



EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – DUTIES OF SENIOR PASTOR, ASSISTANT PASTOR AND OFFICERS

SECTION 1. Qualifications and Duties of the Senior Pastor

- A. The Senior Pastor must be an ordained minister and licensed in the State of Virginia.
- B. The authority and duties of the Senior Pastor shall be such as provided by the New Testament:
- 2 Timothy 4:2, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.”
- 2 Timothy 4:5, “But watch thou in all things, endure affliction, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.”
- 1 Timothy 3:4-5, “One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man knows not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the house of God?”
- C. The Senior Pastor shall:
- Preach
 - Pray
 - Teach
 - Visit the Sick
 - Perform Marriages
 - Conduct funerals
 - Represent the Church at meetings of the Tidewater Baptist Association, State and National conventions
 - Be involved in community projects
 - In conjunction with the Joint Board, Diaconate and Trustees, organize the work of the Church and all its ministries.
- D. The Senior Pastor shall submit annual ministry plans, goals, and objectives for the church. The plans, goals, objectives will be based on the collaborative work from the Chairperson of the Diaconate, Trustee and Ministry Coordinators which includes the following ministries:
1. Worship Support
 2. Missions
 3. Christian Education

4. Fellowship

- E. The Senior Pastor should promote Unity in the body of believers, ensuring that the church (officers, members) is operating with one accord according to 1 Corinthians 1:10. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
- F. The Senior Pastor shall preside over all Church meetings (regular and special) and Joint Board meetings. In his/her absence or inability to preside, the Assistant Pastor will preside. In the Assistant Pastor's absence, Chairperson of the Diaconate, or the Vice-Chairperson of the Diaconate may preside.
- G. In meetings involving the filling or vacating of the pulpit or if the Senior Pastor is under the spiritual discipline of the Church, the Chairperson of the Diaconate shall preside. In the absence of the Chairperson of the Diaconate, the Vice Chairperson of the Diaconate shall preside.
- H. The Senior Pastor is ex-officio chairman of all Boards and Ministries of the Church and may, at his/her discretion, preside over any meeting at any time.
- I. All personnel matters, which include the employment or dismissal of Church paid staff, shall be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees in conjunction with the Senior Pastor.

Section 2. Assistant Pastor

Qualifications:

- A. Active member in good and regular standing of Ebenezer Baptist Church.
- B. Licensed in the State of Virginia.
- C. Ordained Minister of the Gospel.
- D. Experience with equipping people for ministry.

Duties:

- A. Help grow disciples and encourage the local body of believers to follow Jesus Christ and, in doing so fulfilling the mission of the church.
- B. Support the Senior Pastor with pastoral responsibilities and supervision of church ministries as assigned.
- C. Partner with other churches/ministries in the community in evangelizing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- D. Assist and cooperatively work with EBC's ministries and committees to assist with growth and impact of ministry and committee initiatives and efforts.
- E. Attend scheduled Diaconate and Ministers' Coalition Meetings and inform the diaconate of any needs in the congregation, as applicable.
- F. Assist with Pastoral Care responsibilities, such as, but not limited to:
 - Primary support for Sunday Services and Bible Studies when the Senior Pastor is not available
 - Provide hospital, nursing home, rehabilitation center or home visits
 - Provide pastoral counseling or provide referrals
 - Perform weddings, funerals, baptisms, and child dedications
 - Serve as interim Pastor during times when the pulpit is vacant.
- G. Accept other responsibilities/duties as assigned by Senior Pastor.

Section 3. Duties of Associate Minister(s)

- A. The duties of the Associate Minister(s) shall be provided by the Senior Pastor. In the absence of the Senior Pastor or Assistant Pastor, duties of Associate Minister(s) shall be coordinated by the Chairpersons of the Diaconate and Ministers Coalition.
- B. At the discretion of the Senior Pastor, Associate Minister(s) may perform pastoral duties for which they are qualified (licensed and ordained) such as: preaching, teaching, conducting worship services, communion, baptismal, praying and anointing the sick, weddings, and funerals.
- C. Other duties or positions may include: Minister of Evangelism, Worship Coordinator, Youth Advisor, Missionary Outreach, Children's church, and based on their interest and expertise, other areas of responsibility may be assigned by the Senior Pastor.
- D. Associate Ministers shall be members of the Ebenezer Baptist Church Minister's Coalition.

