We believe that God is one essence, or being, who is three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is Spirit, uncreated, unlimited, undivided, most loving, just, good, holy, wise, patient, and full of wrath and grace. God eternally decreed all things in creation and providence, down to the smallest detail for His own glory. He created all things in heaven and on earth out of nothing by the word of His power through Jesus Christ.

God the Son. Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity, the eternal Word of God. He is true God and true man, born of the virgin Mary. During His life on earth, He perfectly kept God's law, died a penal substitutionary death, conquered His enemies, rose bodily from the grave, and ascended into heaven, fulfilling the terms of the covenant of redemption. Though the sufferings of Jesus Christ are of infinite value and sufficient for all, Christ bore only the sins of His chosen people on the cross, and thus He only satisfied God's wrath and made atonement for His chosen people, certainly accomplishing their eternal salvation.

God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. At the appointed times, He graciously accompanies the preaching of the Word of God to the elect and effectually applies Christ's work to His people, uniting them to Christ in the covenant of grace, and conferring upon them every saving blessing. He also gives them spiritual gifts to enable them to serve faithfully in Christ's kingdom. The gifts of miracles, prophecies, tongues, and healings fulfilled their purpose during the time of the Apostles, and they have now ceased.

Man. We believe that God created mankind in His image, male and female, and He made them good and upright, with a body and an eternal soul. God made a covenant of works with the first man, Adam, requiring perfect and perpetual obedience, promising life for fulfilling it, and threatening death for breaking it. Adam sinned against God, broke the covenant of works, and came under the curse of death. All who descend from Adam are guilty because of his first sin, and they inherit from him a totally depraved nature, unable to do anything toward their own salvation.

The Holy Scriptures. We believe that the 66 books of the Bible are God's inerrant and infallible Word. The Bible is necessary for salvation, sufficient for all doctrine and practice, authoritative in everything it addresses, and

clear on all matters necessary for final salvation. We believe that later revelation makes explicit what is implicit in earlier revelation and that both Old and New Testaments center on the Lord Jesus Christ as the revelation of the whole Triune Godhead. Accurate biblical interpretation always leads to the knowledge of God, revealed in Jesus Christ.

Salvation. We believe God effectually calls His elect people to Himself by means of the Word of God, joins them to Jesus Christ in the covenant of grace, regenerates their hearts, and gives them gifts of faith and repentance. His people are also justified, or declared righteous, by faith alone in Christ alone on the sole ground of His atoning death, which cancels our sins, and the imputation of His active obedience, which merits life eternal. His people are sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who mortifies their sin. God preserves all believers in salvation to the end by powerfully working in them to persevere in faithful loving obedience to Him. All true believers are eternally secure. This way of salvation is the same in both Old and New Testaments.

We believe that in His great love and grace, God eternally chose a definite number of fallen individuals for eternal salvation, guaranteeing that they will be saved, but He sovereignly chose to pass over all the rest, guaranteeing that they will die in their sins. God's election is unconditional because it does not rest on any foreseen choice, faith, work, or merit in the individuals chosen, but wholly on God's eternal, free, and gracious choice according to the kind intention of His will alone.

Universal Call. We believe that though only the elect are effectually and inwardly called to salvation, God outwardly and universally calls and invites all men everywhere without exception or distinction to repent of their sins and embrace Jesus Christ freely offered in the gospel. The law and the gospel are to be preached far and wide to all human beings indiscriminately. God, in His great mercy, is gathering a people for Himself from every tribe and tongue and nation.

Church. We believe that the universal church is composed of all believers everywhere and is identical with those under the rule of God's kingdom. The universal church is true Israel, or "the Israel of God," and she is heir to all the promises that God made to His people in the Old Testament. We believe that only believers are the rightful members of a local church.

Last Things. We believe that Jesus Christ will one day return to judge the world and consummate His kingdom. Unbelievers will be condemned to an eternity of everlasting torment in hell, while believers will be admitted into an eternity of everlasting life and joy in the blessed presence of God in the new heavens and on the new earth, wherein only righteousness dwells.

