

**CONSTITUTION OF PURCELLVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**Purcellville, Virginia**

**PREAMBLE TO CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

For the glory of God, the preservation of our faith, the building up of our body and the spread of the gospel in order that we might be governed in a manner consistent with God's Word, to preserve the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this Body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this Constitution and Bylaws of Purcellville Baptist Church, hereinafter referred to as "the Church."

**Article I. Name**

The name of this Church Corporation shall be Purcellville Baptist Church which is located in Purcellville, Virginia.

**Article II. Affiliation**

Purcellville Baptist Church is associated with the Southern Baptist Convention but operates as an independent Church with its own governance structure. The Church may affiliate with any like-minded churches, associations or denominations as it decides to further its purposes.

**Article III. Purposes**

Purcellville Baptist Church seeks to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ so as to win men, women, and children to Him as their Savior and Lord, to increase Christ-likeness in its constituents, to serve the community of which it is a part in Christian ways, and to promote those activities which seek to spread the gospel and aid the establishment of God's kingdom.

The Church seeks to discover and follow the truths of the Holy Scriptures, interpreted under the guidance of God's Spirit. Our Vision is to share Christ in each community. Our Mission is that we live to Magnify the Lord as we bring others to Membership in God's Family, build them up to Christ-like Maturity, train them for Ministry in the Church; and send them out for Mission in the world.

The Church is organized and shall be operated exclusively as a nonprofit Church corporation, for the religious, charitable and educational purposes stated in the Articles, Bylaws and herein; including, but not limited to, licensing, ordaining and overseeing ministers of the gospel, worship, evangelism, missions, ministry to the poor and needy, discipleship, and fellowship

according to Biblical principles. The Church is an organization exempt from tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended or any successor statute of similar import.

## **Article IV. Statement of Faith**

### **Section 4.1 About God**

God is the infinite, unchanging Creator and Ruler of the universe. He eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God. God is all powerful, all knowing, all loving and all wise. (*Genesis 1:1, 26-27; 3:22; Exodus 3:14; 34:6-7; Deuteronomy 6:4; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; James 1:17; 1 Peter 1:2*)

### **Section 4.2 About Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. He lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory at the Father's right hand and will return again someday to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. (*Matthew 1:22, 23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5; John 14:10-30; Colossians 1:16; Luke 1:35; Hebrews 4:14, 15; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; Romans 1:3,4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14, 15; Titus 2:13*)

### **Section 4.3 About the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men and women aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives all believers spiritual gifts for ministry in the church. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily. (*2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13; John 14:16,17; Titus 3:4-7; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; 5:18; Galatians 5:22-25*)

### **Section 4.4 About the Bible**

The Bible is made up of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. The Bible is God's Word to us written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. The whole Bible and every word of the Bible is inspired by God. Therefore, it is truth without any error. (*2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105,160; Psalm 12:6; Proverbs 30:5*)

### **Section 4.5 About Human Beings**

People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the supreme object of God's creation. Although humankind was created with tremendous potential for good, all of us fall short of God's perfect standard and are marred by an attitude of

disobedience toward God called “sin”. Sin separates people from God, causes many problems in life and leads to eternal judgment. (*Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; 6:23a; Isaiah 59:1, 2; Revelation 21:8*)

#### **Section 4.6 About Salvation**

Salvation is God’s free gift to us, but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by repenting of our sin and trusting in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior can anyone be saved from sin’s penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith. (*Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8,9; Mark 1:16; John 14:6; John 1:12; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1*)

#### **Section 4.7 About Eternal Security**

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. If one has been genuinely saved, he cannot lose that salvation. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and keeping power of God that gives us this security. (*John 10:29; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 10:10, 14; 1 Peter 1:3-5*)

#### **Section 4.8 About Eternity**

People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence. (*John 3:16; John 14:17; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18; Revelation 20:15; 1 Corinthians 2:7-9*)

#### **Section 4.9 About the Local Church**

We believe that a New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel. The Head of the church is Jesus Christ. The spiritual leaders of the church are pastors, elders and deacons. The purpose of the church is to make disciples. The responsibility of every church member is to exercise spiritual gifts for the growth of God’s kingdom and the health of the body. Members are committed to the study of God’s Word, fellowship, worship, evangelism, ministry and prayer. (*Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 4:11-12, 15-16; 1 Timothy 3:1-15; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 6:3-6; 1 Timothy 2:8—3:15; Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 12; Acts 2:41-47*)

#### **Section 4.10 About the Priesthood of the Believers**

We believe that all Christians are ministers or servants of God. As believers, we have direct access to God through His Son, Jesus Christ. We may go directly to God through Jesus for forgiveness of sin. All believers are priests belonging to God. (*1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 John 1:9; 2:27; 1 Peter 2:5, 9*)

### **Section 4.11 About Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

We believe Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances instituted by Jesus for the believer. Baptism is an outward symbol of inner faith given after one personally trusts in Jesus Christ. Baptism pictures our death, burial and resurrection with Christ. We only baptize believers by immersion. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of devotion to Christ whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize His death and anticipate His second coming. Since salvation is by grace through faith, we receive the Lord's Supper as a symbol of our personal relationship with Jesus and as an act of obedience to His will. (*Acts 2:41; Romans 6:4; 1 Peter 3:21; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 1 Corinthians 21; 11:23-29; Ephesians 2:8-9*)

### **Section 4.12 About Last Things**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring this world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all people in righteousness. The unrighteous will be sent to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. (*Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 24:1-25:46; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; Hebrews 9:27-28; 2 Peter 3:7ff; Revelation 20:1-22:13*)

## **Article V. Church Members Covenant**

As members of the body of Christ, we commit ourselves to a covenant with the Church. This covenant is a commitment, signed by each member, to protect the unity of the Church; share in the responsibilities of the Church; serve in the ministry of the Church; and support the testimony of the Church.

