

CLEARY BAPTIST CHURCH

Constitution and Bylaws

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CONSTITUTION

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist denomination. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches of the same faith.

ARTICLE I: NAME

This body will be known as the Cleary Baptist Church located in Florence, Mississippi.

ARTICLE II: OBJECTIVES

It is the purpose of Cleary Baptist Church to bring people to Jesus and membership in His family, develop them to Christ-like maturity, and equip them for their ministry in the church and life mission of making disciples in the world in order to magnify God's name.

ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and the basis for our beliefs and it shall be our sole and sufficient authority in all matters of faith and practice. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of *The Baptist Faith and Message* as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000 and the following Cleary Baptist Church statement of faith.

Cleary Baptist Church Statement of Faith

Section A: The Word of God

We believe the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

Ref: 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31-32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32

Section B: The Trinity

We believe there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, that these are equal, in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.

Ref: Genesis 1:1, 26; John 1:1-3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19-20; Ephesians 4:5-6

Section C: God the Father

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe He infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

Ref: Luke 10:21-22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:1-2; 2:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6

Section D: Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth.

Ref: John 9:14; John 20:28-29; 1 John 4:9; Luke 1:26-38; Matthew 1:18-25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Luke 19:37; Acts 2:22; Matt 5:19; Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:16; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28

Section E: The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

Ref: John 14:16-17, 26; John 15:26-27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26

Section F: Regeneration

We believe man was created by God in His own image, that he sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God. Consequently, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice and therefore under condemnation. We believe those who repent and forsake sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become new creatures, delivered from condemnation and receive eternal life.

Ref: Genesis. 1:26; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; John 5:24; 8:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Rev. 19:3, 20; Revelation 20:10; Revelation 14-15; 21:18; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 5:19; Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1; John 3:14-16; John 1:12-13; Romans 3:10-19; Psalm 51:5

Section G: The Church

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible profession of faith, and associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

Ref: Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25

Section H: Conduct

We believe a Christian should live for the glory of God and the wellbeing of his fellow men, that his conduct should be blameless before the world, that he should be a faithful

steward of his possessions, and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.

Ref: 1 Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:13; Hebrews 12:1-2; John 14:15, 23-24; 1 John 2:3-6; 2 Corinthians 9:6-9; 1 Corinthians 4:2; Colossians. 1:9, 10

Section I: The Ordinances

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church, baptism and communion. We believe Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe Christ instituted communion to commemorate His death. We believe these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ref: Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Section J: Religious Liberty

We believe every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith, that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority, that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

Ref: 1 Timothy 2:5; Romans 14:7-9, 12

Section K: Church Cooperation

We believe local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization whether national, regional, or local exists and functions by the will of the churches. This church is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, and may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary independent basis.

Ref: Acts 15:36, 41; 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:1; Galatians 1:1-3; Revelations 1:4, 10-11

Section L: The Last Things

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal happiness of the righteous and the endless suffering of the wicked.

Ref: Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 2 Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15; Revelation 19:3-20

ARTICLE IV: POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Recognizing Christ as the head of the church (*Ephesians 1:22*), the government of this church is established in the pattern set forth in Scripture as being Elder-led (*Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5*) and accountable to the body of believers who compose its membership. Persons duly received by the members will constitute the membership. All internal groups and positions created and empowered by the church will report to and be directly accountable to the Elders and the church, unless otherwise specified by church action.

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 Southern Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the association, the state convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

BYLAWS

ARTICLE I: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Section A: General

This is a sovereign and Elder-led Baptist Church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of holding the Elders of the church accountable in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church, and to practice self-government in all areas these bylaws stipulate.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who will be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Members of the Church shall have no property rights or other ownership interest in any assets of the Church. Cleary Baptist Church shall consist of persons who have confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, have been baptized, have been accepted by vote of the church, and have entered into its covenant and have agreed to be held accountable to it by means of signing a statement affirming the covenant of Cleary Baptist Church.