ARTICLE V
Church Government

Jesus Christ is Lord and Head of this church. His will as expressed in the Holy Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, is the sole authority in matters of faith and practice. Christ Church is a congregational church led by elders. We recognize that the authority of Christ is vested in the whole congregation (*Galatians 1:8-10; Matthew 18:15-20*) and that Christ has prescribed that local congregations be led by godly men, who have been duly appointed to lead and oversee the church (*Titus 1:5-11; 1 Timothy 1:4-5*). The elders carefully give spiritual direction to the church for the joy of each member, (*2 Corinthians 1:24*) and the members submissively follow the leadership of and obey the elders, so the elders may do their work with joy (*Hebrews 13:17*). Deacons serve the church in various capacities at the direction of the elders, focusing predominately on the physical needs of the church.

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Unless otherwise stated in the Constitution, matters requiring a congregational vote will require an 80% approval of members who cast a vote. Voting will be taken by secret ballot unless otherwise determined by the elders of the church for special circumstances. Votes will be reported to the congregation as a PASS or FAIL outcome.

Christ Church is subject to no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Any other voluntary associations with other bodies shall not infringe on the rights of this church. When it is thought desirable to have fellowship, consultation, and cooperation with local churches of like faith and order, this church may join itself to

an association of churches upon recommendation of the elders and affirmation by a vote of the congregation. Withdrawal from associations may be affected by the same procedure.

ARTICLE VI

Elders and Deacons

Section 1: General Statement

Jesus Christ alone is the head of His church. However, as head, He has ordained that individual churches should be blessed with the spiritual ministry of special office bearers. Therefore, it is the duty of the church to seek to discover from among members in good standing those men to whom Christ the Lord has imparted the necessary gifts for office bearing. The Lord's appointment is recognized by not only the inward conviction of the individual involved, but also by the approval of the church observing the possession of those gifts and graces required, and by scriptural definition of the office.

While it is always the desire of the congregation to come to one mind regarding those who should be appointed to serve as office bearers in the church, no less than 80% of all votes cast shall be required for the election of an officer. (See "Elections" — Article 2 of Bylaws.) Elders are ordained by Christ to lead in prayer and the ministry of the word (*Philippians 1:1; Acts 6:1-7; 14:23*). Deacons are appointed to care for the temporal needs of the congregation.

Section 2: Eldership

The elders shall be comprised of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure. Subject to the will of the congregation, the Elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock. The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by church vote after two years. After an elder has served three terms of two years (total of 6 years), he may

only be elected to the office of elder after at least one year off. An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, encourage and oversee the ministries of the church, and prepare the church for missions. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our essential convictions.

If at any time the senior pastor shall make application to be released from his office, or if the congregation shall choose by an 80% vote to dismiss him, the relationship between the senior pastor and church may be terminated by the congregation in ninety days from the date of notice of intention, or in a shorter period of time, if it is mutually agreed upon. The process is the same for any other elder of the church.

Section 3: Deacons

The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 and Acts 6:1–7. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men giving themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. They shall be elected to one term lasting for a maximum of two years. Afterward they may be reaffirmed by the congregation two times, each for another 2-year term. After the third 2-year term (total of 6 years), they may only be elected to another term after one year off. Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, preserve unity, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration. The deacons are responsible and accountable for Christ Church's benevolence ministry.

ARTICLE VII

Membership

Section 1: Requirements for Membership

To be considered for membership in this church, a person must be a disciple of Jesus Christ and give biblical evidence of regeneration. Such a disciple must be baptized in obedience to Christ following his or her conversion and commit wholeheartedly to follow Jesus Christ as Lord in accordance with Scripture. Each prospective member must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture and must strive to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith and character of life.

Section 2: Membership Process

Any believer seeking membership at Christ Church should make known to one of the elders his or her desire to unite with the church. The elders may recommend a candidate for membership to the congregation at any meeting of the church. The candidate may be received into membership upon acceptance of 80% of the members present at a meeting of the church one month following the recommendation of the elder. This vote will be via secret ballot, and the results announced following the vote within one week. Once a candidate is received into membership, he or she relinquishes their membership in other churches.