Each member, through the covenant, commits to protecting the unity of the Church by acting in love toward other members, refusing to gossip, and following the Church leadership.

Each member, through the covenant, commits to sharing the responsibilities of the Church by praying for its growth, inviting the unchurched to attend, and connecting with those who visit.

Each member, through the covenant, commits to serving in the ministry of the Church by discovering and using her/his gifts and talents, seeking ways of being equipped by the Pastors, and developing a servant's heart for ministry.

Each member, through the covenant, commits to supporting the testimony of the Church by living a godly life, attending faithfully, and giving regularly through tithes and offerings.

In doing so, each member commits to submit to the teaching and leadership of the Church, to the governing of the Church according to its Bylaws, to the settlement of disputes by and/or among the members of the Church without appeal to any outside civil court according to Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 6:1-8 and the *Rules of Christian Conciliation* (copy of *Rules* may be

found at [www.hispeace.org](http://www.hispeace.org)), to the Word of God as our final authority, to the Church's discipline upon ourselves, and to lovingly assume our responsibility to participate in the discipline of other members, as taught in Scripture.

#### **Article VI. Form of Government**

Under the authority of Christ as the head of the Church, governance rests exclusively in the local body and is exercised by the assembly of voting Members in business meetings. Members of the Church delegate authority as described in this Constitution and Bylaws to the Elders, Pastors, and Deacons.

#### **Article VII. Amendments**

Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted by a three-fourths (3/4) majority of those active Members present and voting at a called business meeting of the Church, after the proposed amendment has been presented, in writing, at the preceding regular or called business meeting.

# **BYLAWS FOR PURCELLVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **OVERVIEW OF THESE BYLAWS**

The purpose of these bylaws is to free the Church for ministry rather than constrain the Church. Although a written record of some of the procedures of the early church is recorded in the New Testament (See Acts 1:12-26; 6:1-7; 8:14-17; 11:1-24; 13:1-3; 15:1-35; 21:17-26; 1 Corinthians 14:26-40; and the Pastoral Epistles), most of ministry policy and procedure was left to the individual church to decide under the direction of the Holy Spirit. These bylaws provide a general framework for ministry in which the Church is to operate. They are based upon sound biblical principles. The Board of Directors shall be the active Elders and shall hereafter be referred to as the “Elders”.

## **-----THE CHURCH BODY-----**

### **ARTICLE I. ELDERS.**

#### **Section 1.1 Role of Elders.**

The Elders shall have overall responsibility for the welfare of the Church. They shall shepherd Church Members, oversee Pastors, Deacons, leaders and staff. Active Elders shall also serve as the Board of Directors to exercise the corporate powers of the Church (see Corporate Governance beginning with Article 10). The Chairman of Elders shall be the president of the Church corporation. At all times, there shall be no fewer than four (4) and no more than twelve (12) Elders.

#### **Section 1.2 Biblical Foundation for Elders.**

Elders were an integral part of the New Testament church. The apostles called themselves Elders (1 Peter 5:1; 2 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1). Elders were active in leadership in the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:6, 22). Elders were also appointed in other churches (Acts 14:21-23; 20:17; Titus 1:5). The apostle Paul divides the officers of the church into two categories: Elders and Deacons (See 1 Timothy 3:1-15).

#### **Section 1.3 Biblical Qualifications for Elders.**

The Bible gives numerous qualifications for Elders in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-3. They are separated below according to personal qualifications; family qualifications, and ministerial qualifications.

**1.) Personal qualifications:** An Elder must be a man who is above reproach, blameless, upright, holy, a lover of good, temperate, disciplined, self-controlled, gentle, respectable, and of good reputation with people outside of the church. An Elder must not be a recent convert, overbearing, quick-tempered, violent, quarrelsome, a lover of money, or one who pursues dishonest gain. Since the Bible warns against hastiness in ordaining others to ministry (1 Timothy 5:22), an Elder must be an active member of PBC for at least two years demonstrating the lifestyle and gifts of an Elder before he can be eligible for office.

**2.) Family qualifications:** An Elder must be the husband of one wife. Since the meaning of the phrase, “husband of one wife” is unclear; single men, widowed men and divorced men are not restricted from serving as Elders. Men who were divorced prior to conversion or because of spousal infidelity may be considered on an individual basis in accordance with biblical principles (Matthew 5:32; 19:1-9; 1 Timothy 3:2). He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect (1 Timothy 3:4). He must have the reputation as one whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. (Titus 1:6)

**3.) Ministry qualifications:** An Elder must be hospitable and able to teach. He must “hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it” (Titus 1:9). An Elder is to provide oversight out of a sense of willingness rather than a sense of obligation (1 Timothy 3:1; 1 Peter 5:2a). He is to serve with a desire to give rather than a desire to receive (Acts 20:35; 1 Peter 5:2b). He is to lead by example rather than by force (1 Peter 5:3).

## **Section 1.4 Responsibilities of Elders.**

Elders responsibilities are divided between shepherding the flock and providing oversight to the flock.

### **1.) Shepherd the flock.**

The Elders shall shepherd the flock through fervent prayer, the ministry of the Word and capturing God’s vision for the Church (Acts 6:1-7).

Elders shall pray for a deeper relationship with God (Luke 5:16), for healing of the sick (James 5:14-16), for God’s direction in appointing Church leadership (Luke 6:12-13; Acts 1:12-26), and for God’s direction for Church ministry (Mark 1:35-39; Acts 11:1-18; 13:1-3). Elders shall be involved in regular intercession for the flock, following the examples of Jesus (Luke 22:31-32; John 17; Hebrews 7:25) and Paul (Ephesians 1:15-19; Philippians 1:3-4, 9-11; Colossians 1:9-12).

