

Cedar Grove Baptist Church Constitution and By-laws

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*For God's Glory
and Our Joy*

**CEDAR GROVE
BAPTIST CHURCH**

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Cedar Grove Baptist Church

Introduction

A church is a fellowship of believers who treasure Jesus Christ as Lord and are united by the common work of the Holy Spirit under the authority of God's Word, the Bible. Churches, like the individuals who form them, are always maturing. In this maturation process, churches often change forms of ministries, programs, and activities; yet, the Word of God, the faith of the believers, and the mission of the church never changes.

The following document—our Constitution and By-laws—is designed to help the church organize and govern its practice; in no way is this document to replace, compete with, or contradict the Bible. Indeed, this document is an attempt to live faithfully by the Scriptures which teach Christians to conduct matters in the church in an orderly fashion (1 Cor 14:40).

As much as we might wish simply to say that our church follows the Bible and nothing else, the truth of the matter is that the Bible does not give instructions on every matter of church governance. Scripture does not tell us how many members make up a quorum or how long church officers should serve without being re-elected. The Constitution and By-laws are designed to answer these types of questions and help us avoid unnecessary conflict and confusion. Please read through this document with a Bible in hand, looking up the Scripture verses and seeing not just how the Church is organized but why Christ has ordered it so.

Constitution

Preamble

We declare this constitution for the preservation and promotion of the Christian faith, and we establish it heartily to govern this church body in an orderly manner. This constitution seeks to preserve the liberties of each

member as purchased by Christ Himself, as well as direct this church body in its relationships to each other and to churches of like faith and practice.

I. **Name.** This body shall be known as Cedar Grove Baptist Church of Shepherdsville, Kentucky. The property and facilities owned by the church are located at 4900 Cedar Grove Rd., Shepherdsville, KY 40165.

II. **Purpose.** The purpose of this church body is to glorify the God revealed in the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible (Ephesians 3:21) by promoting the worship of Him (John 4:23-24), rejoicing and praying without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:16-17), edifying Christ's people (Ephesians 4:11-16), encouraging those persecuted (Hebrews 13:3), discipling unbelievers (Matthew 28:16-20), defending the faith delivered to the saints (Jude 3), and demonstrating the love of Christ to the watching world (John 13:34-35). Each of the tasks above must be accomplished by faith, trusting the Holy Spirit and biblical truth.

III. **Statement of Faith.** Cedar Grove Baptist Church, in voluntary association with other churches of the Southern Baptist Convention, adheres to the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*. In all matters of life, including all matters of faith and practice, the Holy Bible is the only authoritative, unerring guide.

IV. **Church Practice.** The authority of this church resides in its founder and living head, Jesus Christ, who speaks still with power by the Holy Spirit through the written word of the Holy Bible. All matters of church practice must be undertaken in submission to Jesus Christ, in accordance with the Holy Bible, and in step with the Holy Spirit.

BY-LAWS

Article 1. Membership

Section 1: General

Believing that Jesus Christ has called together this assembly of believers in this place to serve as His church, this body retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this congregation, subject to the Bible.

Section 2: Qualifications for Membership.

Any person may freely offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church body. Anyone offering himself must do so voluntarily, under no compulsion from any person whatsoever—whether parent, guardian, friend, foe, teacher, pastor, or staff—only convinced by the Holy Spirit of the truth of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible and of the necessity of remaining faithful to Christ and His church for life.

Any candidate under such compulsion of the Holy Spirit wishing to join with this church should meet the following conditions before being considered for membership. The candidate,

¶1. Should have made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ demonstrated by repentance from sin and the desire to follow Christ obediently (Acts 2:37-42);

¶2. Should be living a life transformed by the power of Christ (Galatians 2:20; Romans 12:1-2);

¶3. Should have followed the profession of faith with baptism by immersion (Matthew 28:18-20), or be willing to follow the profession of faith with such baptism into this church;

¶4. Should agree with the confession of faith and the constitution and by-laws of this church (1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:3,13);

¶5. Should express or have demonstrated a willingness to give whole-hearted support (including financial) to this church (2 Corinthians 8:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14);

¶6. Should submit joyfully to the authority of the church and its overseers (Hebrews 13:17; Matthew 18:15-18; Acts 5:13-14);

¶7. Should have acknowledged all past church memberships and demonstrated satisfactorily that there is no pending disciplinary problems at any other church (1 Corinthians 5:11-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8).

Section 3: Candidates and Election

Once a candidate has presented himself for membership, he will be interviewed by the overseers, who will explain the meaning of church membership, the requirements of church members, and the basic doctrines held sacred by the church. Once the overseers are comfortable with the candidate's suitability for church membership, they will present him to the whole congregation at the regular monthly members' meeting. The candidate must be approved by a three-fourths (¾) vote of the members present at the meeting.

