

Lighthouse Baptist Church
of
Columbus, GA

Constitution & By-Laws
(including Statement of Faith)

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CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS
of the
Lighthouse Baptist Church of Columbus, Georgia (USA)

PREAMBLE

By the Grace of God, our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ, and our faith in Him, we the members of the Lighthouse Baptist Church, being completely dependent on the guidance and direction of the authority of the Scriptures, in order to establish rules and procedures with which to administer this autonomous local New Testament Church do ordain and establish the following Constitution and By-Laws to which we voluntarily submit ourselves. We do so submit in order that the Lord's work may be carried out decently and in order (cf. I Cor. 14:40).

ARTICLE I (Name & Purpose)

Section 1: The name of this local church corporation shall be Lighthouse Baptist Church of Columbus, Georgia.

Section 2: This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building, maintaining and operating of churches, schools, chapels, radio stations, televisions stations, rescue missions, print shops, day-care centers, camps, and nursing homes.

The church's purpose shall also include the fulfilling of the Great Commission issued by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20. This includes winning the lost to Jesus and building disciples for Jesus. This purpose shall be carried out by: (1) grounding Christians in the Word, (2) teaching Christians to pray, (3) encouraging Christians to fellowship, (4) exhorting Christians to evangelize, and (5) training Christians to become fully devoted disciples of Christ. To assist in carrying out this purpose, this church shall also license and ordain men to the Gospel ministry.

ARTICLE II (Statement of Faith)

Section 1: The Bible - We believe the Bible, consisting of sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the verbally inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God. The Bible is God-breathed (II Tim. 3:16), and is to be the final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

We further believe that God has preserved His Word through the manuscripts of the Textus Receptus and Masoretic texts. For English-speaking people, these texts are reflected in the King James Version (KJV). Therefore, the King James Version of the Bible shall be the official translation used by this church and its ministries (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:20-21).

Section 2: The Godhead - We believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit eternally existing as three persons, and yet are still One. These are co-eternal in being, co-

identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and have the same attributes and perfections (Gen. 1:26; Deut. 6:4; Isa 6:3).

Section 3: *The Person and Work of Jesus Christ* - We believe that the Lord Jesus, the eternal and only begotten Son of God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, became man, without ceasing to be God (Phil. 2:5-8). Jesus Christ is full deity because He is God, and He became fully human as a man. He did this in order that He might reveal God in His righteousness, and redeem man in his sinfulness (John 1:1; 14:9; Isa. 7:14; I John 4:14).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His literal death and shed blood on the cross as a representative, vicarious, and substitutionary sacrifice. Our justification is made sure by His literal physical, bodily resurrection from the dead (I Cor. 15:1-4).

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father (Heb. 12:2) where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Mediator, Advocate and Intercessor (I Tim. 2:5; I John 2:1; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25).

We believe in that "blessed hope," which is the personal, imminent, pretribulational, premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones. We further believe in His subsequent return to earth with His saints, at the end of the tribulation period, to establish His millennial kingdom (I Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 19:11-20:6).

Section 4: *Salvation* - We believe all men are sinners (Rom. 3:10,23) and in need of the saving work provided by Jesus on the cross. This salvation is a free gift from God (Rom. 6:23), and is available to those who will believe (Rom. 10:9-13; John 1:12). Salvation is by grace alone through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). The conditions, which bring a person to the point of salvation, are repentance and faith (John 3:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Gal. 2:16). We further believe that justification by faith establishes an eternal relationship that can never be broken (Jn. 3:16, 36; 10:29).

Section 5: *The Church* - We believe the Church is the body and bride of Christ (Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:25-29). This body is a spiritual organism that is made up of born-again believers (Acts 2:47; I Cor. 12:13).

We believe the local church is autonomous (i.e. free from any external authority and control), and self-governing under the control of Jesus Christ, who purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

We believe the church has been commissioned to spread the Gospel throughout the world (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15).

The two ordinances of the church are the Lord's Supper and Baptism.