Elders shall administer the ministry of the Word for personal study and growth (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17), for public and home teaching to believers and non-believers (Acts 20:20-21; Titus 2:1-15). Elders shall protect the Church body against false teachers and false doctrines (Acts 20:27-32; 1 Timothy 1:3-4; 4:1-7, 11; 2 Timothy 2:14-18; Titus 1:10-16; 3:9-11).

Elders shall discover, communicate, and guard God's vision for the local Church. The foundation for ministry vision shall be prayer and the Bible. The source of Church vision must be the Lord (Jeremiah 14:14-16; 23:16-32). The Elders may also help discern and confirm God's calling on specific individuals (Acts 13:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:14).

## **2.) Oversee the flock.**

Elders shall give careful watch to themselves, other Church leaders, the Members and the ministry of the Church.

Elders are to watch over themselves before they watch over others (Mark 14:38; Acts 20:28a; 1 Timothy 4: 15-16).

Elders will only move forward on any decision when they are in unity of spirit (Ephesians 4:1-3). The Holy Spirit is ultimately the guide, resident in each Elder and able to direct each individual on how to decide a given issue (John 16:13). Elders must listen carefully to dissenting brothers (Numbers 13:30-14:11; 1 Kings 22:1-18). The Bible and prayer are mandatory in the decision-making process as Elders seek the will of God for each decision (John 17:17; Colossians 4:2).

Elders are to watch over other Church leaders (Acts 15:1-3; 21:17-26). Elders will oversee the hiring and evaluation of all pastoral staff. The Elders shall determine the number of and responsibilities of Pastors. Appointment of Pastors will be recommended by the Elders and approved by the Members. The Elders will appoint Deacons. Elders will approve all teachers, small group leaders and ministry leaders. This authority may be delegated to pastors, or Ministry Leaders. However the Elders will be informed of the names of individuals nominated/selected to become teachers, small groups or ministry leaders. Elders will handle all charges against Church leadership and subsequent Church discipline according to Biblical guidelines (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Timothy 5:19-20).

Elders are to watch over the flock (Acts 20:28-31; Hebrews 13:17). The Elders will have watch/care over specific groups of members called "Flocks". They will be responsible for shepherding these families and for training up assistants to help them in this ministry (Ephesians 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:2). Elders are also responsible for overseeing all matters of Church discipline.

The Elders shall be responsible for oversight of all Church affairs, assets and personnel, except for specific actions reserved by the Members at large as specified elsewhere in these bylaws. "Oversight" includes, but is not limited to, approval of new ministries, evaluation of ongoing ministries, dispersal and investment of funds, making and managing contracts, hiring and dismissal of personnel, facilities' renovation and expansion, and any other action that may be necessary to carry out Church ministry. The Elder Body may delegate its authorities to individual Elders, staff members, Deacons and ministry teams.

## **Section 1.5 Appointment of Elders.**

**1.) Elder Nominations:** Although the Bible nowhere records Elders being appointed by Church vote, it does not seem to support an Elder body appointing itself. The entire Church body was involved in the decision to fill the apostolic position vacated by Judas Iscariot with Matthias (Acts 1:15-26). They were also responsible to choose out from among the body the first seven Deacons (Acts 6:1-6). The Elder nomination process for PBC is as follows:

- a. The Members shall nominate individuals who are qualified to serve as Elders.
- b. The active Elders shall screen, evaluate and decide upon the suggestions.
- c. The final nominees shall be asked to prayerfully consider becoming Elders.
- d. Once candidates and current Elders agree, the candidates' names shall be brought before the Members to determine any reason why the candidates should not be ordained.
- e. After three (3) weeks before the Members, and if there are no unresolved objections, the candidates shall be affirmed as Elders by the Members. (All active Members may participate in the nomination and affirmation of Elders. At least three-fourths (3/4) of the active Church Members present and voting must approve an Elder candidate for him to take office.)

**2.) Term Limits:** The Bible promotes the concept of a sabbatical year (Exodus 23:10-11). Elders may serve the Church for six (6) years. At the end of six (6) years the Elder shall be requested to take a sabbatical year of rest or serve as an Elder in a church plant.

**3.) Elder Discipline and Termination:** If two (2) or more persons (with preference to unrelated individuals) have a grievance against an Elder(s), the offended parties must bring the matter before the Elders. Those church leaders who are guilty of sin will be rebuked publicly so that others may take heed. If the conduct of an elder is immoral or egregiously improper, he may be terminated upon the unanimous decision of the rest of the elders.

## **ARTICLE II. SENIOR PASTOR AND PASTORAL STAFF.**

### **Section 2.1 Relationship to Elders.**

The Elders and the pastoral staff shall have a relationship of mutual respect and support. All pastors serve the church body in a teaching, shepherding, leading role. The Elders shall recognize the high calling and responsibility of each Pastor. When deciding issues that impact the church's direction and vision, the Elders will seek the input of the pastoral staff. Pastors must have the approval of the Elders to change the church's direction and vision. The Senior Pastor shall be a voting member of the Elders. His leadership among the Elders shall be balanced with accountability to the Elders.