Section B: Candidacy

Any person is qualified for full membership in the Church upon his or her profession of saving faith in Jesus Christ, his or her identification with Christ and His body through believer's baptism, and completion of a new member's interview with an Elder that provides instruction on the purpose, philosophy, and ministry of the Church as well as the responsibilities of its members. After completion of the new members' interview with an Elder, any person may be offered as a candidate for membership in this church at the recommendation of the Elders. All such candidates will be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in the following ways:

- By profession of faith and baptism according to the policies of this church.
- By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Southern Baptist church.
- By a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion in a church of like faith and practice when no letter is obtainable.

Should there be dissent as to any candidate, such dissent will be referred to the Elders, or an appointed membership ministry team for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty-five (35) days. An affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of those church members present and voting will be required to elect such candidates to membership. All candidates will be affirmed as members upon signing a statement declaring a willingness to be held accountable to the covenant of Cleary Baptist Church.

Section C: Duties of Members

Members are expected to:

- Regularly attend corporate worship at least three weeks each month (except for illness, travel, etc.).
- Develop a prayer life, spend time studying the Word of God, and daily live a Christ-like life.
- Be involved in small group bible study (*e.g., Sunday school*).
- Be involved in disciple making.
- Serve in the church in accordance with **1 Corinthians 12**.
- Give regularly of their financial resources to support the church in accordance with 2 Corinthians 9:7.
- Uphold the teaching, doctrines, and covenant of Cleary Baptist Church by word and by deed.
- Agree and live by the biblical principles of marriage and sexuality (as defined by the Cleary Baptist Church Statement on Marriage and Sexuality).

Section D: Rights of Members

Certain rights are guaranteed to all members of Cleary Baptist Church, unless under discipline as laid out in this document. The rights of such members include:

- Every member 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.
- Every member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church according to the church approved guidelines.
- Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

Section E: Church Discipline

Discipline at Cleary Baptist Church is addressed in the Church Discipline document.

ARTICLE II: CHURCH STAFF, OFFICERS, ELDERS, DEACONS, & MINISTRY TEAMS

All ministerial staff, officers of the church, and ministry team members (excluding interim staff) will be covenant members of this church.

Section A: Elders & Ministerial Staff

- I. Senior Pastor, Elders and Ministerial Staff
 - a. Responsibility
 - i. Responsibility of the Senior Pastor
 1. The Senior Pastor shall serve as the “first among equals” of the Elders. The Senior Pastor shall be primarily responsible to teach God’s Word from the pulpit and lead the Church to obey the

Word by making disciples of all nations. The Elders shall serve as pastors alongside the Senior Pastor and be a spiritual accountability group for the Senior Pastor.

ii. Responsibility of the Elders

1. Elders are called to serve among and provide spiritual protection for the Church body and are accountable to Christ and the Church membership. Elders are to provide overall leadership to the Church through prayer, the ministry of the Word, and pastoral care, and are to set the example for all Church members by their obedience to the mission of Christ and His Church (*Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 6:3-4; 20:28-31; 1 Corinthians 4:14-16; 1 Timothy 3:2-3, 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1-4*) as well as such other duties as are prescribed herein for Elders.
2. Elders shall be the chief administrators of the ministries of the church and lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks.
3. The Elders are the leaders of the pastoral ministries in the church. They work with the church staff, church counsel, ministry teams, and the Deacons to:
 - a. Lead the church in the achievement of its mission.
 - b. Proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers.
 - c. Preach and teach the Word, reproofing, rebuking, and exhorting the members to live a holy life and to serve God with reverence and diligence, care for the church's members and other persons in the community.
 - d. To equip the church members to do the ministry of the church.
4. One of the Elders shall preside at all family gatherings of the church and act as moderator of all family gatherings of the church or, in the absence of any Elders, one of the Deacons shall be appointed to serve as moderator. One of the Elders shall serve as a nonvoting ex officio member of all ministry teams. They shall be expected to give pastoral leadership in all church organizations and ministries when deemed necessary.
5. Insofar as is practical, the Elders shall be expected to cooperate with the Rankin County Baptist Association, the Mississippi Baptist State Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention. All Elders shall be expected to work in harmony with and adhere to the beliefs, covenant, and practices of this church as set forth in its Constitution and Bylaws, and to be committed to the theology of this church as set forth by the body of Elders.

