

Community Baptist Church
of
Columbus, GA

Constitution & By-Laws
(including Statement of Faith)

Adopted on
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CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS
of the
Community 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 Community 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 Community 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.

In obedience to the clear teaching of the Scriptures that we should not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, we form the Community Baptist Church. We desire to glorify God by:

- Worshiping Him in Spirit and in truth
- Joining in fellowship with and upholding one another
- Studying and applying the Scriptures
- Praying for our church, our families, our public officials, our outreach and that God's will be done on earth
- Establishing an outreach, both domestic and foreign

ARTICLE II (Statement of Faith)

This *Statement of Faith* does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the *Statement of Faith* accurately represents the teachings of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all members, staff, Trustees, and volunteers. All literature, whether print or electronic, used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith. All activities permitted or performed in any facilities owned, rented or leased by this church, or engaged in by any member of the church staff (volunteer or paid), and all decisions of the administration of this church shall not conflict with the *Statement of Faith*. In all conflicts regarding interpretation of the Statement of Faith, the Elders, on behalf of the church, have the final authority.

Furthermore, we adhere to the summary of beliefs as stated in both the Nicene Creed and Apostles' Creed.

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 and only 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," "lead elder," 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 Lead Elder.

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 being, 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 blessedness of the saved in a literal heaven (Rev. 21-22), and the everlasting punishment of the lost in a literal Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

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), These two-distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God 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 biological man and a biological woman (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; I Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23). For clarification, this statement refers to men (male) and women (female) identified by their DNA, Chromosomes and biology at birth.
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 a 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 God intends marriage to be a lifetime commitment and desires it to last until a 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)

Community 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: *Purpose of Membership*

Membership provides the means of being identified as a member, having the spiritual covering of the elders, entering into gracious accountability for one's Christian life, voting on Church matters presented by the elders, nominating potential deacons, serving Christ in and through this local body, and utilizing one's spiritual gifts and talents to and through this body to the world to fulfill the Lord's purpose for His church.

Furthermore, church membership facilitates:

1. Defining who is part of our local church fellowship
2. Knowing the responsibilities of the local church fellowship
3. Providing adequate watch-care and shepherding for each individual member
4. Exercising authority in discipline and restoration of the wayward member

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.

Membership to this church shall not be denied on the basis of ethnicity.

Section 2: *Process of Membership*

The Community Baptist Church membership process is as follows:

1. Prospective member contacts the church Elders to notify of their desire to unite in membership.
2. Prospective member submits written or oral testimony to an Elder of how he/she came to faith in Christ.
3. Elders review testimony and information for prayerfully deciding on acceptance into church membership.
4. Prospective member completes membership training, including:
 - a. Theology of the church
 - b. Church by-laws familiarization (*all new members must affirm reading of these By-Laws*)
 - c. Responsibilities of church members and leaders

5. If accepted, prospective member is presented and welcomed to the church as new member of the church.

Section 3: *Methods of Membership*

Membership in the local fellowship of this church may be accomplished by three following means. These means of being accepted do not negate the requirement for all new members to fulfil the steps outlined in Section 2 (above).

1. *By Salvation & Baptism* - 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 be considered for membership in this church by having publicly declared their profession of faith and by following in believer's baptism by immersion, after their conversion.
2. *By transfer of letter* - 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 which affirms that said member is in good standing.
3. *By Statement of Faith* - In the event that such a letter cannot be obtained, due to loss of or unavailability of records, a believer may be received by statement of their salvation and that they have been baptized by immersion.

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.

Section 4: *Responsibility of Members*

By uniting this church, members are committing themselves to give and receive spiritual watch-care within the fellowship and to serve in the ministry of the church. Every member is responsible for working to build up Christ's church.

Every member is important to this church and is responsible for being informed concerning the ministries and other affairs of the church. Each member is responsible to seek the Lord's direction based on Scripture when decision-making matters are brought to the congregation.

Each member must work to maintain purity, unity, and love in the fellowship. It is expected that members will strive to live according to the teachings of Scripture by avoiding the works of the flesh and receiving the fruit of the Spirit.

Members shall seek to exercise their spiritual gifts for the mutual benefit of all the church body and shall submit to the loving rule of the elders.