### **Section 2.2 Qualifications.**

The Senior Pastor and other pastoral staff must meet the qualifications of an Elder set out in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

### **Section 2.3 Duties and Responsibilities of the Senior Pastor.**

The Senior Pastor shall have in his charge the welfare of the Church. Some of his responsibilities are as follows:

- a. Preaching and promoting the Gospel and God's Word.
- b. Conducting religious services on stated and special occasions and administering ordinances;
- c. Be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the Church;
- d. May call special meetings of Church organizations and ministry teams;
- e. Shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the Church and provide for preachers and workers to assist in special services and for pulpit supply, when he is absent; and
- f. Supervise all staff unless the Elders decide to delegate these responsibilities.

### **Section 2.4 Selections and Appointment.**

The Senior Pastor and all pastoral staff shall be selected by a unanimous vote of the Elders, after preliminary procedures, as the Elders deem necessary, have been fulfilled (e.g., interview by search committee, preaching one or more times before the Members, personal interviews by Elders, etc.). The Elders selection shall be confirmed by the active Members, at a regular or special Members' meeting, by at least three-fourths (3/4) of the active Members present and voting casting an affirmative vote. Notice of the time and place of the meeting, as determined by

the Elders, shall be given in writing and from the pulpit for two (2) successive Sundays prior to the meeting, and shall also be published in the Church bulletin.

**Section 2.5 Term of Office.**

The term of office for the Senior Pastor and pastoral staff shall be for an indefinite period of time unless contracted, terminated or resigned.

**Section 2.6 Pastoral Discipline and Termination.**

If two (2) or more persons (with preference to unrelated individuals) have a grievance against a Pastor(s), the offended parties must bring the matter before the Elders. Those church leaders who are guilty of sin will be rebuked publicly so that others may take heed. If the conduct of a Pastor is immoral or egregiously improper, he may be terminated upon the unanimous vote of all the rest of the Elders. For other reasons, any Pastor, including the Senior Pastor, may be terminated upon unanimous decision of the Elders. This is established to prevent disunity within the congregation.

## **ARTICLE III. DEACONS.**

### **Section 3.1 Biblical Foundation for Deacons.**

Deacons became a part of the New Testament church in its beginnings (Acts 6:1-7). They were called upon to facilitate a specific ministry so as to allow the Apostles undistracted attention in prayer and the ministry of the Word. The title *Deacon* means “one who serves.” The qualifications for Deacons are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

### **Section 3.2 Biblical Qualifications for Deacons.**

The qualifications for Deacons are found in Acts 6:1-7 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The prerequisites are divided in the categories of personal, family and ministry qualifications.

**Personal qualifications:** The Deacons shall come from among the Church Members (Acts 6:3) and be active Members. They should be known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom; men full of faith, God’s grace and power (Acts 6:3-8). They are to be men who are sincere and worthy of respect. They cannot indulge in much wine or pursue dishonest gain. Requirements for being a Deacon are stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-13.

**Family qualifications:** The Deacon must be the husband of one wife. He must manage his children and his household well. Since the meaning of the phrase, “husband of one wife” is unclear; single men, widowed men and divorced men are not restricted from serving as Deacons. Men who were divorced prior to conversion or because of spousal infidelity may be considered on an individual basis in accordance with biblical principles (Matthew 5:32; 19:1-9; 1 Timothy 3:12). Deacons’ wives are to be women worthy of respect, not gossips, but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

**Ministerial qualifications:** Deacons must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They also must first be tested in ministry. If nothing is against them, then they are to be allowed to serve as Deacons. A Deacon must be a member of the Church for at least one year and have been proven capable in managing Church ministry.

### **Section 3.3 Responsibilities of Deacons.**

The Deacon body works diligently, in behalf of the Elders and Members, to assist the Church teams in a serving capacity across each of 5 Purposes – Membership, Maturity, Ministry, Mission and Magnification.

#### **Examples of the role of Deacons**

- A. Assist team leaders/pastors/ministry leaders
- B. Prayer and encouragement
- C. Interface with office staff to ensure effective use of church resources
- D. Provide a physical presence and support when additional team members are needed
- E. Encourage the Church body to become involved in ministry
- F. Provide assistance to ministries

### **Section 3.4 Appointment of Deacons.**

**1.) Deacon selection:** Deacons will be nominated by the Elder body and their activities will be overseen by the Elders.

The process for appointing Deacons is as follows:

- a. The Elders shall nominate individuals who are qualified to serve as Deacons.
- b. Deacon nominees shall be brought before the Members and their nomination placed in the bulletin for three (3) weeks to determine if there is any reason why the nominee should not be confirmed.
- c. After three (3) weeks, and if there are no unresolved objections, the Deacon candidate will be confirmed by the Elders.

**2.) Term Limits:** The Bible promotes the concept of a sabbatical year (Exodus 23:10-11). Deacons may serve the Church for six (6) years. At the end of six (6) years the Deacon shall be requested to take a sabbatical year of rest.

**3.) Deacon Discipline and Termination:** If two (2) or more persons (with preference to unrelated individuals) have a grievance against a Deacon(s), the offended parties must bring the matter before the Elders. Those church leaders who are guilty of sin will be rebuked publicly so that others may take heed. If the conduct of a Deacon is immoral or egregiously improper, he may be terminated upon the unanimous decision of the rest of the Elders.

## **ARTICLE IV. THE MEMBERS.**

### **Section 4.1 Membership.**

**1.) Qualifications for membership:** To become an active member of Purcellville Baptist Church one must have a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and manifest evidence of a change of heart. The prospective active member must have been baptized after having made a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ. The prospective active member must accept the obligations and responsibilities that accompany being a Church member, including the signing of the Church membership covenant.