Section 3: Cancellation of Membership

A member may be removed from the membership of Christ Church by:

- A. VOLUNTARY REMOVAL — A member in good standing may make a voluntary request to cancel membership.
- B. EXCLUSION — If a member is habitually absent from the stated meetings of this church without just cause or is unwilling to resolve conflicts or settle differences in a Scriptural manner, he or she may be removed from the membership at the discretion of the elders, subject to the approval of the congregation.
- C. TRANSFER — Letters of recommendation shall be granted to evangelical churches which request them upon the recommendation of the elders and approval by the congregation, provided the member in question is in good

standing and not subject to or already under discipline at the time of the application. When such letters have been granted, the membership to this church shall be considered cancelled. Letters of recommendation shall be forwarded and given only to other evangelical churches (*Philemon 2*).

D. INVOLUNTARY REMOVAL — It is right and in harmony with the Scriptures for the congregation, upon recommendation of the elders, to remove from this fellowship any person who persists in holding false or heretical doctrine; or who obviously and persistently lives inconsistently with his or her profession; or who lives in violation of the law or public morals; or who walks disorderly; or who persists in disturbing the unity and peace of this church (*Matthew 10:15; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,11,15; Romans 16:17*).

E. DEATH

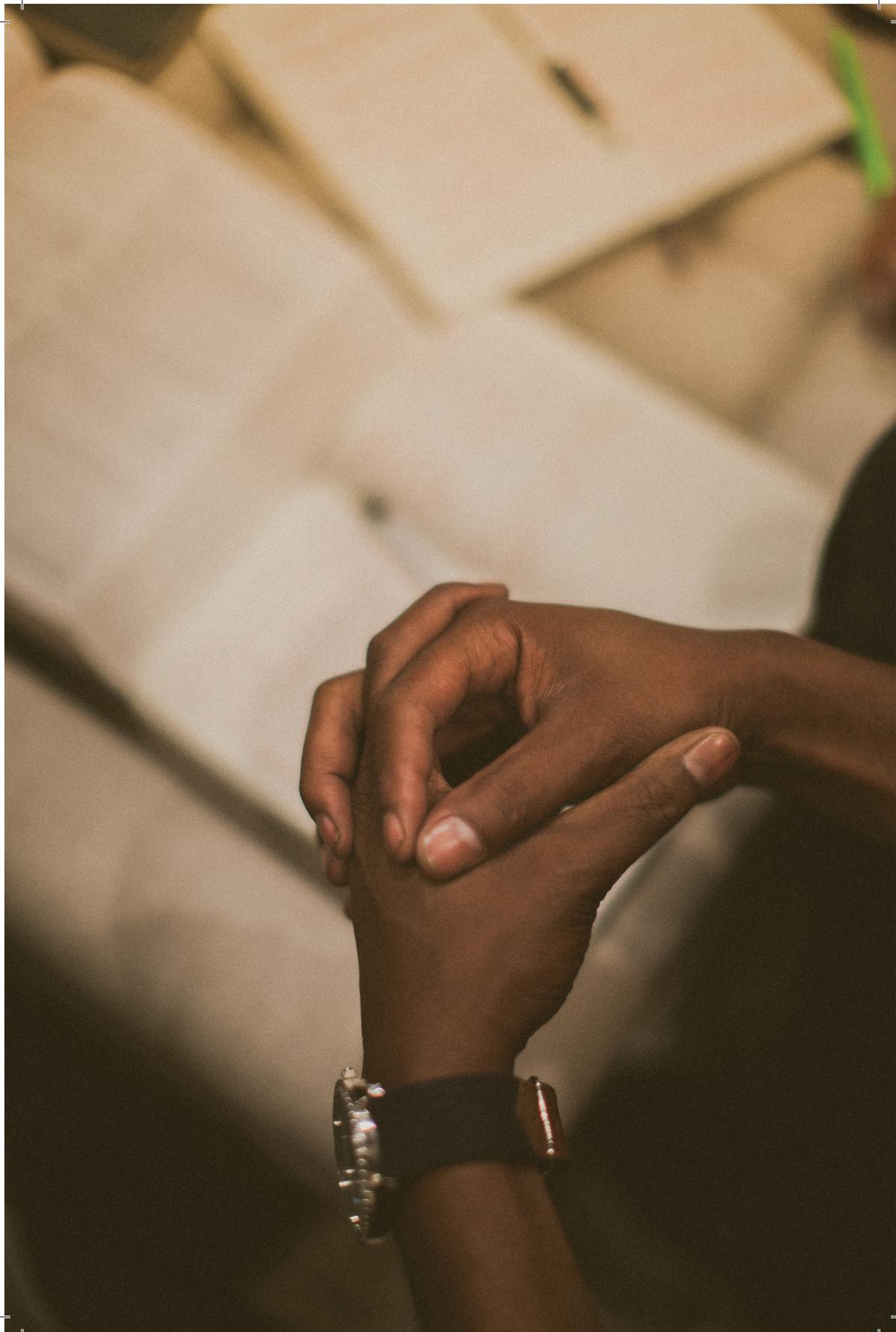
ARTICLE VIII

Amendments

Amendments to the Constitution may be adopted by an 80% majority vote of the members present and voting at a congregational meeting, provided that such amendments have been distributed to the congregation by the officers in written form at least three weeks prior to the congregational meeting.



Bylaws



ARTICLE I

Duties and Privileges of Membership

Scripture instructs Christians to live together in local churches. In order to fulfill Scriptural responsibilities in following Christ according to His will, it is incumbent on every believer to unite with other believers in submission to the lordship of Christ in a local church.

Section 1: Means of Grace

All public and private means of grace, such as honoring the Lord's Day, faithful attendance at the stated meetings of the church, regular observance of the ordinances with the gathered church, daily, systematic reading of the Bible, devotion to prayer, private and family worship, and the like shall be exhorted to our members.