Section 4. Duties of Diaconate

- A. The Diaconate shall meet in November for the purpose of electing officers. A Chairperson and other officers shall be elected by the members during this time.
- B. The Diaconate shall meet regularly as deemed necessary. The time and date shall be set by mutual consent of the Senior Pastor and the Board. Fifty percent (50%) of the Diaconate shall constitute a quorum necessary to transact the business of the Board (except the meetings where final action is to be taken on the filling or vacating of the pulpit). In meetings where final action is to be taken on recommending the calling or dismissal of a pastor, seventy-five percent (75%) of the Diaconate, exclusive of the Chairperson, shall constitute a quorum necessary to transact the

business of the meeting. A motion to recommend to the Church the calling or dismissal of the Senior Pastor shall be valid when carried by a majority vote of the Diaconate present in the meeting.

- C. The Senior Pastor/Assistant Pastor or Chairperson of the Diaconate or Joint Board can call a special meeting as required.
- D. The Diaconate shall assist the Senior Pastor/Assistant Pastor in overseeing the total activities of all boards, ministries and committees of the Church.
- E. Deacons are responsible for preparing and serving the Holy Communion under the supervision of the Senior Pastor/Assistant Pastor or assigned Minister.
 - 1. Prepare the communion table with linens, candles, etc.
 - 2. Serve the sacraments in service and to the sick and shut in.
- F. Each deacon will be assigned and responsible for the needs of families in the congregation through visitation, communication, and spiritual inspiration. The duties include:
 - 1. Minister and serve the congregation with special attention and care for those who are sick and in distress.
 - 2. Comfort families during the death or sickness of their loved ones.
 - 3. Assist the baptismal candidates in preparation for Christian Baptism. The Diaconate shall submit the names of the candidates for baptismal certificates to the Church office.
 - 4. Assist in the benevolence needs of the families.
 - 5. Supervise the church's Annual Benevolence Fund, as assigned.
 - 6. Confer with the Senior Pastor regarding any family/individual counseling that might be needed.
 - 7. Work in conjunction with the Pastor's Secretary and/or Administrative Assistant in keeping an accurate record of the Church members.
- G. The Ministry of the Deaconess shall assist the pastoral staff, deacons and other care leaders in ministry to the congregation. Specifically, the deaconess shall:
 - 1. Assist the pastor and the deacons in developing the spiritual life of members of the church.
 - 2. Assist the pastoral staff, and deacons in visiting the sick, needy, widows and distressed members of the church.
 - 3. Assist the pastoral staff and deacons in the administration of communion and baptismal rites.
 - 4. Attend and participate in monthly Diaconate meetings and leadership training.

SECTION 5. Duties of the Diaconate Officers

- A. The Chairperson of the Diaconate shall act in conjunction with the Senior Pastor, or at the direction of the Senior Pastor, as an advisor to the various boards, ministries, and committees

on Church policy. The Chairperson of the Diaconate shall not head a ministry or any other board of the Church.

- B. When the Church is without a Senior Pastor and/or Assistant Pastor, the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Diaconate shall assume leadership of the Church and shall act as the official representatives of the Church.
- C. The Chairperson of the Diaconate shall preside at all Church and Joint Board meetings in the absence of the Senior Pastor or Assistant Pastor. The Vice-Chairperson of the Diaconate shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson.
- D. The Diaconate Chairperson shall appoint a committee to conduct an annual review of the membership roll. The committee shall compile the list of deceased members, determine categories of remaining membership, and recommend the list of names to be purged from the membership roll. The Pastor's Secretary and/or administrative staff shall purge the membership roll. See Section 4: Modes of Dismissal and Reinstatement for further types of termination of membership.
- E. The Secretary of the Diaconate shall keep a true and accurate record of meetings and ensure that copies along with supporting meeting documents are filed in the Diaconate Office and maintained physically and electronically.

SECTION 6. Duties of the Trustees

A. Qualifications:

The Trustees shall have expertise and/or some experience in matters of real estate, insurance, legal liability, and other matters of corporate responsibility. The members of the Board of Trustees shall be bonded.