**2.) Process of joining the Church:** All present Members of the unincorporated entity known as Purcellville Baptist Church shall, upon signing the Members Covenant agreeing to be bound by the Articles, Constitution and Bylaws of the new church corporation, become Members of this incorporated Church. No Members of this Church, nor any officer, nor any member of the Board shall by virtue of such membership, office or position, incur or be subject to personal liability to any extent for any indebtedness, obligations, acts or omissions of this Corporation. All prospective members should attend a class concerning the Church vision, beliefs and responsibilities of membership in order to join. The prospective member may meet with an Elder or a Pastor should additional questions arise. The prospective member shall present themselves for baptism by immersion; or upon transfer by letter from a church of like faith and practice; or upon statement of prior Christian experience and believer's baptism.

**3.) Responsibilities of Members:** As members of the body of Christ, we commit ourselves to a covenant with the Church. This covenant is a commitment, signed by each member, to protect the unity of the Church; share in the responsibilities of the Church; serve in the ministry of the Church; and support the testimony of the Church. We also commit to strive towards developing the following habits.

- a. Have a quiet time of daily personal Bible study, prayer and praise (Acts 2:42).
- b. Attend and participate in Church services and activities faithfully (Hebrews 10:25).
- c. Belong to a small group, such as a Sunday school class, a home group, a men's/women's study or a support group within the Church body (Acts 2:43-47).
- d. Invite others to Church and to our small groups.
- e. Tithe and give offerings to the Church (Malachi 3:3-10; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8).
- f. Serve in at least one ministry of the Church (Romans 12:3).

### **Section 4.2 Members Ministry.**

The Members are called to function as the bride and body of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 Peter 2:4-9). Each person has at least one specific spiritual gift that is essential for the health of the body (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31). Church leaders equip the Members for ministry (Ephesians 4:12-15). The Members serve on ministry teams according to spiritual giftedness.

### **Section 4.3 Designation of Membership.**

An active member is one who has signed the Membership Covenant, and meets all the qualifications and responsibilities above in Section 4.1. Except as otherwise noted in these Bylaws, every active member of this Church who is at least eighteen (18) years or older is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the Church, provided the member is present at the time of voting.

### **Section 4.4 Voting Rights of Members.**

Every active Member shall have the right to vote and participate in the electoral process on the following matters:

- 1.) Election of the Elders;
- 2.) Disposition of all or substantially all of the Church's assets;
- 3.) Merger or dissolution of the Church;
- 4.) Acquisition of real property and related indebtedness;
- 5.) Call of a Pastor;
- 6.) Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution or Bylaws of the Church; and
- 7.) Any other major event or decision as designated by the Elders.

Active Members on the meeting date who are otherwise eligible to vote are entitled to vote at the meeting.

### **Section 4.5 Termination.**

The Church may dismiss from its membership and remove from the Church rolls:

- 1.) Active Members who request a transfer of membership to another church. (Upon such request, a letter of recommendation shall be granted after approval by the Pastor(s));
- 2.) Deceased Members;
- 3.) Members who request cessation of their membership;
- 4.) Inactive member(s) who have not been involved in the life of the Church;
- 5.) Church discipline as defined below.

### **Section 4.6 Church Discipline.**

The Bible addresses the issue of discipline in the church (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15). Should a member become an offense to the Lord and His Church, the Elders may recommend that his or her membership be terminated, but only after faithful

efforts have been made according to Christ's directions in Matthew 18:15-17. Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by the Church upon evidence of repentance (2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 6:1).

Dismissal, due to church discipline according to procedures in Matthew 18:15-17 and the Church Discipline and Restoration Policy, is expanded upon in a separate policy. Members who are found guilty of public, aggravated, or habitual sin or false teaching (as determined by the Elders) and remain unrepentant after being lovingly confronted will be subject to church discipline. Termination of membership shall occur in this instance only after due process has been afforded according to the Church Discipline and Restoration Policy. Once the notice of the disciplinary process has begun, we encourage the member to continue working through the restoration process. Should the member decide to leave the Church rather than participate in the restoration process, the Church leadership will continue to pray for the member but will inform the new church that the individual is under discipline. A Member's rights and responsibilities of membership can only be terminated after a unanimous vote calling for termination of membership by the Elders followed by notice to the Church Members.

#### **Section 4.7 Restoration of Dismissed Members**

A member dismissed by the Church shall be restored according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8 upon determination by the Elders that the dismissed member has repented and his or her present lifestyle and is living in accordance with the Members Covenant. Full restoration occurs upon a unanimous vote of the Elders and notice to the Church Members.

## **ARTICLE V. Settlement of Disputes Within or Against the Church**

In any dispute arising between or among Church Members, pastors, or staff, the dispute should be resolved by the Board/Elders (or a duly appointed team from the Board) under Biblical guidelines and the Christian Conciliation Rules and Procedures published at [www.hispeace.org](http://www.hispeace.org) or [www.peacemakers.net](http://www.peacemakers.net). All employees, contractors, and vendors of the Church should be asked to sign policies or contracts containing the Christian Dispute Resolution clause. Christian mediation should be attempted; but, if it does not resolve the dispute, then legally binding Christian Arbitration should be employed by the Board or individuals selected by the Board in accordance with the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation*. A decision shall be reached after prayerful consideration, in a spirit of humility, with each Arbitrator seeking that which most glorifies God and regarding one another before himself.

Any claim or dispute arising between or among Church Members, pastors, or staff and the Church shall be brought to the Elders, settled by mediation, if necessary, and brought to legally binding arbitration in accordance with the *Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation* of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, a division of Peacemaker<sup>®</sup> Ministries (complete text of the Rules is available at [www.HisPeace.org](http://www.HisPeace.org) or [www.peacemakers.net](http://www.peacemakers.net) ). Notwithstanding this provision, to protect our Church and under our risk management obligations, we are required to maintain liability insurance. Therefore, this Christian dispute resolution provision is conditioned upon agreement by our insurers that, in light of the particular facts and circumstances surrounding the disputed matter, this provision, and the process it establishes, will not diminish any insurance coverage maintained by the Church.