Section 2: Marriage and Family Life

Marriage is ordained by God and is exclusively a covenant relationship between one man and one woman. Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between one man (biological male), one woman (biological female), and Himself, Christ Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man (male)

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and a biological woman (female). Further, the pastors and staff of Christ Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of Christ Church shall not host any weddings or marriage celebrations except those that are between one man and one woman. Christians who are married to each other are to relate to each other not only as husband and wife but also as brother and sister in Christ.

Christians who are married to unbelievers should strive to influence their homes for the glory of God by commending the gospel and demonstrating its power in their lives according to apostolic instructions found in 1 Corinthians 7:12–16 and 1 Peter 3:1–7.

Unmarried Christian adults should live faithfully to Jesus Christ in all of their relationships and use the opportunities their singleness affords them for the

advancement of the gospel and the prosperity of the church according to the apostolic instructions found in 1 Corinthians 7.

The church expects its members to follow the Scriptures in home government. God has required that godliness in the home have a high priority in every life. The home holds a central attention in God's Law and is the object of frequent exhortation in the New Testament.

- Husbands are expected to rule their homes with gentleness but firmness. They are to love their wives sacrificially with a Christ-like love and are to give leadership to the spiritual vitality of the home.
- Wives must be subject to and respectful of their husbands as to the Lord.
- Parents should train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (*Ephesians 6:4*) by holy example, catechizing, providing consistent education, and implementing firm, loving discipline (including the careful, measured, biblical use of the rod of correction—*Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 23:13–14; 29:15*).
- Children must reverently honor and obey their parents (*Ephesians 6:1–3*).

These primary responsibilities, prayerfully executed, will honor the name of Christ in the community and strengthen the cause of Christ in generations to come.