The two recognized positions of the church are those of Bishops and Deacons (Phil. 1:1). It is understood that the position of Bishop includes all the biblical terms that describe that position, which also include pastor, elder, shepherd and overseer. These terms all describe the ruling leadership of the church. For the purpose of this document it is understood that the

term “pastor” is included in the usage of the term “elders.” The senior pastor of the church serves as the “teaching elder,” “senior pastor,” or “the first among equals.” Therefore, the term “elders” will refer to the senior pastor and the elders as a whole. It is understood that the term “elders” includes the senior pastor.

Deacons are appointed to care for the temporal needs of the church ministry, as they assist the elders (cf. Acts 6:1-6). They are not to assume any ruling authority.

Section 6: *Satan* - We believe Satan is a real personality, the author of sin, and the direct cause of the fall; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he will be eternally punished along with the fallen angels in the Lake of Fire (Gen. 3:1; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:2,10).

Section 7: *Eternity* - We believe in the everlasting conscious blessedness of the saved in a literal heaven (Rev. 21-22), and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost in a literal hell (Rev. 19:11-15).

Section 8: *Separation* - We believe all Christians should live in a manner that does not bring reproach upon the Lord's name, and that separation from religious apostasy and sinful practices is commanded by God (Rom. 12:1-2; II Cor. 6:17; Rom. 16:17; I John 2:15-17).

Section 9: *Missions* - We believe it is the obligation of the saved to witness by life and by word the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Matt. 5:16; 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15; John 15:16).

This obligation is carried out, at home and abroad, by those who are believers. Thus, each believer is to be involved with the propagation of the gospel by actively being a witness, by actively engaging in biblical methods of spreading the gospel to the unreached, and by actively supporting those whom God has called to give their lives on the foreign locations of the field.

Section 10: *Creation* - We believe God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of the origin of the universe, earth and mankind (Genesis 1-2; Ex. 20:11).

Section 11: *Human Sexuality* –

1. We believe that God has commanded that no sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex (Gen. 2:24; 19:5,13; 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; I Cor. 5:1; 6:9; I Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4).
2. We further believe that God created people as “*male and female*” (Gen. 1:27), and any attempt to remove the distinction of the genders is unbiblical. Therefore, all forms of transsexuality and transgenderism are man's sinful rebellion against the plan and purpose of God.

3. We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of a man and a woman (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; I Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23).
4. No church official, elder, or pastor shall perform any wedding ceremony for anyone who does not conform to the above statement (point #3), and has not been an current active member of this church for the previous six months. No church property shall be used for any wedding ceremony that does not meet this qualification.
5. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (elders and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church as either elders or deacons (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; I Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12).

Section 12: Divorce and Remarriage - We believe that God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16a) and intends marriage to last until the spouse dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication (Matt. 5:32) or desertion by an unbelieving spouse (1 Cor. 7:15). If a divorce is according to biblical grounds, then remarriage is permitted (1 Cor. 7:27-28).

Section 13: Abortion - We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that teaches abortion of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable. If an abortion is medically required to save the life of the mother, it then becomes a decision for the mother and father (Job 3:16; Psalm 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 29:1,5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

ARTICLE III (Association)

Lighthouse Baptist Church is an autonomous New Testament church. As such, this church is not subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical body, convention, association, government or agency. We are autonomous and subject only to Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church. This church has the right to cooperate and associate with other biblical groups on a voluntary basis. All such associations with other groups or bodies shall be on the basis of their adherence to the fundamental doctrines and tenets of the faith. The Scriptures strictly forbid our association with any entity, body, or group that denies the fundamental doctrines (Rom. 16:17; Gal. 1:6-9; I Tim. 1:19-20). All associations and usage of materials shall be based upon the biblical standard. The Bible shall be the only standard for this church.

ARTICLE IV (Membership)

Section 1: Admission of Members -

- (a) Those persons, who have professed a saving faith in Christ, are recognized as being saved and part of the body of Christ. Such persons may unite with this church by having publicly declared their profession of faith and by following in believer's baptism by immersion, after their conversion.