Section 4: Candidates and Dissension

Prior to the congregational vote, if there is any dissent voiced by the members concerning a candidate's ability to meet the above listed conditions, the overseers will investigate the nature of the dissent, seek clarification and reconciliation where appropriate, and make a recommendation as to the proper course of action to the church body no later than 30 days after the dissent. Election of the candidate into membership will be on hold while the investigation takes place.

Section 5: Candidates and Faithcare Membership.

¶1. **Temporary Residents.** Students and others residing in the area temporarily who are members in good standing of a biblical church may apply for Faithcare membership. Qualifications for membership are the same as those listed for regular membership, with the understanding that the candidate remains a member of his or her home church. A letter of commendation will be sought from the candidate's home church. Because membership is retained at the original church, the Faithcare member should not vote at Cedar Grove.

¶2. **Age-Appropriate Privileges.** Also available for Faithcare membership are young people (below the age of 16) demonstrating the desire and qualifications for membership as listed in Article I, Section 2, of this document. In this instance, these Faithcare members are restricted from certain privileges of membership (suffrage, some facility usage, some ministry positions) until the more appropriate age of 16. After the age of 16, the overseers will meet with the Faithcare members prior to their being presented for an affirmation vote at a regular members' meeting so that both parties are comfortable with full membership.

Section 6: Candidates, Membership, and Responsibility

According to the Scriptures, all members are equal in their position in Christ but differ greatly in their gifts and areas of service. All members are expected to employ their talents and gifts to the glory of Christ and the good of His church (1 Corinthians 12:4-31). Yet, certain responsibilities are basic to all believers. Those who are filled with the Holy Spirit will gladly meet the following expectations:

¶1. **Corporate Responsibilities**

a. **Attendance at Regular Meetings.** Members should freely attend all scheduled meetings of the church unless providentially hindered (Hebrews 10:24-25).

b. **Commitment to Church Standards.** Members should conform and contribute to the doctrinal purity and unity of the church (Ephesians 4:1-8). Members would benefit in this regard by reading through this document annually to stay attuned to our commonly held doctrine and practice.

c. **Financial Support.** Members are expected to support financially the work of the church through systematic and generous giving (Malachi 3:8-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9).

d. **Edification of the Church.** Each individual member of the church is expected to give his or her life to the greater well being of the church as a whole (John 13:35; 15:13; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Members should seek to cultivate relationships with one another and maintain mutual love and honesty so that they may better be able to pray for one another (Ephesians 6:18), as well as love, comfort, encourage, and help one another whenever needs arise (Hebrews 3:12-13; 10:24-25).

e. **Unity of the Church.** Each member has an obligation to strive for unity within the body. As Paul writes, *Be completely humble and gentle: be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace* (Ephesians 4:2-3). At minimum, this means forgiving one another and talking to one another openly and honestly, rather than talking about one another or allowing disagreements to fester into disunity.

f. **Reputation of the Church.** Each member is expected to act in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which means maintaining high moral standards, as well as making sure that gossip, back-biting, and other forms of division are not tolerated within the body. Scripture teaches the believer to make sure his speech is always with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt (Colossians 4:5-6).

g. **Authority of Leadership.** In a culture defined by self-confidence and arrogant assertions, Christians are expected to be models of glad

submission, walking worthy of the Lord so that His excellence is displayed through us (Colossians 1:10; 1 Peter 2:9). Members are expected to obey their leaders and imitate their faith as leaders obey and imitate Christ Himself (1 Corinthians 11:1; Hebrews 13:7), receiving their instruction, counsel, and admonitions with a humble and teachable spirit (Acts 17:11; James 1:19-21).

¶2. Personal Responsibilities

a. **Personal Devotion.** For the good of his own soul and for the strength of Christ's church, each member should practice spiritual disciplines that strengthen faith, including regular daily prayer and intake of the Word (Bible reading, devotions, sermons, book studies, or discipleship materials).

b. **Family Devotion.** For the good of themselves and the greater good of society, members should be faithful to the teachings of Scripture with regard to family life and government of the home. Husbands should serve as leaders of the home, leading their wives with loving regard and training their children in the ways of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-6:4).

c. **Personal Evangelism.** Members should pray and labor for the salvation of all peoples in accordance with Christ's command and for an increase of their joy (1 John 1:4, Romans 1:16-17, Revelation 5:9). This evangelism includes living consistently in obedience to Christ's commands, as well as speaking the gospel message of the New Testament (1 John 2:10).

d. **Christian Sanctification.** Christians have been set free from the bondage of sin and called to an abundant life that is distinct from the world (Titus 2:11-14); therefore, we must pursue our further sanctification in Christ (Hebrews 12:14). This sanctification sets us apart individually as believers and collectively as the church.

Section 7: Candidates, Membership, and Privileges

The highest privilege a human could have is the privilege of belonging to the body of Christ. *See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God, and such we are. For this reason, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him (1 John 3:1).* Many are the privileges of those in Christ. Here are a few listed in relation to the functioning of His church.

¶1. **Privilege of Suffrage.** Once approved, each member gains the right to vote in all elections of the church body, including the right to participate in all discussions of church business in the spirit of unity through the bonds of peace.