Section 3: Missions and Witnessing

It is the duty of every Christian and of every church of Christ to seek to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth and to make disciples who will, in turn, make disciples (*Matthew 28:18–20*). Evangelistic and missionary efforts are the natural consequence of regeneration (*Psalms 51:10–14*). “Preach the Gospel” is a frequently repeated command of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to witness by word, deed, and lifestyle. Personal efforts to make disciples for Christ are expected of every member. Beyond this, we are committed to cooperative efforts for sending the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Section 4: Principles of Giving

We desire to contribute regularly, faithfully, and sacrificially to the support

of this church in recognition that all that we have has come to us from God and He is worthy of being worshipped with gifts and offerings (*Psalms 96:8*). We give because we have been given much in Jesus Christ. “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you, by his poverty might become rich” (*2 Corinthians 8:9*). Other references (*Malachi 3:8–11; 1 Corinthians 16:1–2; 2 Corinthians 8 and 2 Corinthians 9*).

Section 5: Christian Liberty

Where God has not prohibited certain practices in His Word, the Christian has liberty to participate in them with discretion and care. The following principles must always guide the Christian’s exercise of liberty:

A. FEAR OF GOD — As the servant of Christ, all actions must be motivated by love to God, and all objects must be used for His glory. The term “liberty” is often used as a cloak of malicious self-indulgence, which is sin (*1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Timothy 4:4,5; 1 Peter 2:15,16*).

B. LOVE OF BRETHREN — Though no man may dictate to the Christian’s conscience, the welfare of fellow saints must always deeply affect his decisions. In a spirit of serving the brethren, he must do that which he judges will edify them and prevent their stumbling (*Galatians 5:13; 1 Corinthians 10:23; 1 Corinthians 8:9*).

C. COMPASSION FOR THE UNCONVERTED — Use of liberty must always be regulated by its effect upon sinners to not become a stumbling block in the proclamation of the gospel (*1 Corinthians 9:19–22*).

D. WATCHFULNESS OVER THE SOUL — Though free in conscience to use all of God’s creation, carefulness in practice is demanded because of remaining lusts. Where the Christian judges himself weak through lust, he must abstain in order to persevere in the faith (*1 Corinthians 9:23–27*).

Section 6: Support of Deacons and Elders

Every member should encourage and pray for the elders and deacons in their respective ministries.

Support includes helping the deacons be aware of needs in the church and community and cooperating with them in practical ways to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities (*Acts 6:1–7*). Every member is admonished

by God’s Word to encourage the elders to fulfill their duties “with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you” (*Hebrews 13:17b*).

Members are called to follow the example of the elders as far as warranted by the Word (*1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17; Hebrews 13:7*), defending them in all good causes. (*2 Timothy 1:15, 4:16*).

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ARTICLE II
Meetings

Unless otherwise stated in the Bylaws, matters requiring a congregational vote will require an 80% approval of members who cast a vote.

Section 1: Notice of Meetings

Notice of all congregational meetings shall be given at regular worship services on the three successive Sundays immediately prior to the meeting. In an emergency, a meeting may be called on shorter notice by making an effort to notify each member of the time, place, and purpose of the congregational meeting.

Section 2: Number of Meetings

Congregational meetings shall be held bimonthly. In the event of an emergency or crisis, additional meetings may be called.

Section 3: Method of Calling Meetings

It shall be the right and responsibility of the elders or any member to call congregational meetings. A written request to call a special congregational meeting, clearly stating its purpose, signed by at least 3 members (representing separate families) of the church in good and regular standing and presented to the elders, shall require the elders to call such a meeting within two weeks of receiving the request. When special congregational meetings are called, there must be notice given to the congregation as to the purpose.

The elders shall meet at the call of their chairman, or at the request of any three of their members; the deacons shall meet in the same manner.

Section 4: Responsibility for Meetings

The elders shall arrange the details of all congregational meetings and see that all possible preparation for their successful conduct is made. All meetings of Christ Church shall follow the principles outlined in Robert's Rules of Order, Revised. All congregational meetings will be recorded and made available upon request to any member.

Section 5: Quorum for Transaction of Business

The voting members present at any constitutionally called congregational meeting shall be considered a quorum for the transaction of business. All church officers shall be voted upon by written ballot. A quorum for elders and deacon's meetings shall be 60% of their total number.

Section 6: Voting Age

Any member of the church eighteen years of age or over, in good and regular standing, shall have the right to vote on any question properly brought before the congregation.