- (b) Members from other churches of like faith and practice may be received into this membership by transferring their membership letter from their former church, based upon the granting church statement that said member is in good standing. In the event that such a letter cannot be obtained, due to loss of or unavailability of records, they may be received by statement of their salvation and that they have been baptized by immersion.
- (c) Members from another denomination may be received into this membership by statement of their saving faith in Christ and having been baptized by immersion after they were saved. If their former denomination placed any saving qualities upon their baptism, then they must be received by baptism after understanding that it has nothing to do with their salvation, but is a sign of obedience to Christ.
- (d) All prospective members are to read a copy of this Constitution and By-Laws, and be in agreement, prior to uniting with Lighthouse Baptist Church. This document will be reviewed, along with other membership expectations, in either a New Member's Class or Elder Interview prior to joining. Agreement thereto will be by written documentation.
- (e) Membership shall not be provided to anyone who is practicing of the sexual perversions listed under "Human Sexuality" of the *Statement of Faith* or practicing, as a manner of life, any other known sin.
- (f) Membership to this church shall not be denied on the basis of race or color.

Section 2: Discipline of Members -

- (a) It is vital to the testimony of this church and the glory of the Lord that the purity of the church be preserved and its unity and peace protected, for a divided house cannot stand (Matt. 12:25) and a sinful house is a reproach. With these ends in view, it shall be the duty of the elders to seek diligently to reclaim any member known to be living in disregard of his biblical and covenant obligations. It is specifically directed that the elders move with promptness in dealing with anyone who is obstructing the work or disturbing the peace of the church by slander, falsehood, gossip, conspiracy or other unfair and unchristian methods. It is recognized that a New Testament Church is governed by the directing of the Holy Spirit through the leadership of the elders as overseers (Acts 20:28) and shepherd (I Peter 5:1-3).
- (b) If a member is walking disorderly and in conflict with the above principles, or is involved in any known immorality, dishonesty, public scandal, or any violation of biblical principles or this Constitution and By-Laws, and such member cannot be restored through confession and correction of his sins, he shall be dealt with on the basis of Matthew 18:15-17; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 5:1-13; and II Corinthians 2:5-10. His case shall be brought before the church by recommendation of the elders. The elders will then present the evidence, declare the offender to be under church discipline and, if the offender refuses to repent and seek full restoration, the church shall follow the biblical admonition of withdrawal of fellowship.
- (c) Any member who has been placed on the inactive roll or removed from the membership roll by church discipline, as stated above, may be restored to full fellowship and membership status after satisfactory evidence has been shown concerning true repentance, confession, and

commitment to the church. If it is an inactive member, who wishes to become active again, they must demonstrate their commitment by faithfulness and giving before making request to become active again.

If a request is made, to the elders, to be reinstated as an active member by someone who has been disciplined by the church, the following guidelines must be used for their acceptance: Since the discipline was a matter of public knowledge before the church, then their request must demonstrate public knowledge of confession and commitment. This evidence must include a public confession to the church. This confession need not include any unnecessary details, but simply the fact that repentance to God has been made according to First John 1:9, and that they desire to be a cooperative servant of Christ within the church body. This person may then be received back into membership.

- (d) The elders shall regularly review the membership roll. Any able-bodied member that has shown no interest in the church by attendance and/or regular contributions for the previous three (3) months shall automatically be placed on the inactive membership roll. When this action shall be taken, the elders and deacons shall faithfully demonstrate efforts to reclaim this member have been taken. The Scriptures mandate that we are to try to restore the fallen brethren (Gal. 6:1-2).
- (e) No person on the inactive membership roll shall be entitled to vote, teach, hold office or any leadership position.
- (f) The elders, deacons and members shall make a sincere effort to spiritually reclaim those on the inactive roll. During the last quarter of each year the elders shall review the inactive members. If, after continued attempts to restore them, these members do not respond with commitment to Christ and His church, then after one year of inactive status they shall be dropped from membership. A permanent file of these former members shall be maintained for continued prayerful effort to reclaim them for the service of Christ and the church.
- (g) In the event of disputes between members, it is required that they be settled personally in accordance with Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-16 and 1Corinthians 6:1-8. To air these private disputes publicly or in a court of law is in direct violation of Scriptural principles. The elders shall have sole authority in the resolving of member conflicts.
- (h) Any and all church discipline shall be administered in obedient Christian love, and shall be for the purpose of restoration of the wayward member back into the fellowship of this local church.
- (i) All of the above guidelines shall also apply to charter members of this church also. Being a charter member shall not invoke any special privileges or honors.