iii. Responsibility of other Ministerial Staff members

1. The responsibilities of the ministerial staff shall be covered individually for each staff person in the personnel policies and procedures document.
- b. Selection of Ministerial Staff
- i. Selection of the Senior Pastor
 1. The Senior Pastor must, for an extended period of time prior to his calling, give evidence of the spiritual maturity, service, devotional life and leadership ability that is required for the position.
 2. Upon a vacancy in the position of Senior Pastor, the Elders shall recommend to the Church for approval a Senior Pastor Search Team. The Senior Pastor Search Team shall include at least one Elder, one Deacon, and one member of the Church who is neither an Elder nor a Deacon.
 3. The Senior Pastor Search Team should also include either the chairman of the personnel ministry team or a designee selected by the personnel ministry team if its chairman is not able to serve on the Senior Pastor Search Team.
 4. A candidate for Senior Pastor as designated by the Senior Pastor Search Team shall be approved by
 - a. the affirmative vote of all of the Elders in attendance at a meeting of the Elders, and then
 - b. the affirmative vote of at least three-fourths (3/4) of the Church membership present at a Family Gathering called for that purpose.
 - ii. Selection of the Elders
 1. Elders will be selected from the adult male membership of the Church as led by the Holy Spirit and affirmed by the Church membership. An Elder must have given evidence of spiritual maturity and service for an extended period of time.
 2. Elders may include both staff and non-staff members. The qualifications for Elders are contained in **Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4.**
 3. An Elder shall be called by the church whenever the existing Elders indicate an additional Elder(s) is needed. When the Elders indicate additional Elders are needed it shall be their responsibility to examine any man within the church who indicates his desire to serve as an Elder in Cleary Baptist Church. Upon satisfaction of the Elders of Cleary Baptist Church that a candidate meets the qualifications for Elder, they shall bring this candidate before the church for consideration as an Elder of the church.
 4. The Elders may bring multiple candidates before the church at one time if they recognize a need for more than one additional

Elder. The selection of a new Elder shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose on a Sunday morning, of which at least one week's public notice shall be given. The selection will take place in this way:

- a. The church shall devote one month to prayerful consideration of any new Elder candidates. During that month, church members are encouraged to ask the Elder candidate(s) questions to ensure that the Elder candidate(s) is in fact ready to be an Elder of Cleary Baptist Church. If through questioning there is any reason the Elder candidate(s) should not serve as an Elder, the church members may disclose such complaint to an existing Elder.
 - b. The church shall run an ad in the local newspaper or otherwise publish the individual's name for public consideration for no less than two (2) weeks indicating the name of each individual being considered as a potential Elder in the church so that if there is anyone in the community who may have reason this man should not serve as an Elder that individual may disclose such complaint.
 - c. Upon satisfaction of the candidate's public character and his ability to address the questions and concerns the church may have in calling him to be an Elder, after the one month of prayerful consideration, the church shall then select each Elder candidate by secret ballot, with an affirmative vote from three-fourths (3/4) of those present constituting a call.
- iii. Ordination of Elders
1. When new Elders are affirmed by the church and have not been previously ordained to the office, they shall be ordained. Upon the appointment of a new Elder, the individual shall be ordained as an Elder of Cleary Baptist Church as soon as can be arranged between himself and the other Elders.
 2. The man so ordained is thereafter recognized as an Elder of Cleary Baptist Church until excluded from the church, he voluntarily leaves the position of Elder, he is removed from the position of Elder due to no longer meeting the qualifications of an Elder, or he is no longer a member of Cleary Baptist Church.
- iv. Selection of Other Ministerial Staff
1. The Church shall employ other ministerial staff to equip the Church for ministry. Persons so employed must be approved by the Elders in cooperation with the personnel ministry team. Men and women serving on the ministerial staff must give evidence of

spiritual maturity in their service and devotional life. The Elders, in consultation with the personnel ministry team, will determine the titles to be used (*e.g., Pastor, Minister, Associate, Assistant, etc.*) and establish the hiring criteria and responsibilities for each position according to the experience and qualifications of the person in relation to the position and responsibilities held.