It is the nature of the Body of Christ to be a caring body. Therefore, any member should at any time feel free to share with an elder(s) any suggestions or concerns for the improvement of the church body in the light of pertinent Scripture.

The expectation for each member is regular attendance and support of the church with their time, talents, and finances.

Section 5: *Discipline of Members*

When a member of this church begins to display a consistent pattern of sinful behavior, it may be necessary for the elders to apply biblical church discipline as instructed by God in His Word. The purpose of the discipline is to see the erring believer come to repentance and a restored fellowship with the Lord and His church.

All discipline will be concentrated with the Elders, and the elders will prayerfully determine whether a matter is a genuine matter of church discipline. Members in the early churches were subject to discipline for reasons such as:

1. Unwillingness to become reconciled to an offended brother (Matt. 18:15-17)
2. Unwillingness to engage in work (II Thess. 3:6-15)
3. Divisiveness in the church (Rom. 16:17-18)
4. Sexual immorality or habitual covetousness, idolatry, reviling, drunkenness, or swindling (1 Cor. 5:1-13)
5. False teaching (1 Tim. 1:20; II Tim. 2:17-18)

Members of the church are expected to conduct their lives in accordance with Biblical standards of holiness as they grow to become more like Christ. The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Cor. 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Tim. 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Gal. 6:1).

Disciplinary Procedures

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).

In order to fulfill the biblical mandate of church discipline, disciplinary procedures will conform to the following guidelines:

1. Members of this church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the elders, shall be subject to church discipline, including withdrawal of Christian fellowship and protection according to Matthew 18:15-18.

Prior to such discipline, the following biblical procedure must be followed:

- (1) It shall be the duty of the member of this church who has knowledge of the erring individual's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct such erring individual in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration.

If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then step 2 must be taken.

- (2) The warning member shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his or her repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent.

The first and second warnings may occur with no specified time interval.

- (3) If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then it shall be brought to the Elders. If the Elders determines, after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture that there is corroborating evidence that the erring individual has sinned or is continuing to sin, that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and that he or she refuses to repent, then the elders shall inform the church at a regularly scheduled worship service in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance. If the erring individual demonstrates repentance, then notice to that effect may be given at a regularly scheduled worship service.

- (4) If the erring individual does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then the Elders shall declare that he or she is no longer in fellowship with the local body of believers and is to be treated as an unredeemed person (Matt. 18:17c). At that point, the person's name is removed from the membership roll and the church body is exhorted to abstain from eating or seeking Christian fellowship with the unrepentant sinner (1 Cor. 5:11).

- (5) If the erring individual, after such dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Elders, then he or she shall be publicly restored to full fellowship and membership.

2. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the elders in the exercise of their discretion may proceed directly to the third stage of church discipline, (i.e. the informing of the church at a regularly scheduled worship service in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance) or to the fourth stage of church discipline, (i.e. the dismissal from fellowship and/or membership of the church) when one or more of the following have occurred:

- Where the transgression and the refusal to repent have been public, i.e. openly and to the offense of the whole Church (1 Cor. 5:1-5); or
- Where the disciplined party has taught or otherwise disseminated doctrine deemed false or erroneous by the elders, then chosen to disregard the direction and reproof of the elders (Rom. 16:17); or
- When the disciplined party has been warned twice to cease from factious and divisive conduct and has chosen to disregard that warning (Titus 3:10-11).

3. The members of this church, and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because

of public statements to the congregation at the third or fourth stages of church discipline. Members who are under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous paragraphs, forfeit and waive the right to resign from this church. Resignations from membership are possible only by members who are in good standing and who are not under any disciplinary action.

4. Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the elders (or a duly constituted subcommittee thereof), a member, non-member regular attendee, or other individual may be notified that he or she is not to be present upon church premises for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of others on church premises. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with church discipline of that person.
5. This church does not continue church membership on an indefinite basis for members who do not participate in the fellowship. Participation involves church attendance, faithful support, and regular contact with the church body. Once a year the elders will review the church membership roll and evaluate each member's participation in the local body. Members who do not participate for three months or longer, unless physically hindered, will be considered to be in violation of Hebrews 10:25 and therefore will be placed on the inactive roll. If circumstances biblically warrant it, the errant member will be subject to the discipline described above.

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 6: *Membership Guidelines*

Active Members — Shall be those who members who display their interest and welfare in the ministry of Community 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 their finances and talents.