Section 3: Membership Guidelines

- (a) Active Members — Shall be those who members who display their interest and welfare in the ministry of Lighthouse Baptist Church and the work of God. Such interest shall be

demonstrated by faithfulness in attendance, and faithfulness in the support of the ministry with tithes and offerings.

- (b) Inactive Members — Members who, without reasonable excuse, do not attend the regular services of the church for a period of three months will be considered inactive. Inactive members are not eligible to vote on church matters for a period of three months. Any inactive member will be restored to active membership status, upon resumption of faithful attendance and financial support of the ministry.

Section 4: Dismissal of Members -

- (a) Dismissal shall be by death, transfer of letter, exclusion, or upon request.
- (b) Any member in good standing may be granted a letter of transfer and recommendation to any church of like faith and practice upon request. This letter shall be requested by and sent to the church with whom the member wishes to unite. No letter will be given into the possession of an individual member.
- (c) A letter of transfer of membership may not be granted to any church that is not of the Baptist faith and practice. If a member desires to unite with such church, then their name will simply be dropped from the membership roll of this church.
- (d) No member who has behaved in such a manner as to be liable for church disciplinary action may be recommended to another church for membership under any circumstances until the matter has been satisfactorily resolved. This is in upholding the scriptural principle found in Matthew 5:23-24. If a disciplined member unites with another church by statement, then their name will simply be dropped from the membership roll of this church.

ARTICLE V (Government)

The government of this church is Theocratic, by which is meant that Jesus Christ is the Head (Col. 1:18). This church operates under the scriptural principle that Jesus Christ Himself has given the elders the authority to be the leaders, overseers and shepherds of the local church flock (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:1-3). The church belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ and is to be obedient to His leading.

ARTICLE VI (Officers and Leaders)

Section 1: Pastor (i.e., Senior Pastor, Teaching Pastor, or Lead Elder) -

- (a) If the pastor (senior elder) position of this church should be vacant, church shall then, without undue delay, secure another man of God to serve as pastor. The elders shall first consider a man, who has been trained and mentored for serving as pastor. If no such man is available from the church at that time, then the elders shall recommend a pulpit committee that shall consist of five spiritual men. This committee should be comprised of elders and other men from the church. The church shall then be informed of the identity of this committee in a called business meeting on the second Wednesday evening service following the vacancy of

the pulpit. Because the Bible states that the men are to be the leaders in the church (cf. I Cor. 14:34-35), this committee shall consist solely of men.

This committee shall consist of spiritually minded members who are active and in good standing with the church. After much prayer, they shall examine Godly men, and only one at a time. Upon securing a Godly man who meets the qualifications of First Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, the committee may then present this candidate to the church for their prayerful consideration and approval. The senior pastor can only be elected by a ninety percent vote of the membership present at a special called business meeting that has been announced in at least two regular services during the previous week.

- (b) The pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time.
- (c) The pastor shall meet the requirements found for pastors in First Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. If at any time the pastor is not able to fulfill these requirements, then he shall willingly resign from the pastorate of this church.
- (d) The pastor shall assume the leadership of this church, and serve as president of the corporation. This commitment to leadership shall carry with it the responsibility to lead without *"...being lords over God's heritage..."*(I Pet. 5:3). He is to serve as the lead elder (sometimes referred to as "the first among equals"). He shall labor in the Word, prayer and doctrine (Acts 6:4; I Tim. 5:17), and will be responsible to have the general oversight of the ministry and the everyday workings of the church (Acts 20:28). He shall feed the flock of God (I Pet. 5:2; Heb. 13:7). He, along with the remaining elders, will watch for the souls of the sheep and will give account to God for his life, ministry and people (Heb. 13:17). The pastor shall be free to choose the means and methods by which he exercises the ministry that God has given him.
- (e) Because the pastoral and office staff is an extension of the pastor, the elders shall have sole authority to hire and terminate all staff. To hire a new staff member, the Senior Pastor will serve as search committee.