¶2. **Privilege of Leadership.** Each member gains the privilege of serving in elective offices of the church. All elections must adhere to the provisions of this document, in accordance with the provisions stated in the Bible where applicable.

¶3. **Privilege of Intimate Fellowship.** Each member gains the privilege of fellowship with the other members of the congregation in a way of commitment that non-members can never have. Members of a church body share in a deep intimacy known to no other people in the world (Galatians 6:10, 1 Timothy 4:10). Each member gains the privilege of having brothers and sisters who will encourage and admonish in love so that joy may increase.

¶4. **Privilege of the Ordinances.** All members participate fully and freely in the celebration of our Lord's Supper and in sharing the joy of baptism. Baptism is an ordinance reserved only for members; only those being received into membership of the church shall be eligible for baptism.

¶5. **Privilege of Facilities.** Each member is granted the use of facilities either free or at a reduced rate from that charged to non-members, as it

is expected that members are the ones whose contributions pay for the facilities.

¶6. **Privilege of Ministry.** Each member gains the opportunity to flourish in the exercising of his spiritual gifts. According to Scripture God has gifted true Christians for service in the church, as **1 Cor 12:7** says, *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

¶7. **Privilege of Oversight.** Members have access to their overseers who will lead them in the way of Christ, providing them with instruction, correction, and wise biblical counsel (see article VI). In addition, members also have deacons looking after them to provide service as needed.

¶8. **Privilege of Participation.** Each member gains the privilege of uniting with other Christians locally and around the world in the cause of the Great Commission—a work that demonstrates the glory of God throughout the world and which can be fully enjoyed and appreciated only in the context of Christian fellowship. Members are a part of the global body of Christ and the eternal purposes of God.

¶9. **Privilege of Prayer Support.** Members can expect that they will have brothers and sisters in Christ who are lifting them up in prayer and supporting them in their faith through these prayers (2 Corinthians 1:8-11).

Section 8: Members and Termination

Membership in Cedar Grove Baptist Church may be terminated in one of 4 ways, as outlined below:

¶1. **Death.** Death automatically terminates membership.

¶2. **Commitment to Another Body.** Joining or committing to another church (Baptist, other denomination, or other faith) terminates membership at Cedar Grove Baptist Church.

¶3. **Transfer.** Request to transfer to another Baptist church will terminate membership in Cedar Grove Baptist Church upon the granting of church letter. If disciplinary action is pending on the person making such request, no letter of transfer will be granted.

¶4. **Discipline.** Disciplinary action of this church may require a member's privileges of membership be revoked.

Section 9: Members and Discipline

The goal of all discipline, of course, is the glory of Jesus Christ through the holiness of His Bride, the Church (1 Corinthians 5:6). We seek foremost in our discipline to demonstrate a love to Jesus Christ. Consistent with this love to Christ is a love to those who are under the discipline of the Church. God our Father promises to discipline those whom He loves (Hebrews 12:6). Scripture is clear that this discipline comes primarily through the church (1 Corinthians 5:11-13). This discipline is for the purpose of greater devotion to Christ. Thus, the best discipline and greatest love leads to restoration in the Church.

It shall be the practice of this church—and each individual member of it—to encourage one another in the faith and build one another up in love. Part of this building up in love includes being honest with one another about disagreements. Each individual member has the responsibility in love to confront a brother or sister about known sinful matters, conflicts, or disagreements that arise. This simple step will stop most conflicts from becoming problems in the church. Jesus Himself teaches this procedure: *If you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first, be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.* In other words, we each understand that our worship is affected by our relationships with others in the church.

Beyond the person to person reconciliation, this church is committed to further reconciliation and purity in accordance with the teachings of Christ in Matthew 18:15-20. Christ teaches that we should first go and seek reconciliation. If there is no reconciliation, the offended party should contact two witnesses (both members of the church, preferably one being an overseer) and seek further reconciliation.

If, after this second encounter, there still is no reconciliation, the matter should be presented to the overseers, who will attempt to mediate and bring satisfactory, biblical closure to the matter. If the matter still is not resolved, it must go before the church body at a regular scheduled members' meeting. The Senior Pastor must present the matter, along with a proposed plan of action which he and other overseers have developed, in order to bring about reconciliation and bring glory to Jesus Christ.

If the church body determines to exclude a member, the church must vote to exclude by a 2/3 majority vote of the members present at the meeting. In essence, the church never excludes anyone; rather, the church acknowledges that the offending party, by his actions or inactions, has separated himself from the body, and that, by his failure to comply with the church's requests, he has shown that he has no desire to remain in Christ's fellowship. In other words, the church affirms by vote that he has excluded himself from fellowship. Thus, fellowship can be restored only when he changes his mind and demonstrates desire to be in genuine fellowship with Christ's church.

Section 10: Members and Restoration

Restoration is possible only after the excluded member seeks reconciliation to the church body through a humble repentance and a sincere desire to obey the Bible, follow the leadership of the overseers, and live in faithful fellowship with the church body.