2. The hiring of other Ministerial Staff Members shall be accomplished in this manner:
 - a. Upon determination by the Elders of the church for the need of additional ministerial staff members, the Elders shall call a meeting with the personnel ministry team to discuss this need.
 - b. The Elders will recommend to the Church for approval a Ministerial Staff Search Team. The Ministerial Staff Search Team shall include the Senior Pastor, at least one Elder, one Deacon, and one member of the Church who is neither an Elder nor a Deacon.
 - c. The Ministerial Staff Search Team should also include either the chairman of the personnel ministry team or a designee selected by the personnel ministry team if its chairman is not able to serve on the Ministerial Staff Search Team.
 - d. A candidate for any Ministerial Staff position must be approved by:
 - i. The affirmative vote of all of the Elders in attendance at a meeting of the Elders.
 - ii. The affirmative vote of at least three-fourths (3/4) of the Church membership present at a Family Gathering called for that purpose.
- v. Termination of Ministerial Staff
 1. The termination of ministerial staff is a serious consideration and must be undertaken with caution and done in an orderly manner. All members of the Ministerial Staff shall be subject to the same removal standards as Elders. The Senior Pastor shall be subject to the same removal standards as Elders. In any case where the employment of a staff member is to be terminated by the Church, the personnel ministry team shall take any required actions in consultation with the Elders. Under no circumstances shall a vote to remove an Elder from his office or the termination of other ministerial staff be addressed at any family gathering without following these guidelines:
 - a. Removal of an Elder or Ministerial Staff Member
 - i. An Elder or Ministerial Staff Member may relinquish his office by giving at least two (2)

weeks' notice to the other Elders and the church at the time of the resignation. An Elder or Ministerial Staff Member may resign from their position immediately at the approval of the remaining Elders.

- ii. The church may also remove an Elder or Ministerial Staff Member from his position. Such action may only take place under the following conditions:
- iii. If action is due to moral/ethical indiscretions, doctrinal issues, or other non-health related issues.
- iv. The complainant party discretely discusses the problem with the Senior Pastor to try to seek resolution.
- v. If unresolved, the complainant, along with the remaining Elders, shall meet with the Elder or Ministerial Staff Member again in an attempt to seek resolution.
- vi. In the condition that there are fewer than three (3) Elders, the complainant, along with two (2) or three (3) witnesses, shall meet with the Elder or Ministerial Staff Member to seek resolution.
- vii. If unresolved, the complainant and witnesses shall bring the issue before the church during a regular or special called Family Gathering for disciplinary purposes. After the congregational hearing, a meeting will be set with at least two (2) week's public notice to determine whether the Elder or Ministerial Staff Member shall be removed from his office. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Church membership present at a Family Gathering, by secret ballot, shall be required to remove the Elder or Ministerial Staff Member from office.
- viii. In the condition that there are four (4) or more Elders, an Elder may be removed from office at the unanimous request of the remaining Elders. In such condition, the Elders may remove the offending Elder immediately and shall be required to call a family gathering to declare the reasons for removing the Elder with one week's public notice. At such meeting the Elder under discipline shall have the right to present evidence in his own defense if he feels he has been removed from his position wrongly. After the congregational hearing, a meeting will be set with at least two (2) week's

public notice to determine whether the Elder will be restored to his position if he contends he was wrongly removed and desires to be reinstated. A three-fourths (3/4) vote by secret ballot shall be required to reinstall the Elder. A unanimous vote by the remaining Elders to reinstall the Elder under discipline may be conducted at any time. Upon the decision of the Elders to reinstall an Elder under discipline that man shall again be presented to the church for consideration and after at least two (2) weeks of prayer and consideration the church may vote to reinstall that Elder.

- ix. If action is due to health reasons and/or other situations in which the Elder or Ministerial Staff Member will be unable to perform their duties for an extended period of time beyond all vacation, sick leave, and other leave, then the remaining Elders along with the personnel ministry team shall determine the best course of action to protect the interests of the church. A unanimous vote of the Elders and a majority vote of the personnel ministry team shall be needed to present a vote before the church to remove the Elder or Ministerial Staff Member from office. A specially called or regular family gathering will be scheduled with at least a two (2) weeks' notice to all members. A three-fourths (3/4) vote shall be required to remove the Elder or Ministerial Staff Member from office.