Judgment upon an arbitration decision may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction. Members, pastors, staff, or third party vendors/contractors shall understand that these methods shall be the sole remedy for any controversy or claim arising within the Church or against the Church and expressly waive their right to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another or the Church for such disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision. In that case, judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered by any court having competent jurisdiction, in conformity with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## **ARTICLE VI. MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS.**

### **Section 6.1 Members Meeting.**

A meeting of the Members shall require that proper minutes be kept by the Secretary of the Board of Directors or other properly designated Church officer. Ample notice of the time and place of the meeting, as determined by the Elders, shall be given. The purpose of this meeting shall be to conduct any proper business necessitating Member approval. The meeting of Members will have been called by the Elders and will be conducted after at least one week's notice has been given to the Members. The Elders, at their discretion, may call an emergency meeting of the Members with less than one week's notice.

### **Section 6.2 Other Members and Special Meetings.**

Other Members and/or special meetings may be called at any time and for any purpose by the Elders to inform the Members on the status and direction of the Church ministries, to encourage and exchange information concerning ministries of the Church; to present position appointments, including any staff changes and employment and/or to report about the stewardship of Church resources. Except as noted elsewhere in these Bylaws, notice of these meetings shall be given from the pulpit and published in the regular Church bulletin at least one week prior to the meeting. The notice shall specify the date, time and place and the general nature of the business to be conducted. Business meetings requiring a vote of the Church membership shall convene for the purpose of calling new pastoral staff, the sale or purchase of church real property and related indebtedness, election of Elder(s) or any changes in the Bylaws or Constitution. Voting at any business meeting may be by secret ballot, voice or show of hands.

### **Section 6.3 Quorum and procedure.**

The presence of ten per cent (10%) of all active Members at a duly called meeting shall constitute a quorum of the membership for the transaction of business. If quorum is not met at that meeting, then another meeting shall be called, with proper notice given. At the second meeting, requirements for quorum are satisfied by any number of active Members present. All decisions of the Members shall be made by majority vote of those active Members present and voting, except where otherwise specified in these Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE VII. TEAMS**

### **Section 7.1 Special Teams.**

The Elders may appoint Special Teams (Standing or Advisory) for such purposes as it deems necessary for carrying out its responsibilities. The Elders shall designate the purpose, membership and duration of each special team upon its inception. A special team may not exist beyond duration of one year without reauthorization of the Elders.

### **Section 7.2 Ministry Teams and Team Leaders.**

There are many ministry teams already in operation. The Elders may establish such other teams as for example audit, stewardship, personnel and any others needed to assist them in the performance of their responsibilities, and the Elders shall approve the team leader or chairperson of such ministry team. The Elders may also terminate any team which is no longer necessary or effective for ministry. If the Elders do not appoint a team leader, then a team leader should be selected by the voting members of the team and then approved by the Elders.

## **ARTICLE VIII. OTHER STAFF AND LEADERS**

### **Section 8.1 Non-Pastoral Staff.**

The non-pastoral staff at Purcellville Baptist Church functions as servants in coming alongside of the pastoral staff and Church body to support them in ministry. This includes all office staff. Non-pastoral staff may be hired upon request by the pastoral staff and approval by the Elders.

### **Section 8.2 Duties and Responsibilities of Church Staff.**

The duties and responsibilities for these positions will be formulated by the Elders with responsibilities included in the personnel section of the policies and procedure manual.

### **Section 8.3 Selection of Church Staff.**

The selection of Church staff shall be the responsibility of and under the approval of the Elders.

### **Section 8.4 Termination of Non-Pastoral Staff.**

The termination of any staff member shall be recommended by supervising staff, and approved or rejected by the Elders. Such actions involving termination of any staff may be reported to the Members, but need not be approved by the Members.

### **Section 8.5 Teachers and Home Group Leaders.**

Sunday School teachers/leaders, Bible Study leaders and Home Group leaders share an important role of leadership over students and Members. Therefore, all teachers must be exemplary Christians fulfilling the responsibilities of Church membership and meeting the approval of the Elders before they may take a teaching or home group leader position in the church (James 3:1). This will help protect the Church from false teaching (Acts 20:27-31). Volunteers may assist teachers without Elder approval.

## **ARTICLE IX. CHURCH OPERATIONS**

Day-to-day operational activity shall be delegated by the Elders under organizational structures considered appropriate to meet the needs of the Church. Elders retain ultimate oversight of the Church and spiritual oversight.

Pastors or Leaders of each department (e.g. Membership, Maturity, Ministry, Mission, Magnification, Family, Youth, Children, and Operations) are charged with day-to-day responsibility for strategy, direction and implementation of all plans.

Deacons support ministry activities of each Pastor/Leader as requested.

The development of the Church operations and policy manual shall be overseen by the Elders or their designees with professional consultation and review. This manual includes all Church policies, procedures, job descriptions and organization charts depicting lines of responsibility in the administration of the Church. The manual shall be kept in the Church office and made available for use by any member of the Church. The Elders, or their designees, shall review the manual at least annually. The Elders are the sole authority to approve changes. The Elders, and any of its designees, shall be responsible for compiling and maintaining a policies and procedures manual for the day-to-day administrative functions of the Church not covered in the constitution and bylaws. These policies and procedures manuals shall be available at the Church office.