Restoration will occur after the excluded member has satisfactorily met the terms of reconciliation previously recommended by the overseers. The overseers will determine when the terms have been met. The overseers will

present the excluded member to the church body at a regular members' meeting. The church body must vote to restore the excluded member by a 2/3 majority vote of those present at the members' meeting. If the vote passes, the member is fully restored to membership. Members will each extend a hand of fellowship to the restored member.

Article II. Leadership & Governance

Section I: General

According to Scripture, the congregation—under the authority of Jesus Christ and the guidelines of the Bible—is its own authority so long as it remains faithful to the Bible. Recognizing this, the Bible authorizes the existence of two offices: overseer and deacon. Overseers, in accordance with Scripture and the will of the congregation, provide broad oversight of the church and its ministries. Deacons provide structural support and execution of ministry. In addition to these offices, the church may, as it deems wise, create other offices in order to be more effective (such as clerk, treasurer, and trustees) or to comply with applicable laws. However, no office or staff shall undermine the biblical offices of overseer or deacon.

Any elected officer of the church, any paid staff of the church, any teacher of the church, and any other occupying either a paid staff position or an unpaid office of leadership must be a member of Cedar Grove Baptist Church in good standing. Volunteers who wish to help may do so as long as members are present. When working with children, volunteers must meet all requirements established by the children's ministry and the overseers.

Section 2: Office of Overseer

Cedar Grove Baptist Church shall call, as it deems necessary, certain men to serve as overseers of this local congregation. Scripture uses a variety of language to speak of the office of overseer in the local church—*pastor*, *bishop*, *overseer*. Most commonly, the position is referred to as *elder*. Each local congregation in the New Testament seems to have had several elders (or overseers) to lead the congregation (see Acts 14:23).

Therefore, in an effort to be boldly biblical, we gladly entrust the care of the church to the overseers whom God directs to Cedar Grove Baptist Church. Each overseer must meet the qualifications outlined in **1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9**. Additionally, one overseer shall be elected to serve as the Senior Pastor of the church body. The Senior Pastor must be viewed by the church body as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching God's Word.

¶1. Qualifications of the Overseers

- a. **Character.** The overseers must be male and must meet all requirements of Scripture (see 1 Tim 3:1-8 and Titus 1:5-9). The church must see the visible effects of the Holy Spirit at work in the overseer's life.
- b. **Doctrine.** The overseers must adhere to sound biblical doctrine as outlined in *BFAA 2000* and must hold dearly to the Reformation doctrines of salvation by grace alone through faith in Christ alone.
- c. **Desire.** The overseers must have a strong internal desire to lay down their lives for the good of the church; this means they will sense an internal call from Christ and be gifted by the Holy Spirit to serve and teach the church.
- d. **Discipline.** The overseers must order their lives and manage their families according to the Bible. As Scripture teaches, if a man cannot manage his own family, how could he possibly manage the church of Christ? (1 Timothy 3:5). Managing his household includes modeling genuine faith and being a loving husband and father.
- e. **Authority.** Though obvious, it must be emphasized that the overseers hold the Bible to be authoritative in all matters; inerrant, infallible, and sufficient for every good work God requires of humankind in general and the church in particular.

f. **Wisdom.** The overseers must possess a Godly wisdom which is seasoned through their having applied biblical instructions to their lives. They must be able to govern the flock of Christ with gentle—yet decisive—care, maintaining focus on the biblical priorities of sound doctrine and the spread of Christ's glory to all peoples.

g. **Knowledge.** The overseers must each possess a gift of biblical knowledge accompanied by the ability to teach.

h. **Hospitality.** The overseers must have open lives and open homes so that the body is confident there are no hidden sinful lifestyles and also so that the biblical mandate to be hospitable might be honored (1 Timothy 3:2).

i. **Ability.** The overseers must have the physical strength which the position requires in order to carry out their responsibilities properly.

j. **Administration.** The overseers must possess a sufficient knowledge of business affairs in order to manage well the fiscal aspects of the work of the church, as it is a significant part of the overseer ministry to manage the church budget and finances. In November of each year, the budget will be presented and voted upon so that the new budget can take effect by January of the following year.

¶2. Duties of the Overseers

a. **Doctrinal Purity.** The overseers are responsible for the spiritual well-being of the church of Jesus Christ. Primarily, this responsibility calls for sound doctrine and clear application of biblical theology (2 Timothy 4:3). When error threatens the church, overseers must be able to refute it, correct it, and admonish those holding or teaching it in accordance with biblical directives (Titus 1:9, 11; 2 Timothy 2:16-17; 2 Timothy 2:24-26).

b. **Word Ministry.** The overseers are responsible for directing all Word focused ministries of the church, including preaching, worship,

teaching, counseling, discipleship, and education. Word ministries are always to be designed in consideration of completing the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

c. **Church Integrity.** The overseers are responsible for interviewing all candidates for membership, recommending discipleship programs, and assimilating candidates into membership and service, recognizing that each member of the body has significant contributions to make for the good of Christ's church.