The termination of any pastoral or office staff member will be the decision of the elders. In the event of termination, the staff member involved may be entitled to severance pay that is equal up to two month's compensation, at the discretion of the elders.

The senior pastor, in conjunction with the elders, shall set the compensation due any staff member (pastoral or non-pastoral).

- (f) The pastor shall secure a pulpit supply in his absence and the church will pay for the supply.
- (g) The pastor shall have sole authority as to who speaks in the pulpit of this church. This authority shall extend to weddings, funerals and/or any assembling of this church or its organizations.
- (h) The pastor may hold revivals and conferences of his choice so long as he maintains his spiritual obligation to his church, which is his primary duty.

- (i) The pastor shall be moderator of all business meetings.
- (j) The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of any and all committees that shall be formed. He shall have one vote on each committee.
- (k) The office of pastor may be vacated either by death, resignation, or upon the recommendation of the remaining elders and a three-quarters vote of members present at a special called business meeting. No vote for dismissal may be permitted without the recommendation of the elders. However, for the elders to make such a recommendation, the pastor must be guilty of either preaching false doctrine, or living an immoral life or some other matter of serious sin. In matters of testimony the pastor shall be dealt with as stated under section 2 of this document. However, because the office of pastor is subject to unwarranted attack and criticism, any accusation must be documented and witnessed by at least two people, according to First Timothy 5:19-20. In the event the pastor is dismissed, the church shall give the pastor not less than sixty days notice of dismissal. If, in the judgment of the elders, the conduct of the pastor justifies immediate termination of his ministry, the church may declare the pulpit vacant and will pay two months regular compensation, plus benefits, beyond that date. If the pastor resigns, he shall give the church a notice of at least thirty days, and not more than sixty days, if the church so requires.
- (l) The pastor shall be entitled to two (2) weeks vacation per year for the first five years. During years six through nine, he shall be entitled to three (3) weeks vacation. Each year, after nine, he shall have (4) weeks, as long as he does not neglect his duties as pastor. Vacation time shall accrue and be used as needed, and with the consensus of the elders. If the pastor has served in the ministry prior to coming to Lighthouse, his prior ministry shall be counted as accrued time for vacation earning.
- (m) The pastor shall be allowed time for attending Bible and/or fellowship conferences each year, in order to gain spiritual nourishment. However, the frequency of such attendance must not interfere with his primary duties to this church.
- (n) If the ministry demands permit it, the pastor shall be allotted time for a sabbatical, as needed, but no more than thirty days in a year, and may annually accrue to a maximum of sixty days. A sabbatical is a time for spiritual rest, rejuvenation, and refocusing of vision for the ministry. Therefore, during the sabbatical, the pastor should refrain from accepting any speaking or other ministry engagements. A properly used sabbatical will benefit both the pastor and the church. The remaining elders shall continue the work of the ministry during these times. If the elders believe the circumstances of the ministry are such that a sabbatical would harm the ministry, then it will be rescheduled for another time.

Section 2: Elders -

The word “*elder*,” πρεσβύτερος (presbuteros), generally speaks of one who has gained experience. This would agree with the requirement of not being a “*novice*” (I Tim. 3:6). The pastor should be able to counsel with wisdom that is gained from experience. While age is certainly a factor in determining an elder, it is also based upon spiritual aging or maturity.

The elders serve with the senior pastor as the ruling leadership of the church. They are to meet all qualifications as stated for the office of bishop (1 Tim. 3:1-7).

(a) Elder selections

Elders will be appointed by the Senior Pastor and any currently serving elders, as positions are needed, and shall be approved by the church.