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. Any inactive member will be restored to active membership status, upon resumption of faithful attendance and financial support of the ministry, and approval of the Elders.

Section 7: *Dismissal of Members*

All terminations from the membership shall be made only after due counsel and consideration by the Elders. Such a removal from the membership roll shall be made for the following reasons:

- A. Transfer of Letter. Any member in good standing may request that a letter of membership be transferred to another fellowship of like faith. No letter will be granted to a member who is under the corrective discipline of this church or to a member who seeks to transfer to a church which, based on the judgment of the elders, is not loyal to "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"(Jude 3).
- B. Non-Letter Transfer. Any member who unites with another church without a letter will be dropped from the membership.
- C. Personal Request. Any member who requests that his/her name be dropped from the membership roll shall be dismissed after due admonition and counsel from the elders.

- D. Physical Death. A member who dies shall be removed from the active membership roll.
- E. Disciplinary Termination. The elders may terminate a person's membership for disciplinary reasons (including non-attendance) based on the guidelines in Article IV, Section 5.

Section 8: *Member's Right of Inspection*

Church members desiring to see documents of the church (e.g. books, records, minutes) are to make a request in writing to the elders stating the request and the reason. The elders will respond to the request at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

ARTICLE V (Government)

The Lord Jesus is the Chief Shepherd of this congregation. It is before Him that all other leadership must bow (Eph. 1:15-23; Col. 1:18). He communicates His will for the church through His Word, the Holy Bible. He gives additional guidance by means of the specific leading of the Holy Spirit who indwells the heart of each believer. He also shepherds the flock through the elders of the church to whom He has given specific gifts (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

ARTICLE VI (Officers and Leaders)

Section 1: *Authority & Responsibility*

The affairs of the Community Baptist Church shall be governed and managed by spiritual men as defined by the biblical term of "elders." The elders shall serve as the shepherds, directors and officers of the corporation and will have the final authority in all matters since they are the biblical overseers of the ministries of the Church. Specifically, the duties of the elders shall include, but are not limited to the following:

- A. Consistently study, preach and teach God's Word (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; 2 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:9).
- B. Maintain doctrinal purity (Titus 1:9)
- C. Devote themselves to prayer and ministry of the Word of God (Acts 6:4)
- D. Give diligent labor, caring leadership, and guided counsel in the Word (Rom. 12:9; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:4-5, 17).
- E. Exercise pastoral care (1 Thess. 5:14-15; James 5:4) and hospitality (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8).
- F. Select and remove all officers, staff, and employees of the Church; prescribe such duties and job descriptions for said persons; establish the terms of offices and employment; and establish levels of compensation and raises.
- G. Make disbursements from the funds and properties of the Church as are required to fulfill its purpose. Conduct, manage, and govern the ministries, finances, and all activities of the Church (NOTE: The elders may enlist the help of members who are uniquely gifted and skilled to assist in making recommendations regarding ministries, finances, and other activities of the Church. This may involve establishing teams charged to ensure proper execution of a particular activity of the church.).
- H. Establish rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and practices for the Church consistent with the Scriptures, the purpose of the Church and the By-Laws.

- I. Carry on any business in which the elders may legally engage and apply any revenue from that exclusively for religious, charitable or education purposes as will qualify the Church as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The borrowing of money and the incurring of indebtedness for the purposes of the Corporation is to be avoided.
- J. Confirm or deny all membership applicants.
- K. 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.
- L. The elders may serve as board members of various church ministries as necessary.

Section 2: *Decisions of Elders*

Decisions shall be reached after prayerful consideration by unanimous vote in a spirit of humility, with each elder regarding one another before himself. Decisions that are not unanimous shall be tabled for prayer and fasting by all elders.

If all the elders are guided by the same Spirit and all have the mind of Christ, there should be unanimity in the decisions they make. If there is division, all the elders should study, pray, and seek the will of God together until consensus is achieved. Unity and harmony in the church at large begin here.

Section 3: *Number of Elders*

The total number shall be as many as are qualified and needed to carry out the duties of an elder.

Section 4: *Nomination and Selection*

Elders will be selected and appointed by the currently serving elders, as positions are needed. The elders will constantly observe the men of the church, and their walk with God, so as to be able to effectively choose an elder when needed.