ARTICLE III

Elections

Section 1: Principles

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

- substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process,
- nominations should proceed with the support of the elders,
- all candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members,
- the election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2: Selection of Elders and Deacons

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church.

- Names of nominees to serve as elders or deacons shall be presented by the elders at the previous member's meeting providing that previous meeting occurred at least six weeks prior.
- The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process.

- Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the candidate in private.
- Then, only after private discussion does not resolve a member's concern, it should be shared with the elders.

This should be done as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting. For elders and deacons, there should be no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the 1689 London Baptist Confession and the Church Covenant. All candidates should receive no less than 80% of all votes cast for the office of elder or deacon to be elected to said office. Abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election unless another date has been specifically designated. Should the need arise for a Senior or Associate Pastor, the same process shall be applied.

ARTICLE IV

Ordinations

Section 1: Ministers of the Gospel

It is our hope that Spirit-filled men will be called out from among us to proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God. The church will commission such men by giving a license to those whose ministries will be limited in scope or time, or by ordination to the ministry.

When there is a prospective candidate for ordination to the ministry, the elders shall guide that person in his studies and preparation. They shall then call a council to examine the qualifications of the candidate. The council shall examine the soundness of his conversion, the godliness of his walk, the soundness of his doctrine, the degree of his gifts, the extent of his training, and the blessing of God upon his labors for Christ. If the council heartily recommends that the candidate be ordained, the church may give the recommended commission by an 80% majority of the members present and voting at a congregational meeting. The elders, under the principles set forth in Article VI of the Bylaws, shall have the power to exercise discipline, even to the revocation of this church's ordination or license.

ARTICLE V

Conflict Resolution

Any matter involving controversy within the church, within the elders and deacons, or between the congregation and the elders or deacons, if it threatens to cause dissension and injury to the welfare of the church, must be called to the attention of the elders as soon as possible by any member of the congregation aware of the situation. If the elders fail to resolve the difficulty, so as to allay dissension, any such matter will be taken to a Council of Appeal as prescribed below or as is detailed in the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith (26.15)

Council of Appeal

To bring resolution to an issue within the church, a Council of Appeal will be formed in one of two ways:

- 1 The elders may call upon the church to establish such a council.
- 2 Any member of the church may call for the establishment of such a council upon concurrence of at least 3 members representing separate families.

The Council shall consist of the elders and/or deacons and an equal number of other members in good standing to be chosen by vote of the congregation. The congregation shall appoint a chairman to preside at its meetings. The chairman will act as facilitator and tie-breaking vote if necessary.

The resolution of any matter shall require a two-thirds vote of a 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. The church should receive this decision in humility and prayer.

ARTICLE VI

Church Discipline

The Christian life is characterized by godly discipline. This includes self-discipline which involves training oneself for godliness (*1 Timothy 4:7*) and church discipline.

All reports to any individual of sexual misconduct or other illegal actions must be reported to the local authorities immediately for investigation.

Section 1:

Corrective Discipline

When individual and private counsel and admonition have failed, the matter must be brought to the attention of the elders, who will then shepherd the discipline process according to the instructions of God's Word (*Matthew 5:23,24; 18:15-18*). In extraordinary circumstances, at the discretion of the elders, a matter may be taken directly to the church, according to the apostolic instruction of 1 Corinthians 5 and Titus 3:10-11.

The goal of such discipline should be:

- 1 The repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (*Hebrews 12:1-11; Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1*).
- 2 The instruction in righteousness and welfare of other Christians, as an example to them (*1 Corinthians 5:11; 1 Timothy 5:20; Hebrews 10:24-25*).
- 3 The purity of the church as a whole (*1 Corinthians 5:6-7; Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 21:2*).
- 4 The good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (*Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:10-14*); and
- 5 And supremely the glory of God which is manifested when His holy character is reflected to the watching world (*Deuteronomy 5:11; John 15:8; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:12*).

The following are elements of corrective discipline:

A. 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 meet with and seek the restoration of those who have been excluded or suspended when they (the elders) have judged that the aims of the discipline have been accomplished. Such action is to be reported to the church. Upon recommendation of the elders the congregation shall have the right to restore an excommunicated person by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called congregational meeting.