d. **Church Unity.** The overseers are responsible for maintaining the unity of the fellowship by overseeing matters of conflict and bringing about biblical reconciliation. Overseers are responsible for facilitating restoration with members who have been excluded.

e. **Staff Supervision.** The overseers are responsible for supervising all staff and paid employees of the church.

f. **Worship Fidelity.** The overseers shall be responsible for conducting and planning all worship services so that Christ is exalted, sound doctrine affirmed, the Church edified, and the gospel extended.

g. **Persecution Priority.** The overseers should coordinate and promote work on behalf of the persecuted and suffering church around the world in order to establish the local church in its proper global context and glorify Christ (Hebrews 13:3).

h. **Local Ministry.** The overseers are required to live and minister within a reasonable distance of the Cedar Grove Baptist Church facilities in order to be available to meet the needs of the congregation.

i. **Vision Guidance.** The overseers are expected to offer insight and direction to all committees, teams, organizations, and ministries of the church so that we move forward as a body, united in Spirit, intent on one purpose (Philippians 2:2). The overseers should supervise all

ministries, budgeting, and expenditures in order to ensure the church fulfills its duty to bring glory to Christ. To accomplish these duties efficiently, overseers may form work teams and supervise work groups from the body at large, making use of the various gifts with which the Spirit of Christ has blessed the body.

j. **Overseer Tenure.** Overseers, once elected by the congregation, are to serve as overseers for life, pending the on-going affirmation of the church body. The church body will conduct an affirmation vote every four (4) years, affirming each overseer in his position. Overseers may be excluded from the office if situations arise which disqualify them biblically (see 1 Timothy 5:19). In such cases, the overseer team must vote by at least $\frac{3}{4}$ majority to exclude the member, and the church must affirm this decision by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority and rebuke the man publicly so others will take warning (1 Timothy 5:20). Also, overseers may appeal to the overseer team for a leave of absence for personal reasons.

§3. Privileges of the Overseers

a. **Double Honor.** Overseers who rule well and pay close attention to their doctrine, preaching, and conduct are worthy of double honor (1 Timothy 5:17). This honor always includes reverence and respect and may include remuneration as the church deems appropriate. Recommendations for salaries and salary increases should originate from the original committee which called the Senior Pastor, or, in the case of other paid staff, the Senior Pastor and an appropriate committee comprised of at least 2 laypersons. Of course, all salaries and increases must be approved by the church body at a regular members' meeting.

b. **Office Services.** Overseers are allowed to use office space, office supplies, and office equipment (copiers, printers, telephones, etc.) as necessary in order to fulfill their obligations to the church body in a timely and efficient manner. Of course, overseers are responsible to pay for personal use items themselves (personal copies, calls, etc).

c. **Public Recognition.** Overseers are allowed to speak on behalf of Cedar Grove Baptist Church and the gospel of Jesus Christ to other churches, schools, and organizations as deemed appropriate by the overseer team.

d. **Study Courses.** Overseers are allowed to take courses or teach courses in order to deepen their knowledge of the Word and increase the kingdom of Christ. All plans for coursework or teaching assignments must first be presented and approved by the overseer team. In some cases, as the budget allows, the church will supplement costs for study.

e. **Convention Expenses.** Overseers are encouraged to attend the Southern Baptist Convention and other significant conventions as deemed appropriate by the overseer team. Money for such conferences may be available in the budget. Of course, all convention attendance is secondary to the work of the ministry at Cedar Grove; attendance at such meetings should supplement the work at Cedar Grove, never compromise it.

f. **Joyful Obedience.** Perhaps most important of all, overseers are worthy of obedience. They receive their highest honor when the children of God feed upon their teaching, take it to heart, and follow in loving obedience. *Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you* (Hebrews 13:17; see also 3 John 4).

Section 3: Office of Deacon

Deacons are Spirit-gifted servants of the church who are charged with the responsibility of supervising all service ministries of the church, thereby aiding the overseers and the church in seeing the Word of Christ spread. This church recognizes the biblical possibility of both deacons and deaconesses (1 Timothy 3:11; Romans 16:1). For the sake of convenience and to avoid cumbersome word constructions ("deacons/deaconesses"); this

document understands *deacon* to include the possibility of *deaconess* as well. Likewise, *deacons* will suffice for *deaconesses*.

¶1. Deacon Qualifications

a. **Biblical Requirements.** Deacons must meet the requirements for the position outlined in 1 Tim 3:8-15 and Acts 6:1-7.

b. **Biblical Conviction.** The deacons must adhere to sound biblical doctrine as outlined in BFAM 2000 and must hold dearly to the doctrines of salvation by grace alone through faith in Christ alone.

c. **Biblical Authority.** Deacons must hold to the Bible as authoritative, inerrant, infallible, and sufficient for every good work.

d. **Humble Obedience.** Deacons must order their lives by the pattern of Christ found in the Scripture, with a noticeable willingness to serve.

e. **Spiritual Desire.** Deacons must sense internally of the Holy Spirit that they are called and gifted to serve as deacons to the church. This internal call is noticeable by a pattern of humble service in the lifestyle of the deacon.