2. Non-Ministerial Staff

- a. Non-ministerial staff members will be employed as the church determines the need for their services. The church personnel ministry team, under the guidance of the Elders, will have the authority to employ and to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members. Such employment and termination of services will be with the recommendation of the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with consultation of related ministry teams of the church.

Section B: Deacons

I. The Work of the Deacon

- a. In accordance with the meaning and practice of the New Testament Church, Deacons are to be leading servants in the Church. Deacons are members of the

Church responsible for supporting the Elders in the ministry of the Word, caring for the needs of the Church and community, and promoting the unity of the Church (*Acts 6:1*).

- b. The duties of Deacons include, but are not limited to, assisting the Elders in shepherding and caring for all covenant members, overseeing the care, maintenance and stewardship of all church properties, preparing and administering the ordinance of communion each Lord's Day. To this end they will:
 - i. Assist the Elders in achieving the mission of the church.
 - ii. Serve as examples of men proclaiming the Gospel by word and deed in their daily life.
 - iii. Caring for the church's members and other persons in the community.
 - c. Qualifications of Deacons
 - i. Only those members who meet the spiritual qualifications in Acts 6:1 and **1 Timothy 3:8-13** shall be ordained for the Deaconship.
 - ii. We believe the Bible clearly teaches God's ideal for all men concerning marriage and fidelity. The Deacon shall be the husband of one wife and faithful to his wife, avoiding sexual immorality. They shall also live in accordance with the terms of the church covenant as herein recorded.
 - d. A Deacon's life must have a definite Christian bearing, have the knowledge of Christ as Savior, have followed Him in baptism and seek to live so that he will be a witness to Christ and Cleary Baptist Church.
 - e. The Elders, Ministerial Staff Members, and Deacons are models of Christ in the church and must be examples for other members. Each Deacon must uphold the biblical standards of a Deacon by refraining from:
 - i. Drunkenness, whether in public or private.
 - ii. Gambling and patronizing casinos.
 - iii. Anything that might cause his brother to stumble.
 - f. He must faithfully support and promote the whole program of the church with his prayers, time, talents, and finances. He must be an active member of the church and be engaged in making disciples in his own life and be regular in attendance in worship.
 - g. A Deacon must cooperate with the Elders and fellow Deacons fully seeking at all times to promote unity and the welfare of the church.
 - h. He must faithfully attend all Deacon meetings unless providentially hindered.
 - i. A man must be a church member in good standing, having already proved himself, in order to serve as a Deacon.
- II. Method of Procedure
- a. The Deacon body shall hold regularly scheduled monthly meetings with an Elder(s) to discuss any issues that need to be addressed for the service of the body and the community.
 - b. Special called meetings of the Deacon body may also convene to do business subject to the following provisions:
 - i. No called meeting shall convene without due notice given to all Deacons.

- ii. The purpose of the meeting must be announced at the time of the notification of the meeting, and only that issue may be considered at that time.
 - c. Under the guidance of the Elders, the Deacon body shall apportion the membership of the church among themselves to fulfill the functions of the Deacon family ministry. Each Deacon shall serve his Deacon family.
- III. Term of Office of Deacons
 - a. The Church will affirm Deacons by secret ballot at a special family gathering called for that purpose in accordance with selection process outlined in these bylaws.
 - b. This church shall maintain an adequate number of Deacons necessary to accomplish the ministry needs of this church and fulfill the ministry obligations of the Deacon family ministry.
 - c. Deacons will serve so long as they desire and they meet the qualifications to be a Deacon as laid out in Scripture (as noted in these bylaws), or until the task for which they have been elected has been fulfilled. No man shall be compelled to serve as a Deacon and any Deacon may choose to step down from this position without repercussion. The Elders will call a special family gathering for the purpose of affirming Deacons whenever a need arises that requires a new Deacon.
- IV. Removal of a Deacon from Active Service.
 - a. If a Deacon has been found to not meet the qualifications set forth in these bylaws of Cleary Baptist Church he may be removed from office. In such instance, the Elders will determine if the charges have basis and if they warrant the removal of the Deacon from office. After such a determination, if the Elders are unanimous in their decision, they may immediately remove the Deacon from his position. If there remains a question as whether the Deacon should be removed from service then no action should be taken until such time as a unanimous decision has been reached.
- V. Deacon Nomination & Selection Process
 - a. Deacons will be selected from the adult male membership of the Church as led by the Holy Spirit and affirmed by the members of Cleary Baptist Church. A Deacon must have given evidence of spiritual maturity and service for an extended period of time. The Elders will present Deacons to the church for a vote on an as needed basis. The selection of new Deacon(s) shall take place at a special Family Gathering called for that purpose, of which at least two (2) week's public notice shall be given. Deacons must be affirmed by a three-fourths (3/4) secret ballot vote of the church body.
- VI. Ordination of Deacons
 - a. When new Deacons, who have not been previously ordained to the office, are affirmed by the members of Cleary Baptist Church, they shall be ordained. Upon the appointment of a new Deacon, the individual shall be ordained as a Deacon of Cleary Baptist Church as soon as can be arranged between himself and the Elders.