B. Duties:

The Board of Trustees Shall:

1. Have charge of all Church physical property, keep same insured, ensure all repairs and alterations are completed, secure the services of such persons as may be required by the Church for the orderly maintenance of the Church and other property.
2. Have legal supervision over the temporal needs of the Church and supervision of the clerical and custodial staff.

C. Fiscal Responsibility:

1. The Trustees shall not expend a sum of money more than three thousand dollars

(\$3,000.00) on a single transaction, nor shall they obligate or engage the Church in excess of three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00) on any single transaction without the Church authorizing such expenditures.

2. The Board of Trustees shall obtain formal requests for proposals (RFP) for all projects where funds expenditures are estimated to be more than \$10,000. Unless a sole-source proprietor has been authorized by the Church, Trustees shall obtain proposals from at least three different vendors for comparison/assessment. The Trustees shall not expend a sum of money more than three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00) on a single transaction, nor shall they obligate or engage the Church in more than three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00) on any single transaction without the Church authorizing such expenditures. However, in an emergency (e.g., storm damage, excessive leaks, etc.) where a delay for Church authorization would result in extensive damage and/or much larger expenditures, funds, and corrective action necessary will be expended.
3. The Trustees shall perform all duties required of them by the Laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia as Trustees for a section 501c3 religious corporation and as specified in the New Church Directory by Hiscox – “Church Officers.” Trustees shall ensure that all procedures involving the management, collection, and disbursement of Church monies be conducted in an open, legal manner and free of any suspicion of impropriety or of malfeasance.
 - a. The Trustees, through the offices of the Financial Secretary, Bookkeeper, and Treasurer, shall maintain an accurate and current record of all receipts and expenditures of the Church.
 - b. The Board of Trustees shall present a quarterly report of the financial contributions and expenditures of the church at each Church meeting. The Board of Trustees shall also prepare an annual church budget and present it to the Joint Board and Church for approval at the December meeting. The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees shall present this report.
 - c. All legal documents shall be maintained in a safe deposit box at a local financial institution with duplicate copies maintained in the Church safe.
 - d. The Board of Trustees shall obtain an independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA) to audit the financial records of the Church annually during the month of January for the previous calendar year. The audit report shall be available to any and to all Church members.
 - e. The Board of Trustees shall provide each employee of the Church a legal job description and contract during the period of employment by the Church.
 - f. The Board of Trustees shall establish guidelines for use of the facilities by outside agencies or individuals for weddings, class reunions, etc.
 - g. The Board of Trustees shall maintain the Operations and Procedures manual, which is in the church office.

SECTION 7. Duties of the Financial Personnel

1. Financial Secretary
 - a. Maintain an accurate account of all money received and disbursed through the general fund and all subsidiary funds including ministry treasuries.
 - b. Prepare and maintain weekly deposit worksheets filed in the Financial Secretary's files, the Treasurer's files and in the Church office.
 - c. Prepare and present a financial report each quarter at regularly scheduled Church meetings and at year end. All records must be made available for regular inspection by Senior Pastor, Chairpersons of the Diaconate, members of the Trustee Board, and members of congregation upon request.

2. Treasurer
 - a. Be the chief custodian of the Church funds.
 - b. Assure that all money received are accounted for weekly. No monies shall be received by Treasurer that have not been transmitted through required channels.
 - c. Countersign all checks.
 - d. Keeps all paid bills as a verification for disbursed funds.
 - e. Deposit all funds or designates another Trustee to see that funds are deposited within twenty-four (24) hours after receipt.
 - f. Receives and maintains all bank statements and completes a monthly bank reconciliation report. Bank statements and reconciliation reports must be made available for exhibit at each regular church meeting.

3. Bookkeeper
 - a. Maintain an accurate account of membership contribution records
 - b. Report contribution information to Financial Secretary and membership on an annual basis.
 - c. Manage financial reporting for 501c 3 Corporation
 - d. Assigns envelope numbers and maintain envelop number listing.
 - e. Prepare salary information for annual budget process.
 - f. Maintain and dispose of contribution records as necessary.
 - g. Assist in annual budget preparation.

SECTION 8. Duties of the Joint Board

- A. The Deacons and Trustees shall meet in a Joint Board session before the regular business meetings of the Church. The Senior Pastor shall serve as Chairperson, and in his absence, the Assistant Pastor, Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Diaconate may preside.

- B. It shall be the duty of the Church Clerk to keep the minutes of the Joint Board meeting in books of record. These minutes shall be used to formulate the agenda for the Church meeting.