¶2. Deacon Responsibilities

a. **Service Supervision.** Deacons are responsible for supervising the on-going service ministries of the church. In seeking to fulfill these responsibilities, deacons have the authority to form and supervise various committees and work teams. These teams should be formed in conjunction with the overseers to ensure the most efficient use of physical and human resources.

b. **Event Security.** Deacons organize traffic control, security, and convenience measures before, during, and after all regular and special church-wide events. This includes, but is not limited to, supervising ushers and greeters for all services.

c. **Facility Upkeep.** Deacons supervise the maintenance and general upkeep of the Cedar Grove Baptist Church facilities, including scheduling work days in consultation with the overseers.

d. **Evangelism Participation.** Deacons, in conjunction with the overseers, participate and often administer outreach and evangelism efforts for the church.

e. **Benevolence Ministry.** Deacons supervise ministries to women, widows, widowers, orphans and others in the culture or in the church with great needs.

f. **Fiscal Administration.** Deacons must budget annually for all expected expenditures relating to service ministries, facility upkeep, benevolence ministries, evangelistic efforts, and security measures. The budget should be proposed and approved by the deacon body before submitting it to the overseers.

g. **Deacon Tenure.** Deacons, once elected by the congregation, are to serve as deacons for life, pending the on-going affirmation of the church body. The church body will conduct an affirmation of the four (4) years, affirming each deacon in the position. Deacons may be excluded from the office if situations arise which disqualify them biblically. In such cases, the overseer team will be notified and will work with the deacon body to handle the matter biblically and in a way that strengthens the church. The overseers must vote by at least $\frac{3}{4}$ majority to exclude the deacon, and the church must affirm this decision by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority. Deacons may also appeal to the deacon team for a leave of absence for personal reasons.

§3. Deacon Privileges

a. **Excellent Standing.** Deacons who serve well gain an excellent standing in the church and great assurance in their own faith in Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 3:13).

b. **Supervisory Experience.** Deacons are charged with the responsibility to supervise service ministries, thus ensuring they will have opportunity to supervise work projects and coordinate the efforts of volunteers for various services provided by Cedar Grove Baptist Church.

c. **Ministry Support.** Deacons are allowed to use office space, office supplies, and office equipment (copiers, printers, telephones, etc) as necessary in order to fulfill their obligations to the church body in a timely and efficient manner. Any equipment or items used for personal reasons must be reimbursed to the church by the deacon.

d. **Appropriate Training.** Deacons, because they are charged with the upkeep of facilities and equipment, will be provided all training necessary for the carrying out of their tasks. As the funds allow, the church will pay training related expenses.

Section 4: Other Office and Staff Requirements.

Additional staff may be hired as deemed necessary by the overseer team. Upon determination that additional staff should be hired, the overseer team will submit a proposal to the church body at a regular scheduled members' meeting, complete with details concerning responsibilities and remuneration of the new personnel. The church members present at the members' meeting must approve of the plan by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority.

Any additional staff must be mature Christians with no pending disciplinary actions against them in order to serve on staff. Staff members are expected to agree with and live by the stipulations of this constitution, these by-laws, the confession of faith, and, most important of all, the teachings of the Holy Bible.

At the time of the writing of these by-laws, the church body recognizes the following officers with the following responsibilities:

¶1. **Overseers**—Refer to Article II, Section 2, for details of this office.

¶2. **Senior Pastor**—The Senior Pastor shall be set apart from the overseer body to serve as the lead preacher and teacher within the church. In this capacity, the Sr. Pastor should ensure the church as a whole—including both the overseers and the deacon body—maintains its focus on Christ through the biblical priorities of doctrine, holiness, evangelism, and unity with saints suffering persecution. The Sr. Pastor will preside over the Lord's Supper and all hearings concerning discipline or conflict resolution.

¶3. **Deacons**—Refer to Article II, Section 3, for details of this office.

¶4. **Trustees**—For the purpose of satisfying the requirements of the state of Kentucky, the church shall elect five trustees to represent the corporation (church) in the execution of corporate and legal documents. Trustees will be elected or affirmed at the annual meeting and serve for life, subject to a vote of affirmation from the church body every four years. Trustees may request a leave of absence from their tenure for personal reasons. They may be replaced in the event that their serving in the position proves not to be in the best interests of the body.

The trustees shall perform legal and business transactions as are specifically designated to them by the laws of the State. They shall act only with the approval of the overseers and, where required by law or our own governing documents, with the consent of the members at a regular or special members' meeting.

¶5. **Clerk**—The clerk is responsible to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings, preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and render reports as requested by the church body, the overseers, or the deacons.