(b) Elder functions.

Generally speaking, the term “elder” is the overarching title, which encompasses all of the functions. When Paul called for the gathering of “*the elders of the church*” at Ephesus (Acts 20:17), he exhorted them concerning the *feeding* and the *protecting* of the flock (Acts 20:28-31).

(c) Elder meetings.

The elders should meet at least on a monthly basis, for the sake of assessing the ministry needs and biblical matters. They should give themselves to prayer at each meeting.

(d) Elder tenure.

An elder will serve indefinitely, or until they are no longer desirous of serving, or they no longer meet the qualifications. If a situation should arise an elder may be removed from his position, for cause, by unanimous vote of the remaining elders.

Section 3: Staff-

- (a) Pastoral staff will serve under the pastor as an extension of his ministry and shall be directly responsible to the pastor as to their duties. Pastoral staff positions may become vacant by voluntary resignation of the staff member. A thirty-day notice is required if the pastor so requires. The position may also become vacant as described in Section 1, Item (e) above.

The pastoral staff shall be entitled to the same days off, vacations, conventions and conferences as described in Section 1, Items (l), and (m) above. (These are the same as the pastor's).

The pastoral staff may participate in revivals, conferences, or other meetings per year as long as they do not interfere with his primary obligation to this church. Such meetings must be cleared and planned with the pastor's approval.

- (b) Non-pastoral staff will also serve under the pastor's direction and shall be directly responsible to the pastor as to their duties. These positions will be filled as provided by Section 1, Item (e) above. Said staff shall be entitled to two (2) weeks vacation per year for the first five years. Each year, after five, he/she shall be entitled to three (3) weeks vacation. Days off during the week must first be approved by elders or pastor. If such staff member is terminated, they shall be entitled for up to thirty (30) days compensation, at the discretion of the elders.

Section 3: Deacons -

- (a) The deacons will also serve under the elders. These men will serve as assistants to the elders. They shall minister to the temporal and spiritual needs of the congregation as determined by the elders (Acts 6:1-4).
- (b) The number of deacons shall be according to the areas of need in the church so as to properly accommodate the membership without murmuring (Acts 6:1-4). There should always be at least a minimum of three. However, if enough qualified men are not available among the church membership, then the number may be fewer.
- (c) A deacon must meet the qualifications for deacon as stated in First Timothy 3:8-13. He must also be Spirit-filled (Acts 6:3). His life must set a high standard of separated Christian living (II Cor. 6:17; I Tim. 4:12). He must demonstrate commitment to God's church by being faithful in church attendance to all regularly scheduled services, and all other special church meetings unless providentially hindered (Heb. 10:25). He must be a faithful tither, bringing his tithes systematically to the church for the Lord's work (Mal. 3:10; I Cor. 16:2). He must follow Christ's example by having a compassion for the lost, and seek in his living and speech to win the lost for Jesus (Matt. 9:36; 28:19-20). He must support the doctrinal statements as described in Article II of this Constitution and By-Laws.
- (d) When necessary for adding a deacon, they shall be nominated by the church and appointed by the elders, in accordance with Acts 6:1-6. The elders will interview the nominated candidates as to their testimony and qualifications. The elders may make the judgment as to the qualifications of all nominees, in accordance with Acts 6:6. As soon as the appropriate number of qualified men has been secured, then all interviews will cease and they will be presented to the church as deacons.
- (e) Deaconship shall not be transferable. No one who transfers from another church shall be eligible to be nominated as a deacon until he has been faithfully committed to this church for at least one (1) year.
- (f) A deacon shall serve a regular term of one year, but may succeed himself indefinitely by recommendation of the elders.
- (g) No man shall be considered a deacon of this church unless he has been recommended by the elders and is currently serving as a part of the active deacon body.
- (h) Should a situation arise where enough qualified men cannot be found to fill the deacon body vacancies, then those positions shall remain vacant until such time as God supplies the qualified man, or men.
- (I) This church does not participate in the unscriptural practice of ordaining women as deacons.
- (j) The deacons will not hold authority over the elders, but will serve under their leadership. At the same time, the elders will not have the attitude of being lords over God's heritage (I Pet.