- C. No important business such as church financial obligations or personnel issues shall be considered at any meeting of the Joint Board without giving adequate notice to the Senior Pastor, except in emergencies when the Senior Pastor is not available.

SECTION 9. Duties of the Church Clerk

The individual will be responsible to and supervised by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees in conjunction with the Senior Pastor.

- A. Collect and provide information to the church body at Sunday service or as needed.
- B. Draft and present minutes from previous business meetings for review, correction and/or approval by members.
- C. Maintain a record of minutes.
- D. Take meeting minutes for the Joint Board and Church meetings. Copies of the minutes and supporting documents shall be provided to the Chairpersons of the Diaconate and Trustees within two weeks after meetings. Once minutes of a church meeting have been approved, upon request, copies will be provided to church members.

SECTION 10. Duties of Church Historian

The position of Church Historian (s) shall be a voluntary position responsible to the Joint Board, in conjunction with the Senior Pastor. Duties of the position shall be as follows.

- A. Review historical materials and collections of the congregation to determine the best preservation procedures and techniques.
- B. Establish a permanent archiving system.
- C. Interpret material in a manner for all ages, especially emphasizing the history of faith and the impact of the living faith on the congregation and community.
- D. Keep accurate records in good order.
- E. Document events and collect materials to add to church's historical record.
- F. Assist Senior Pastor and others in the annual observance of the church anniversary.
- G. Other duties as assigned.

SECTION 11. Duties of Administrative Assistant

The individual will be responsible to and supervised by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees in conjunction with the Senior Pastor. The following duties apply for this position:

- A. Provide administrative support to the Senior Pastor and his/her secretary.

- B. Receives visitors and telephone calls for the Church and provide information as required.
- C. Perform clerical duties of the church, e.g., correspondence letters, bulletins/programs.
- D. Support the Trustees in scheduling facility rental and property loan and maintain inventory records.
- E. In the absence of the Senior Pastor's Secretary, maintains the Senior Pastor's calendar including scheduling appointments, conferences, meetings, and speaking engagements.
- F. In the absence of the Senior Pastor's Secretary, make travel arrangements and lodging reservations for the Senior Pastor. Maintain and gather documents for meetings and conferences for the Senior Pastor.
- G. In the absence of the Senior Pastor's Secretary, Inform the Senior Pastor of scheduled meetings, conferences, and appointments.
- H. In the absence of the Senior Pastor's Secretary, transcribe dictation from notes or drafts for the Senior Pastor's use. This includes correspondence and reports, etc., into final format, assuring uniformity, reviewing for errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- I. Compose routine correspondence requiring some judgment and originality.
- J. In the absence of the Senior Pastor's Secretary, maintain the file system for the Senior Pastor of the Church. File, sort, and retrieve information from the system, both in paper and electronically.
- K. Receive, sort, stamp and distribute incoming mail, correspondence, paperwork from/to other Ministries of the Church.
- L. Assist the Diaconate and the Senior Pastor's Secretary in maintaining and updating the Church's membership directory.

SECTION 12. Secretary to the Senior Pastor

The individual will be responsible to and supervised by the Senior Pastor in conjunction with the Trustee Board and shall perform the following duties:

- A. Provide administrative support to the Senior Pastor and serve as the church Administrative Assistant when necessary.
- B. Receive visitors and telephone calls for the Senior Pastor and provide information as required.

- C. Type official correspondence to include letters, briefings, presentations, sermons, etc. for the Senior Pastor.
- D. Formatting and proofreading documents and reports.
- E. Assist the Diaconate in maintaining and updating membership directory.

SECTION 13. Duties of the Director of Music

It shall be the duty of the Director of Music to enhance the quality of the worship experience with a broad range of musical selections, to include traditional hymns workshops, special seasonal arrangements, anthems, and contemporary gospel. The Director shall establish and maintain an open, transparent, Christian working rapport with the other musicians and provide the necessary guidance to ensure orderly, coordinated production of worship music. In the absence of the Director, the Director shall also ensure a substitute is trained and designated to lead worship in song. The Director shall also be responsible for the following tasks:

- A. Lead and guide choir and congregation in uplifting songs of praise and worship.
- B. Arrange and compose music suitable to the skills of the choirs and other musicians.
- C. Recruit, develop, train, and encourage musical talents of the Church membership.
- D. Develop a musical program to support the evangelical ministry.
- E. Arrange choral workshops for choir members and musicians for skill development.
- F. Arrange for appropriate participation of musicians at funerals and other special programs conducted by the Church.
- G. Prepare musical programs to commemorate observed holiday seasons recognized by the Church.
- H. Select and purchase music to be distributed to appropriate choir members to support Sunday worship and other services.