¶6. **Treasurer**—The treasurer (not an overseer or paid staff member) shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in appropriate banks, institutions, or depositories as directed

by the church body. The treasurer shall ensure that accurate accounting of receipts and expenditures is kept in books belonging to the church. The treasurer shall ensure that adequate controls are in place to secure the safe handling of church funds. The treasurer shall provide and present financial reports to the overseers and the church body at members meetings and upon request. The treasurer should be bonded.

Article III. Church Ordinances

Section 1: Baptism

In accordance with the teaching of the New Testament, this church shall receive into baptism any person whom we believe to have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit upon his or her professed desire to live as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ under the following conditions:

¶1. **Immersion.** Baptism shall be by immersion in water after a valid profession of faith. Overseers should be confident that those desiring baptism are, indeed, born-again and expecting to live in faithful devotion to Christ Jesus.

¶2. **Authorization.** Baptism shall be conducted by a pastor or overseer whom the church authorizes. A deacon and/or his wife shall coordinate the preparation, assistance, and clean-up for baptisms.

¶3. **Administration.** Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church. Testimony from the baptismal candidate and others involved is desirable.

Section 2: The Lord's Supper

The church shall remember the Lord's death and celebrate His expected return through its observance of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper

should be celebrated no less than quarterly, normally on the first Sunday of the month, unless otherwise scheduled by the overseers. The overseers may, if they deem it wise for the church body, hold other celebrations of the Lord's Supper throughout the year (Easter, New Years, etc.).

The Lord's Supper shall be administered by the Senior Pastor and the deacons. The deacons shall be responsible for the physical preparations and clean-up of the Lord's Supper. Upon the absence of the Senior Pastor, the overseers shall appoint a fellow overseer to administer the supper.

Article IV. Elections

Section I: Principles of Elections

¶1. **General.** Elections of all officers and leaders in the church should be preceded by much prayer, individually and corporately. All voting members are eligible to submit nominations to the overseers for the various church offices and positions. All nominations for church offices will be treated with grace and honesty, with the goal of Christ's glory and the good of His church in view.

The election of officers and leaders will be held each year at the annual members' meeting. Approximately sixty (60) days prior to the scheduled date of the annual meeting, the overseers will publish offices and positions which need to be filled. Members should then nominate themselves or other members as they deem appropriate.

At least thirty (30) days before the scheduled date of the annual meeting, the names of the nominees will be published to the congregation as a whole for consideration. Anyone concerned about the suitability of a candidate should speak with that candidate, voice the concerns, and attempt to resolve them satisfactorily. If the person remains a candidate and the concerns are not settled, then the matter should be brought to the overseers. The overseers must reconcile the matter for the good of the church.

Elections to fill offices or positions of need that occur during the year may be held at any members' meeting or any duly called special meeting. Again, the overseers will publish the information in advance of the meeting.

Elections for church offices and leadership positions require a 2/3 majority (66%) of members present at the regular, annual, or special called members' meeting.

¶2. **Paid Staff.** The overseers will make sure arrangements are made to give the church body adequate time and opportunity to assess the suitability of candidates to fill the positions. The church body should approve the applicant with a 3/4 majority vote.

¶3. **Paid Overseers.** In selecting paid overseers (as with the Senior Pastor), the church body must have sufficient time and opportunity to see that the candidate is gifted in preaching, teaching, and shepherding a congregation. A committee consisting of at least three (3) overseers and four (4) members of the congregation at large (at least 2 of whom are women) shall serve as a search committee for the purposes of researching and narrowing candidates according to biblical guidelines. The committee will next present one (1) candidate to the overseers who will examine him for biblical and doctrinal fidelity, ensuring also that there is wholehearted consent to our statement of faith, our constitution, and biblical truth. Once the overseers affirm, the candidate will be presented to the congregation as a whole, making sure notice is given for 2 consecutive Sundays before the full vote. The search committee shall bring forward only one (1) candidate at a time. The vote requires a 3/4 majority.

Article V. Church Meetings

Section 1: Rules for Meetings

- ¶1. **General.** In every meeting together, the church is expected to strive together for unity of the faith through the bonds of peace. Each member is expected to act in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- ¶2. **Order.** The overseers preside over all meetings. For regular and special meetings, a moderator selected by the overseers shall moderate the meetings.
- ¶3. **Quorum.** A quorum consists of the voting members present at any regular scheduled or duly called special meeting of the church. The quorum exists only if the meeting is a regular scheduled meeting or a special meeting called in accordance with the terms of these by-laws.

Section 2: Regular Meetings

- ¶1. **Lord's Day Meeting.** The church shall meet regularly each Sunday for its weekly worship services. The ingredients at the service must include proclamation from the Bible, faithful prayer, and Christ-centered singing.
- ¶2. **Mid-Week Meeting.** In addition to the Lord's Day meeting, the church will gather together for services, outreach, ministry, discipleship, and worship during the week as well. At least one regular scheduled meeting should be held each week (Wednesday services, etc).
- ¶3. **Canceling Meeting.** In the event there are emergencies or contingencies possibly requiring the cancellation of services, the overseers (at least 3) and deacons (at least 2, preferably including the

chairman) will confer and make the decision to cancel. The Senior Pastor should be one of the overseers involved if available.