5:3). If at any time either an elder or deacon realizes that his life is not exemplary to the congregation, he should bring his life into compliance with Scripture and into harmony with the body. If he is unable to do this, he should then quietly resign his position. Should any deacon fail to demonstrate a Christian cooperative spirit and not be reconciled, then said deacon shall be disciplined as provided under ARTICLE IV, Section 2 of this Constitution and By-Laws. If any deacon is placed under church discipline, he shall be removed from his service as deacon and only restored upon unanimous agreement of the elders.

- (k) The elders may remove any deacon, teacher or officer for spiritual or moral reasons that would compromise the Word of God and hinder the ministry of the church.
- (l) The elders shall meet with the body of deacons as necessary to insure the needs of the ministry are being met. The pastor, or another selected elder, shall preside over these meetings, and the deacons shall not meet without an elder present. Deacons shall not call any meetings.
- (m) The deacons shall prepare and serve the Lord's Supper when scheduled.
- (n) The deacons shall assist the elders by visiting the sick and infirmed members of the church.

Section 4: Teachers and Officers -

- (a) The securing of qualified Sunday School teachers shall be the responsibility of the elders and staff, or those whom the elders shall appoint.
- (b) All leaders, teachers and officers shall be:
 - Sure of their salvation.
 - Members of the church.
 - Faithful in their attendance at all services.
 - Faithful in their Christian witness, so as to not bring reproach upon Christ and His church.
 - Faithful in their supporting the ministry with their tithes and offerings.
 - Faithful in participation of supporting the churches missions endeavors.
 - Faithful in their support of this church and its ministries.
 - Faithful in sharing the gospel as the Holy Spirit provides opportunities.
 - Faithful to attend the scheduled Teachers & Officers Meetings.
- (c) Willing to agree with the *Leadership Covenant*, on an annual basis, if presented.

Section 5: Trustees

- (a) The Trustees Committee shall consist of three members who shall hold office for a term of three years. The trustees shall be appointed by the elders.
- (b) It shall be the duty of the trustees to acquaint themselves with the laws of the state pertaining to churches and church property, and to see that the church faithfully complies therewith.

They shall exercise general oversight of all church property and make any repair recommendations to the elders.

- (c) The trustees are wholly subject to the will of the church regarding the church property.
- (d) The trustees shall be the representatives of the church in regard to signing all legal documents.
- (e) The trustees shall not sell or encumber the real estate or other property of the church unless authorized to do so by consensus of the elders. The elders then shall present it to the church for a vote. Such action a three-fourths vote of the active members present at a called business meeting of the church.

Section 6: Other Church Positions and Leadership

Other positions, such as clerk and treasurer, will be appointed responsibilities as needed. These positions will be filled or dismissed by the recommendation of the elders.

Section 7: Morality Policy

As stated in the *Statement of Faith*, we believe that God has commanded that no sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. Therefore, any employee of the church, or any person in spiritual leadership, who becomes involved in any of the aforementioned, or becomes pregnant, or causes pregnancy—outside of the marriage relationship, shall be terminated from employment or spiritual leadership (Gen. 2:24; 19:5,13; 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; I Cor. 5:1; 6:9; I Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4). Furthermore, no one who is homosexual, bisexual, transgendered or transsexual may be considered for employment or serving in leadership.

ARTICLE VII (Committees)

This church maintains two types of committees, which are Standing Committees and Special Committees. Special Committees are those which may be needed and recommended by the elders for a specific duty and shall exist for a definite period of time according to the need. These Special Committees may also be referred to as Adhoc Committees.

Standing committees are those that are needful and necessary to the decent and orderly work of the church. The members of these committees shall be recommended by the elders and approved by the church.