B. SUSPENSION — 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 may not be overlooked altogether, lest God's enemies multiply their blasphemies, lest other saints be emboldened to sin, and lest the offender is harmed by a failure to test his own soul and appreciate the gravity of his offense. Therefore, at the discretion of the elders, less severe terms may be imposed upon a member—such as public rebuke or suspension of membership. The latter consists of a temporary suspension of the rights to serve publicly in the church, participate in the Lord's Supper or baptism, or vote in congregational meetings. Those who submit to such discipline are to be wholly forgiven and received as brethren. All such actions shall be reported to the congregation.

C. INVOLUNTARY REMOVAL — The most serious step a church can take in corrective discipline is to remove a member because of unrepentant sin. In extraordinary situations when a member has sinned publicly, scandalously, or divisively and without biblical repentance (*2 Corinthians 7:8–12*), the elders may call upon the church to remove that member immediately (*1 Corinthians 5:4–5; Titus 3:10–11*). In other situations that call for corrective discipline, when restoration is not secured by the processes required in Matthew 18:15–18, further steps must be taken to correct offenders. Written charges shall be given to the accused offender if they request a hearing with the elders. The elders shall meet with the accused unless the person refuses to appear. After a fair and impartial hearing of all the witnesses accessible, and all facts ascertainable, the elders must form a judgment. If they believe the accused to be guilty and deserving of severe biblical discipline, they shall recommend that the offender be removed at a duly called congregational meeting. The congregation shall have the right to remove a member by an

80% vote of the members present and voting. Involuntary removal always has as its end the glory of God, the purity of the body of Christ and the restoration of the offending party. If a church member is removed it is the responsibility of the congregation to continue to engage with that member with patience and love, exhort them to repent, and seek reconciliation. The church should not avoid a removed member, but rather pursue them with the gospel as they would any other unbeliever.

ARTICLE VII
Finances

The work of this church is financially dependent upon the voluntary gifts of God’s people. The elders, in conjunction with the Treasurer, shall be responsible for the orderly preparation and administration of the annual budget and all financial disbursements and receipts. Before the end of each year, the budget shall be approved by a vote of the congregation and shall be considered the basis for current liabilities. No adjustments are to be made to the budget that exceed 2% of the annual budget without the consent of the congregation. The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

ARTICLE VIII
Clerk and Treasurer

Section 1: Duties of the Church Clerk

The Clerk shall keep a record of all business transacted at the various meetings of the church, keep an accurate record of the membership, and carry on all necessary and related correspondence for the congregation. The Clerk shall be annually appointed by congregational vote.

Section 2: Duties of the Church Treasurer

The church Treasurer is to be responsible for the keeping of an accurate financial record of all funds identified with the church, reconciling monthly statements, monitoring, and safeguarding church accounts, and maintaining records of individual contributions. The Treasurer shall be annually appointed by congregational vote.

Eligible candidates to the office of Treasurer should be a member in good standing possessing abilities in financial stewardship and accounting practices willing to voluntarily serve in this position. The congregation may vote to work with a paid or non-paid Certified Public Accountant or professional bookkeeper to handle or oversee the proper discharge of all the above referenced duties.

The Treasurer or his appointed designee shall be accountable for counting the weekly offerings following all corporate worship services. He shall be accompanied by at least one additional member on rotation to maintain accountability.

The Treasurer shall work with and report to the elders. The Treasurer shall ensure that a financial audit is conducted at least every 5 years by a certified public accountant.

ARTICLE IX

Church Corporation

In compliance with the laws of the State of Alabama for Corporations Not for Profit, this church shall have at least 3 (but not more than 7) men to serve as trustees of the corporation. They shall be listed as Directors for purposes of carrying out their required services.

ARTICLE X

Amendments

Amendments to the Bylaws may be adopted by an 80% majority vote of the members present and voting at a congregational meeting provided that such amendments have been distributed by the elders in written form at least three weeks prior to the congregational meeting.







CHRIST CHURCH
of Guntersville

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