- ¶4. **Regular Members' Meeting.** The church shall hold regular members' meetings once per month, on the 3rd Sunday of the month (following the p.m. service). The agenda for the members' meeting must be published by the Wednesday prior to the members' meeting, giving members an opportunity to consider beforehand the items on the agenda. All items to be added to the agenda must be submitted to the overseers by noon of the Sunday prior to the regular scheduled Sunday members' meeting.

The overseers may exclude an item from the agenda if they determine unanimously that the matter would be better handled without bringing the issue before the entire church at a members' meeting. In the event this occurs, the overseers will speak directly to the person making the agenda request, and, if the person desires, they will explain their decision at the regular members' meeting.

- ¶5. **Annual Members' Meeting.** There shall be an annual members' meeting at which church officers are voted upon. The annual meeting shall be held in August of each year. The elected officers will assume their duties in September.

Section 2: Special Meetings

- ¶1. **By Overseers.** Overseers may call for a special meeting of the members if situations should arise requiring such additional meetings. Such a meeting must be called for at least five (5) days in advance, announced at two regular church meetings, and held at a time conducive to member attendance.

- ¶2. **By Congregation.** Special meetings may be requested by the body at large so long as a request is submitted to the overseers in writing and affirmed by 10% of the voting membership. The special called meeting will be scheduled within 2 weeks of receiving said notice and must be held at a time conducive to member attendance.

Article VI. Legal Matters

Section 1: Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim, provided

- ¶1. The overseers determine that the person acted in good faith;
- ¶2. The overseers determine the person acted with the care an ordinarily prudent person in similar circumstances would have acted;
- ¶3. The overseers determine the person acted in a manner believed to be in the best interest of the church;
- ¶4. And the overseers agree the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 2: Disputes

Because the Bible expects Christians to make every effort to live at peace with all and to resolve disputes in private or within the church (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8), the church urges its members to resolve conflicts according to biblical principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Likewise, the church will work within biblical guidelines to avoid, if at all possible, lawsuits between itself and others outside the church, whether believers or unbelievers, individuals or corporations.

Section 3: Biblical Counseling

Understanding that Christians may suffer various trials from time to time in their fight for faith, God has provided His Word, the church body, and the overseers to help. Members should seek assistance from other members to

help in their struggles; particularly, members should be able to trust the overseers to provide biblical counseling and oversight (Romans 3:23, Romans 7:7-25, Romans 15:14, Galatians 6:1-2, Colossians 3:16, 2 Timothy 3:16ff, Hebrews 10:24-25, Hebrews 13:17).

We believe the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and for life in this world. Therefore, our counseling shall be based on Scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. Neither the pastoral nor the lay counselors of this church are trained or licensed as psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such persons.

Section 4: Confidentiality

In order to discourage gossip, invite confession, encourage counseling, demonstrate love, and protect confidence, this church, and especially the overseers and officers, will carefully guard personal and private information revealed in confidence (Proverbs 11:1-3, Proverbs 16:28, Matthew 7:12, Romans 15:14, James 5:16).

We do recognize, however, that there will be times when it is necessary to reveal information to others. When the overseers believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate parties under the following circumstances:

- ¶1. **Further Counsel.** When an overseer is uncertain of how to continue counseling with a certain individual, he may determine the most prudent course of action is to seek further counsel from another overseer (Proverbs 15:22).
- ¶2. **Imminent Danger.** When the person seeking counsel is in imminent danger unless others intervene, or when the person seeking counsel is an imminent threat to another individual, the overseer(s) should contact proper authorities (Proverbs 24:11).
- ¶3. **Needed Discipline.** When the person seeking counsel refuses to follow biblical guidelines and the matter becomes one of discipline

rather than counseling, the overseer will be obliged to inform the other overseers in an attempt to gain reconciliation in accordance with the Scriptures (Matthew 18:15-20) and these by-laws.

§4. **Legal Consideration.** When the laws of the state require disclosure (as in the case of child abuse), the overseer will contact the appropriate officials with necessary information (Matthew 18:1-14).

The overseers may, but need not, provide counselees with written notice of these confidentiality provisions, but these provisions shall be in effect regardless of whether such notice is given.

Article VII. Amendments

Section I: Procedure

Amendments and changes in the Constitution or By-laws may be made at a regular scheduled members' meeting. However, any potential changes to the by-laws must be submitted at a regular scheduled members' meeting at least one month in advance before the amendment shall be made.

The party wishing to make Constitution or By-law changes should make the matter known to the overseers, who will then include it on the agenda for the next members' meeting in accordance with the provisions in these By-laws. Once on the agenda, the proposed change must remain tabled until the following members' meeting, at which time discussion and voting on the matter will take place.

Section 2: Vote

Amendments to the Constitution and By-laws shall be approved by a ¾ majority vote (75%) of the members present and voting. The overseers are responsible for enacting and re-publishing the changes in the Constitution or By-laws.



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