ARTICLE VIII (Meetings)

Section 1: Public Worship -

- (a) The church shall meet regularly each Lord's Day for services, as led by the senior pastor.
- (b) The church shall meet regularly each mid-week for prayer and worship, unless otherwise scheduled.
- (c) The church shall meet for any meetings or revivals as scheduled by the pastor.

Section 2: Business Meetings -

- (a) The official church year shall begin on January 1 and close on December 31 each year.
- (b) Business meetings of the church shall be held as needed and called by the elders. No other member may call a business meeting of the church.
- (c) Church votes shall be limited to the transactions involving major transactions of property or other real estate, and other items as deemed legally necessary by the elders. The day-to-day decisions concerning the operations of the church will be under the leadership of the elders. As necessary, the elders will also call for a meeting of the men of the church to discuss such matters.
- (d) All active members, who are in good standing and at least eighteen (18) years of age, are eligible to vote on church business matters, when votes are presented. No member will be considered in good standing, who is not faithful in attendance and supportive with their finances.
- (e) Since the Bible states that the leadership of the church is to be men, women are not permitted to make motions, or grant seconds in voting. However, each qualified lady may cast a vote as led by the Holy Spirit.
- (f) To conduct a business meeting a quorum must be present. A quorum shall consist of twenty percent of the eligible active members who are eighteen years of age or over.

ARTICLE IX (Church Organizations)

The organizations of this church shall be the Sunday School, youth and children organizations, and others as needed and approved by the elders. No subsidiary organization shall engage in any practice or hold any policy contrary to the general position of the church itself, and they shall operate under the leadership of the pastor.

Article X (Tax-Exempt Provisions)

Section 1: *Private Inurement* - No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article I, Section 2 hereof.

Section 2: *Political Involvement* - No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Section 3: *Racial Nondiscrimination* - The church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and, therefore, shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin.

Section 4: *Limitation of Activities* - Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws, the church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in Article I, Section 2.

Article XI (Designated Contributions)

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. In order to conform to current IRS regulations, all contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control of the elders. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article I, Section 2.

ARTICLE XII (General)

Section 1: Use Of The Church Property And Name –

- (a) Use of the property for other than regularly scheduled meetings and activities shall be in keeping with the nature and doctrine of this churches faith and goals. All non-regular activities must first be cleared with the church office in order to prevent scheduling conflicts.
- (b) No secret society will be permitted to hold meetings in the church.
- (c) The church name and its associated logos, domain names, advertising names, websites, and identifying entities are consider the legal property of Lighthouse Baptist Church of Columbus, Georgia. Thus, they shall not be used by anyone who has not properly secured authorization of use from the elders.

Section 2: Church Polity -

- (a) The church polity not treated herein shall be governed by the principles set forth in Robert's Rules of Orders, and Hiscox's, The New Directory for Baptist Churches.

Section 3: Monetary Principles -

- (a) Every member is encouraged to tithe (i.e. give at least 10% of their income) to the Lord. And all members are encouraged to give a freewill offering, above the tithe, to the Lord. The tithes, offerings and gifts of God's people are the biblical way to support the work of the church (Mal. 3:10; Acts 4:34-37; I Cor. 16:1-2).
- (b) No other means of raising monies for the church, than those described above, are acceptable. However, for different ministries of the church (youth, children, etc.) various approaches of raising donations may be accepted upon approval of the elders.

Section 4: Legal Provisions –

- (a) This church shall have the right to own, buy or sell tangible properties, both real and personal, in its own name and through properly elected officers, when authorized by vote of the church.
- (b) No profit shall ever accrue to the benefit of any individuals from the assets, holdings or other transactions in which this cooperation may become involved.
- (c) In the event of the dissolution of this cooperation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated by corporate vote prior to dissolution to such other nonprofit religious corporations as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the articles of faith adopted by this church, and in conformity with the requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Service Code of 1986, Section 501 (c)(3) (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the trustees shall determine.

Section 5: Amendments To This Constitution and By-Laws -

- (a) This constitution may be amended, altered or revised at a called business meeting by a three-fourths vote of the active members present and voting, provided such proposed changes shall have been submitted in writing at least one week prior to church vote.