- b. The man so ordained is thereafter recognized as a Deacon of Cleary Baptist Church until excluded from the church, he voluntarily leaves the position of Deacon, he is removed from the position of Deacon due to no longer meeting the qualifications of a Deacon, or he is no longer a member of Cleary Baptist Church.

Section C: Church Officers

I. Moderator

- a. The moderator shall be one of the Elders. If there is no qualified Elder to serve as moderator then one of the Deacons as appointed by the Elders shall serve as moderator. If the meeting pertains to a matter regarding the office of an Elder and there is no other Elder available to serve as moderator then the moderator will be one of the Deacons as chosen among them.

II. Clerk

- a. A clerk shall be elected by the church as other general church officers are elected. The clerk shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk or church secretary shall keep a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall work with the church secretary in issuing letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws.
- b. The church secretary and/or church clerk shall also be responsible for maintaining the operations manual for the church keeping it current on a monthly basis. An assistant clerk shall be elected each year to assist the clerk in the clerk's duties.

III. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

- a. The church shall elect annually a church treasurer and an assistant treasurer. A person, after serving three (3) years as treasurer and/or assistant treasurer, may not again serve in either office until waiting at least one year. An attempt will be made to keep both persons from vacating their positions in the same year. The treasurer, assistant treasurer, and other designees shall be responsible for the disbursement of church funds as directed by the church. All persons who have the authority to sign checks for the church shall be bonded by the church. Payment of bills for local work and expenses will be made by any tracked means other than cash. The treasurer shall be responsible for overseeing the receiving, preserving, disbursing of all expenditures of the church. The secretary and/or bookkeeper shall keep at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements.

IV. Trustees

- a. Three (3) trustees shall be elected to hold in trust the property of the church. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the

sale, mortgaging, purchase or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of trustees are required. A minimum of two (2) of the trustees must render their signature on each transaction document to make it official. The trustees will also be responsible for securing and maintaining insurance on all church property. The trustees shall serve a nine (9) year term on a rotating schedule whereby one trustee shall be selected by the Elders & Deacons. If someone is chosen to fulfill an unexpired term as a trustee, he may be selected to serve again immediately only if he has served less than four (4) years of the partial term.

V. Secretary and/or Bookkeeper

- a. It shall be the duty of the secretary or bookkeeper to render to the budget/finance ministry team at their regular monthly meeting an itemized accounting report of receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. The budget/finance ministry team shall then be responsible for auditing and summarizing the report, which the secretary will provide to the Elders & Deacons each month. Within thirty (30) days after the end of the fiscal year, the secretary or bookkeeper shall render to the budget/finance ministry team an annual report showing the total amount of receipts and disbursements for that year. The budget/finance ministry team shall be responsible for auditing and summarizing the report to be presented to the Elders & Deacons for affirmation. The summarized form shall be presented to the church and kept as a part of the permanent records of the church.