The body of church members can also be free to recommend a man who they believe to be a man of godly character and integrity.

Any man being considered for the office of elder shall meet all biblical qualifications as defined in First Timothy 3 and Titus 1. He is to be a man of godly character and a strong commitment to the authority and perspicuity of the Scriptures.

- A. The elders will join into a season of prayer and will research each man to determine if he meets the scriptural qualifications.
- B. If, after this process, God and His Word still confirm this to be His will, he will be presented to the church body for their consideration. The church will have two weeks (14 days), to pray and examine the man based upon the qualifications of an elder. If anyone finds a scriptural reason why the man should not serve, that person will bring the reason to the elders for their consideration. If any elder believes the reason is legitimate, it will be addressed, with the possible ceasing of this process. If no elder believes the reason is legitimate or the issues have been adequately addressed and resolved, the process will continue.

- C. If, after this process there has been no Scriptural reason presented from the Church members to disqualify him, and the elders have endorsed this candidate, the candidate will be then be appointed and scheduled to be ordained (Titus 1:5).
- D. After appointment, the elders will set a date for a public laying on of hands thereby ordaining him officially to his office, with all of the duties and responsibilities listed herein.
- E. The Elders will inform any disqualified nominee of the fact and the reason for the denial. Nothing herein shall preclude a disqualified nominee from being nominated and reconsidered for the office in the future.

Section 5: *Lead or Teaching Elder*

If the Lead/Teaching Elder (herein referred to as “Lead Elder”) position of this church should be vacant, church shall then, without undue delay, secure another man of God to serve fill that position. The elders shall first consider a man, who has been trained and mentored for serving as Lead Elder. He shall also have a commitment to the authority and perspicuity of the Scriptures, and a commitment to the expositional teaching/preaching of the Word of God. If no such man is available from within 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 recommendation. The church body will then vote to either recommend or not recommend. Upon receiving the results of the vote from the church body, the elders will prayerfully decide on whether to extend a call to the man, or not.

- A. The Lead Elder shall be called for an indefinite period of time.
- B. The Lead Elder shall meet the requirements found for elders in First Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. If at any time the Lead Elder is not able to fulfill these requirements, then he shall willingly resign from the pastorate of this church.
- C. The Lead Elder shall assume his position as an elder in the leadership of this church. For legal reasons, he shall also 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).

- D. Because the pastoral and office staff are an extension of the ministry, the elders shall have sole authority to hire and terminate all staff.
- E. 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 remaining elders.
- F. The body of elders shall set the compensation due any staff member (pastoral or non-pastoral).
- G. The Lead Elder shall secure a pulpit supply in his absence and the church will pay for the supply.
- H. The Lead Elder shall have 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. The elders must all agree on those who speak.
- I. The Lead Elder may hold revivals and conferences of his choice so long as he maintains his spiritual obligation to his church, which is his primary duty.
- J. The Lead Elder shall be moderator of all business meetings.
- K. The Lead Elder shall be an ex-officio member of any and all ad hoc committees that shall be formed. He shall have one vote on each committee.
- L. The position of Lead Elder may be vacated either by death, resignation, or upon the recommendation of the remaining elders. If prayerful consideration and biblical evidence warrants, the elders will present their decision to the church body. The church will then vote on whether or not to recommend dismissal. Upon receiving the results of the vote from the church body, the elders will prayerfully decide on whether or not to dismiss the Lead Elder.

No recommendation to dismiss may be permitted without the recommendation of the elders. However, for the elders to make such a recommendation, the Lead Elder 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 Lead Elder shall be dealt with as stated under section 2 of this document. However, because the office of Lead Elder 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 Lead Elder is dismissed, the church shall give the Lead Elder not less than sixty days notice of dismissal. If, in the judgment of the elders, the conduct of the Lead Elder justifies immediate termination of his ministry, the elders may declare the pulpit vacant and, upon prayerful consideration, may agree to pay two months regular compensation, plus benefits, beyond that date. Such compensation can only be denied in the case of gross sin or great damage to the church body. If the Lead Elder resigns, he shall give the church a notice of at least thirty days, and not more than sixty days, if the church so requires.

- M. The Lead Elder 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 Lead Elder. Vacation time shall accrue and be used as needed, and with the consensus of the elders. If the Lead Elder

has served in the ministry prior to coming to Community, his prior ministry shall be counted as accrued time for vacation earning.