-----CORPORATE GOVERNANCE-----

**ARTICLE X. BOARD OF DIRECTORS.**

**Section 10.1 General Powers.**

The corporate powers of the Church shall be exercised by or under the authority of the Board of Directors, who are comprised of the Elders and the Secretary and Treasurer of the Church hereafter referred to as the “Board”. The powers, business and property of the Church shall be exercised, conducted and controlled by the Board for the purposes to direct the affairs of the Church with unanimous agreement. The Treasurer and Secretary shall be non-voting members of the Board, unless they are active Elders of the Church. The Board shall be responsible for the maintenance of scriptural discipline within the Church and its membership.

**Section 10.2 Number, Qualification, Term and Election.**

The Board shall consist of the active Elders who shall be elected individually by a vote of the Members as specified in the above section on Elder nomination. Board Members are elected by active Members. The authorized number of Board Members shall be such number as may from time to time be authorized by the Elders, provided that such number is no less than four (4) and no more than twelve (12). With the exception of the Senior Pastor, no Board Member shall serve for more than six (6) years without being requested to take a year off before thereafter being reelected. The Board shall elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman from among the lay Elders who shall serve one-year terms but may be re-elected, as long as an active Elder, for up to three consecutive annual terms. The Elders shall appoint the Secretary and Treasurer of the Church.

**Section 10.3 Vacancies on the Board.**

A vacancy on the Board because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or any other cause shall be filled using the same procedures for Elder nominations in section 1.5.

**Section 10.4 Resignation and Removal.**

Any Board member may at any time deliver to the President of the Corporation (i.e. Chairman of Elders) a written notice of intent to resign which shall be effective upon acceptance by the Board. Any Officer or Board Member may be removed at any time with or without cause when, in the sole judgment and discretion of the Board, it is determined by unanimous vote of the rest of the Board that such Board Member should no longer serve on the Board. In the event any Board Member is so removed, a new Board Member may be elected in accordance with section 10.3 above.

**Section 10.5 Duties and Specific Powers.**

Without prejudice to the general powers set forth above, and subject to the same limitations, the Board Members shall have the following duties and powers:

- a. Establishing governing principles, policies and determining practices for the Church, including the creation and maintenance of policies and procedure manuals, which shall contain all controlling policies and procedures governing any and all aspects of the Church's affairs, including, but not limited to, committee task descriptions and policies regarding the handling of funds, use of facilities, and employment policies and practices;
- b. Exercising oversight of the Church financial, business, and property matters and providing counsel;
- c. Hearing and considering all reports and recommendations submitted by pastors, councils, committees and staff;
- d. Recommending the borrowing of money and incurring indebtedness on behalf of the Church and the cause to be executed and delivered for the Church's purposes and in the Church's name, promissory notes, and other evidences of debt and securities;
- e. Conducting such other duties and activities as the Board may determine from time to time that are consistent with the Articles of Incorporation, Constitution, and these Bylaws, including those actions requiring a vote of the Members.

The Board may delegate some of its authorities and duties to individual Elders, pastors, staff Members, Deacons, ministry teams and others as long as the delegation does not breach its fiduciary duties to the Church.

#### **Section 10.6 Transactions with Interested Parties.**

A contract or other transaction between the Church and one or more of its Board Members, Deacons, or family members thereof (hereinafter "Interested Party"), or between the Church and any other entity, of which one or more of the Church or its Board Members or Deacons are also Interested Parties, or in which the entity is an Interested Party with a financial interest – shall be voidable at the sole election of the Church unless all of the following provisions are satisfied:

The Church entered into the transaction for its own benefit; the transaction was fair and reasonable as to the Church, or was in furtherance of its exempt purposes at the time the Church entered into the transaction; Prior to consummating the transaction, or any part, the Board authorized or approved the transaction, in good faith, by a vote of a majority of the Directors then in office, without counting the vote of the interested Director or Directors, and with knowledge of the material facts concerning the transaction and the Interested Parties' interest in the transaction; and Prior to authorizing or approving the transaction, the Board, in good faith, determined, after reasonable investigation and consideration, that either the Church could not have obtained a more advantageous arrangement, with reasonable effort under the circumstances, or the transaction was in furtherance of the Church's tax-exempt purposes.

Common or interested Board Members may not be counted in determining the presence of a quorum at a meeting of the Board (or a committee thereof) that authorizes, approves, or ratifies

such contract or transaction. Notwithstanding the above, no loan shall be made by the Church to any of its Board Members, Deacons or Members.

**Section 10.7 Conflicts of Interest Policy.**

The Board shall adopt a Conflicts of Interest Policy that will provide for full disclosure of material conflicting interests by Board Members, Deacons, Officers, Directors or employees. This Policy shall permit the Board to determine whether the contemplated transaction may be authorized as just, fair and reasonable to the Church.

**Section 10.8 No Compensation for Directors.**

No salary or compensation shall be paid to any member of the Board in his capacity as Member of the Board, but nothing herein shall be construed to preclude any Board Member from serving the Church in any other capacity and receiving reasonable compensation. Moreover, the Board Member may receive reasonable reimbursement for travel and other approved expenses upon request and written documentation.

## **ARTICLE XI. BOARD MEETINGS.**

### **Section 11.1 Place of Meetings.**

Regular or special meetings of the Board Members may be held at any place that has been designated from time to time by resolution of the Board Members. In the absence of such designation, meetings shall be held at the principal office of the Church. Notwithstanding the above provisions of this section, a regular or special meeting of the Board Members may be held at any place consented to in writing by all of the Board Members, either before or after the meeting. If such consents are given, they shall be filed with the minutes of the meeting. Any meeting, regular or special, may be held by conference telephone or similar communication equipment, as long as all Board Members participating in the meeting can hear one another. All such Board Members shall be deemed to be present in person at such meeting.