Section D: Church Ministry Teams

I. Standing Ministry Teams

- a. The standing ministry teams of this church shall be set up under the guidelines set forth in these bylaws. Additional regular ministry teams may be added by the amendment procedures prescribed by these bylaws.
- b. All ministry teams work under the leadership of the Elders. At least one of the Elders shall serve as an ex officio member of each ministry team within the church.
- c. Job descriptions, responsibilities, and the organization of all ministry teams shall be maintained in the church operations manual and updated as deemed necessary by the Elders.
 - i. General Requirements
 1. All persons who serve on ministry teams shall be members of Cleary Baptist Church.
 2. The Elders may choose to remove a ministry team member who fails to uphold the responsibilities of the office in which he/she serves if they are unanimous in the decision. Upon removal of the individual, the Elders shall appoint a new member to that position. The dismissed ministry team member shall be notified of such action in a meeting with the Elders or in writing when such meeting cannot be arranged.

3. In the case of an individual undergoing discipline that individual shall be immediately removed from serving on any ministry teams. In addition, if the person is under censure, but has not been removed from the body, then that member may not serve until fully restored to the body.
 - ii. Selection of Ministry Team Members.
 1. All standing ministry teams deemed necessary by the Elders shall be nominated by the Elders & Deacons and approved by the church. The prospective nominees to the various ministry teams shall be presented to the church for approval no later than the August special Family Gathering called for that purpose. The ministry teams shall begin operation with its new members each September first.
- II. Special Ministry Teams
- a. Ministerial Staff Search Teams
 - i. Search Teams may be formed in accordance with the guidelines set forth in these bylaws.
 - b. Special Project Teams
 - i. The Elders, as needed, may set up special project ministry teams on a temporary basis.

ARTICLE III: CHURCH COUNCIL

Under the guidance of the Elders, the church council will serve the church by leading in planning, coordinating, and evaluating the ministries and programs of the church and its organizations.

The primary functions of the church council will be to incorporate the leadership vision of the Elders into the various areas of leadership in the church; To review and coordinate ministry and program plans, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate achievements in terms of church objectives and goals.

Regular members of the church council will be the Elders, Deacons, other Ministerial Staff Members, directors of church program organizations, Sunday School and Small Group Leaders and the chairpersons of each ministry team. The church council may choose to invite additional members if they so see fit.

All matters agreed upon by the church council, which call for action not already approved, will be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH FINANCE

The Budget/Finance ministry team, in consultation with the Elders & Deacons, shall prepare and submit to the church an annual budget. This budget shall be affirmed by the Elders & Deacons and voted on in a Family Gathering called for that purpose.

The budget/finance ministry team shall be nominated by the Elders & Deacons and be approved by the church. They shall serve in accordance with the operations manual.

It shall be the work of this ministry team to secure budget recommendations from the Elders, Deacons, Ministerial Staff Members, church staff, organizational leaders, and each ministry team chairperson to develop the annual budget.

The Budget/Finance ministry team will make recommendations to the Elders & Deacons to be affirmed and voted on in a Family Gathering called for that purpose, or a regularly scheduled Family Gathering.

Receipts from all sources shall be accounted for on the books of the secretary and/or bookkeeper. From these accounts, all expenses shall be paid by any tracked means other than cash according to the budget allocation or as directed by the church. Any member has the privilege to designate his offering to any church approved ministry or fund and the church will forward such designated gifts to that fund. The church does reserve the right to use designated funds for other purposes with the approval of the Elders, Deacons and the church body.

The secretary and/or bookkeeper shall properly record all funds on the books of the church. The expenses of all organizations, as approved by the Elders, shall be disbursed from the church treasury as provided.

The church or any of its organizations may seek special offerings or fundraising methods. All such activities may be undertaken only after approval and recommendation from the Elders.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular proportionate gifts in accordance with 2 Corinthians 9:7.

The method of supporting the church budget shall be by voluntary contributions and offerings. The Elders must approve all other methods. All other methods so approved will have their value determined with an appraisal by the church.

All contributions become the property of Cleary Baptist Church and are not refundable.

ARTICLE V: CHURCH MEETINGS

Section A: Worship Services

The church will meet regularly as determined by the Elders for the worship of Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism will be among the ingredients of these services. The Elders will direct the services for all the church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

Section B: Special Services

The Elders at their discretion will place revival services, special evangelistic services, and any other church meetings essential to the advancement of the church's objectives on the church calendar.

Section C: Family Gatherings

Meetings of members of the Church for conducting business of the Church shall be known as Family Gatherings. The Elders may call such meetings. Family Gatherings shall be held no less frequently than annually in the church worship center. Notification, which may include the church website, worship guides, and other electronic means, of a Family Gathering shall be given to the membership of the Church not less than two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.