- N. The Lead Elder 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.
- O. If the ministry demands permit it, the Lead Elder 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 Lead Elder should refrain from accepting any speaking or other ministry engagements. A properly used sabbatical will benefit both the Lead Elder 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 6: *Staff*

A. Pastoral Staff

Pastoral staff will serve under the direction of the Lead Elder as an extension of his ministry and shall be directly responsible to the elders 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 elders so require. 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 5, Items (m), and (n) above. (These are the same as the Lead Elder).

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 elder's approval.

B. General Staff

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

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: Deacons

- A. The deacons will also serve under the direction of 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 until he cannot fulfill his responsibilities, or is no longer qualified. The elders have the authority to request a deacon's resignation if they believe him no longer able to serve.
- 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. A newly approved deacon candidate shall serve for six months as a training partner with a veteran deacon or elder.
- I. 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.
- J. This church does not participate in the unscriptural practice of ordaining women as deacons.

- K. 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 5 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.
- L. 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.
- M. The elders shall meet with the body of deacons as necessary to insure the needs of the ministry are being met. An elder, shall preside over these meetings, and the deacons shall not meet without an elder present. Deacons shall not call any meetings.
- N. The deacons shall prepare and serve the Lord's Supper when scheduled. If enough deacons are not available, the elders will serve the communion.
- O. The deacons shall assist the elders by visiting the sick and infirmed members of the church.

Section 8: Teachers & 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 teachers and officers shall be:
 - 1. Certain of their salvation.
 - 2. Members of the church.
 - 3. Faithful in their attendance at all services.
 - 4. Faithful in their Christian witness, so as to not bring reproach upon Christ and His church.
 - 5. Faithful in their supporting the ministry with their tithes and offerings.
 - 6. Faithful in participation of supporting the churches mission endeavors.
 - 7. Faithful in their support of this church and its ministries.
 - 8. Faithful in sharing the gospel as the Holy Spirit provides opportunities.
 - 9. Faithful to attend the scheduled Teachers & Officers Meetings.
- C. All persons who lead or assist in any ministry of worship or teaching must be an active member of Community Baptist Church, and in good standing.

Section 9: Trustees

- A. The Trustees of Community Baptist Church shall consist of the currently serving elders. In their capacity as a Trustee, their term shall be 10-years and may serve consecutive terms without limitation.

- 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 to consider the will of the church regarding the church physical 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 requires a three-fourths vote of the active members present at a called business meeting of the church.

Section 10: *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.

ARTICLE VIII (Meetings)

Section 1: *Public Worship*

- A. The church shall meet regularly each Lord's Day for services, as determined by the elders.
- 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 elders.

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 real estate, and other items as deemed legally necessary by the laws of Georgia. The day-to-day decisions concerning the operations of the church will be under the leadership of the elders.
- 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. The elders maintain the authority to declare a member as in good standing or not in good standing.
- E. 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, Christian Academy, 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 elders.

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. Usage of the property for other than regularly scheduled meetings and activities shall be in keeping with the nature and doctrine of this church's faith and goals. No event which conflicts with the *Statement of Faith* shall be permitted. All non-regular activities must first be approved by the elders and 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 Community 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*

The church polity not treated herein shall be governed by the standard acceptable rules of order.

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. All gifts, offerings, and tangible donations to the ministry are under the control of the leadership of Community Baptist Church of Columbus GA, and shall in no way be considered under the control or ownership of the donor.
- C. 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 appointed officers, when authorized by majority vote of the church and approved by the elders.
- B. No profit shall ever accrue to the benefit of any individuals from the assets, holdings or other transactions in which this corporation may become involved.
- C. In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. Any existing paid staff or employee shall receive six-months full compensation as a severance package, if sufficient funds are available.

If sufficient funds remain, and the pastor has served the church for a minimum of ten years, and he has not been provided with a reasonable retirement plan, he is to receive a retirement package that is based upon a reasonable weekly investment of a minimum of \$100 per week, plus a minimum of 8% accrued interest, for the amount of time he has served as pastor or lead elder.

None of its remaining assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated by elder 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*

This constitution may be amended, altered or revised as deemed necessary by the Elders. Upon completing any revision, the elders will make the church body aware by making a revised document available to the church membership.