### **Section 11.2 Times and Notice of Meetings.**

Regular meetings shall be conducted on a monthly basis and without notice. Special meetings may be called at other times by the Chairman of the Board with two (2) days notice to the Board Members by any usual means of communication. Such notice need not specify the purpose for which the meeting is called.

### **Section 11.3 Waiver of Notice.**

The transactions of any meeting of the Board Members, however called and noticed or wherever held, shall be as valid as though taken at a meeting duly held after regular call and notice, if a quorum is present, and either before or after the meeting, each of the Board Members not present signs a written waiver of notice, a consent to holding the meeting, or approves the minutes, by signing the original copy. The waiver of notice or consent shall specify the purpose of the meeting. All waivers, consents, and approvals shall be filed with the corporate records or made a part of the minutes of the meeting. Notice of a meeting need not be given to a Board Member who attends the meeting without protesting before or at its commencement about the lack of notice.

### **Section 11.4 Quorum.**

Three-fourths (3/4) of voting Board Members present at the beginning of a meeting shall constitute a quorum for purposes of transacting business at a meeting.

### **Section 11.5 Action without Meeting.**

Any action required or permitted to be taken by the Board Members may be taken without a meeting if all of the Board Members, individually or collectively, consent to the action in writing. Such action by written consent shall have the same force and effect as the unanimous vote of the Board Members. Such written consent or consents shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Board Members.

**Section 11.6 Manner of Acting.**

Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the Board Members shall conduct business, take actions, and make decisions unanimously. If unable to do so, and after concentrated prayer over the matter at hand, the Board may approve the action or decision based on a vote of all Board Members minus one (e.g. with twelve [12] Board Members this would require eleven [11] affirmative votes). This shall constitute approval of the Board and shall be deemed to be the act of the Board Members.

**Section 11.7 Participation by Conference Telephone.**

Members of the Board of Directors or of any committee thereof may participate in a meeting of such Board or committee by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment whereby all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at such meeting. When such a meeting is conducted by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment, a written record shall be made of the action taken at such meeting, noting participation of those who were present by means of such communications equipment.

## **ARTICLE XII. OFFICERS.**

### **Section 12.1 President.**

The Chairman of Elders shall serve as the President of the Corporation and shall be the chief executive officer with all the rights and powers attributed thereto and which the Board sets unless he delegates some of the duties to other Elders, Pastors or staff.

### **Section 12.2 Secretary.**

The Secretary shall be a member of the Board but may or may not be an Elder. The Secretary shall record and preserve the minutes of all Board meetings. The Secretary shall also serve as Clerk of the Members and shall record and preserve the minutes of all Members meetings, shall maintain an up-to-date Church roll of Members, and prepare and forward membership letters. The Secretary shall be charged with the duty of giving proper notice to the Church and Board Members of the respective Board and Member meetings.

### **Section 12.3 Treasurer.**

The Treasurer shall be a member of the Board but may or may not be an Elder. The Treasurer shall be responsible for all monies collected and distributed by the Church and shall make financial reports to the Board. The Treasurer shall ensure that a financial report is made available for Members at the annual Members meeting and such other Members meetings wherein a financial report is deemed necessary. A copy of the financial records shall likewise be available to the Members on a monthly basis. Proper records and books concerning incoming and outgoing funds shall be kept and such records and books shall be made available for auditing or inspection.

## **ARTICLE XIII. FISCAL MATTERS.**

### **Section 13.1 Deposits.**

The Board shall select banks, trust companies, or other depositories in which all funds of the Church not otherwise employed shall, from time to time, be deposited to the credit of the Church.

### **Section 13.2 Checks.**

All checks or demands for money and notes of the Church shall be signed by such officer or officers or such other persons as the Board may from time to time designate. Any check over the amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) shall require two authorized signatories.

### **Section 13.3 Fiscal Year.**

The Board of Directors shall have the power to fix and, from time to time, change the fiscal year of the Church. Unless otherwise fixed by the Board, the fiscal year shall be from July 1 to June 30. Accurate records shall be kept by all organizations of the Church and reports made on the fiscal year basis. All funds handled by any and all organizations shall be reported to the Church Treasurer.

### **Section 13.4 Contracts.**

The Board may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents of the Church, in addition to the officers so authorized by these Bylaws, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of any on behalf of the Church. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. All contracts for major services or expenditures should be reviewed by a competent attorney where considered necessary.

### **Section 13.5 Helping Hands Ministry.**

The Helping Hands Ministry shall establish procedures to receive and disburse by check all funds allocated to them. It shall be the duty of this ministry to determine needs of the congregants or others in the community as they arise. The Helping Hands Ministry shall consist of least three (3) members. Helping Hands shall examine the need(s) of the recipients of these designated funds under an approved policy. They may also receive and distribute clothes, food, household furnishings, and other items deemed necessary to distribute accordingly.

### **Section 13.6 Church Corporation holds Title to Real or Personal Property.**

All property, whether real or personal, shall be acquired, owned, held, administered, managed, encumbered, leased and sold by the Church Corporation and in the name of the Church Corporation, and in regard to real and personal property the Church Corporation shall have all the general powers as set forth in Section 13.1-826 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, and all the aforesaid general powers are incorporated herein by reference.

**ARTICLE XIV. AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS.**

The Bylaws may be amended by an affirmation of majority vote of the active Members present and voting, provided that amendments are offered in writing to the Members at least four (4) weeks prior to a Members vote.

I, the undersigned Secretary for Purcellville Baptist Church, do hereby certify that the above Constitution and Bylaws were adopted on \_\_\_\_\_ by the Members at a duly called meeting and that this Constitution and Bylaws are current and in operation as of that date.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Church Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date