Family Gatherings shall be held for members to vote on recommendations of the Elders including, without limitation, any of the following: the annual Church budget, the hiring of Ministerial Staff Members, amendments to the Bylaws of the Church, the selection of Elders and/or Deacons, the merger or dissolution of the Church, the disposition of all or substantially all the assets of the Church, and the purchase of real estate or non-budgeted capital improvements greater than five percent (5%) of the annual Church budget.

Other matters may, from time to time, be brought to the Church for a vote. The appropriate ministry team, if any, and the Elders shall first address any matter brought before the Church for a vote. The Elders shall first address any such item recommended by a ministry team. The membership of the Church may call a Family Gathering by a written petition requesting such a meeting signed by no less than fifty percent (50%) of the members of the Church.

Section D: Quorum

The members present at a regular family gathering, or a special family gathering held after reasonable notice thereof, shall constitute a quorum.

Section E: Parliamentary Rules

Except where the Bylaws state otherwise, Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall be the accepted pattern for the transaction of the business of the Church. The spirit of God's laws and the attitude of Christ's love will always supersede and have right of way to the technicality or formalities so long as the ethical integrity and spiritual harmony of God's Holy Word is not in jeopardy nor compromised. So may it ever be.

ARTICLE VI: ORDINANCES

Section A: Baptism

This church will 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.

- a. Baptism will be by immersion in water.

- b. One of the Elders or whomever the Elders authorize shall administer baptism. Members who lead others to Christ will be encouraged to baptize these new believers although they are never required to do so.
- c. Baptism will be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.
- d. The Elders shall counsel a person confessing Christ who has refused baptism after a reasonable length of time.

Section B: Communion

Communion is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the Body of Christ, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming. This church will practice open communion. In light of the pattern found in scripture, Cleary Baptist Church will observe communion each Sunday.

ARTICLE VII: OPERATIONS MANUAL

The church secretary will maintain the church operations manual to include all church policies and procedures, staff job descriptions, church officer position descriptions, ministry team descriptions, and organizational charts depicting lines of responsibility in the administration of the church. The manual will be kept in the church office and made available for use there by any member of the church. The church secretary and/or church clerk will maintain the operations manual by adding and/or amending any items that have been approved at family gathering. The Elders shall review the manual with authority to recommend changes for the church to consider. Any church member or church organization may initiate suggested changes in the manual at a scheduled Family Gathering.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Bylaws shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Church members present at a Family Gathering called for that purpose. The proposed amendments or a summary of such amendments shall be provided to the Church membership at least two (2) weeks prior to the Family Gathering at which a vote is to be held.

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CHURCH COVENANT

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

We agree to the church bylaws and we do purpose, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love and to grow in the fullness of Christ Jesus our Lord; Under the authority of the Elder leadership within this body of believers; To make the Holy Scripture the supreme standard for all faith and practice and joy; To promote a godly view of culture and family life, seeking to live our lives apart from this world and repent of the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life knowing that God calls His children to be unlike the world; and to seek to grow towards biblical unity in the truth.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; To remember each other in prayer; To aid each other in sickness and distress; To cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense and eager to reconcile. I will shun gossip and divisive words, knowing that they are destructive to Christian fellowship. Furthermore, I will accept and fellowship with all members, regardless of race, gender, background, social status, or level of education, since all are of equal value in Christ.

I will submit to the church's discipline upon myself and lovingly assume my responsibility to participate in the discipline of other members, as taught in Scripture. If I am offended in connection with a disciplinary matter, I will seek resolution within the church and I will never initiate or pursue civil legal action against the church or any other Christian in regards to a disciplinary matter. Furthermore, before pursuing civil legal action against the church or any other Christian for purposes other than discipline matters, I will attempt, if feasible, to resolve the matter within the church through a biblical process as outlined in scripture.

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.

We, having undertaken for the glory of God, the advancement of the Christian faith, and understanding and agreeing with the above statements, as believers in Christ Jesus, join ourselves as covenanted members with Cleary Baptist Church.

(Signed) [Hereafter would be a section of signatures of all members kept in the church office]