SECTION 14. The Christian Board of Education

- A. The Board shall consist of the Education Ministries of Ebenezer Baptist Church that shall include, but is not limited to, the superintendents, directors, and/or facilitators of the existing ministries. Ministries may include but are not limited to: Church School, Vacation Bible School, New Members Class, Health Ministries and Bible Studies
 - 1. Membership of the board will be reconsidered every three (3) years.
 - 2. The Board shall meet at least quarterly, and all meetings will have agendas and will

be open to the congregation.

B. The Senior Pastor/Assistant Pastor and Joint Board shall appoint the Christian Education Coordinator and Co-Coordinator.

1. The coordinator shall serve a term of three years with the option to serve an additional three years if recommended by the Senior Pastor and Joint Board.
2. When the Church theme, goals, and objectives are outlined and communicated by the Senior Pastor/Assistant Pastor, the Christian Board of Education shall work with the Youth, Women, and Men's Ministries to annually develop and implement an educational program which includes workshops, teacher training, and special events that support the Church mission, theme, goals, and objectives.
3. The board shall conduct a tri-annual needs assessment and an annual program evaluation. Based upon the outcomes and needs of the congregation, a tentative program of study and budget will be developed by October of each year.

SECTION 15. Church School

- A. Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor/Assistant Pastor in cooperation with the Board of Christian Education to serve a term of three (3) years and can be elected for a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- B. The Superintendent in consultation with the Senior Pastor/Assistant Pastor and Christian Education Coordinator and Co-Coordinator shall appoint teachers and staff for the Church School.

SECTION 16. Duties of the Church School Superintendent

Ensure all Church School procedures are in keeping with the Church theme, goals, and objectives as communicated by the Senior Pastor and the Christian Board of Education.

- A. Conduct and schedule quarterly business staff meetings.
- B. Order and distribute Church School literature, teaching aids, and other supplies necessary for the successful progress of the Church School.
- C. Attend and/or arrange for representatives at conferences or workshops, conventions, and associations relative to Church School operations and programs.
- D. Teach and/or arrange for a suitable substitute in the absence of any school teacher.
- E. The Church School Superintendent shall maintain a written record of attendance.

ARTICLE II – MINISTRIES AND COMMITTEES

Ministries are formed to help carry out the business and activities of Ebenezer Baptist Church. All ministries must be approved by the church. The secretary and treasurer of each ministry shall keep accurate written record of the minutes and submit to the church clerk in its original format and electronically. Ministry financial records should be submitted to the church treasurer or a trustee before each business meeting. After financial reconciliation of the financial records, the records should be submitted to the church clerk and maintained in its original format and electronically. All funds shall be deposited in the General Treasury. Failure of any ministry or committee to operate in harmony with the Church shall be grounds for disbandment with a sixty (60%) vote at a Church business meeting.

SECTION 1. The Missions Ministry

The Missions Ministry shall consist of the coordinator and the heads of the various outreach ministries of the church. The Missions Ministry shall be responsible for coordinating and supporting all the missionary efforts and outreach programs of the church. Although all the ministries of the body are encouraged to do the work of mission and outreach, it is imperative that those matters be coordinated through the Missions Ministry. One of the basic reasons for the church's existence is to, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Matthew 28:19a. The Missions Ministry shall include ministries that will address the need of the community and the world with an objective to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Missions Ministries may include but are not limited to the following ministries: The Missions Ministries serve the military, homeless, nursing homes, domestic and foreign missions, and other community needs.

SECTION 2. Election of Officers

- A. All ministries of the Church are requested to hold annual elections at least one (1) week before the December Church meeting.
- B. No member shall hold two major offices in the Church simultaneously, e.g., Deacon and Trustee.

SECTION 3. Standing Committees

The Church shall establish such Standing Committees as deemed necessary to execute the purposes and to perform the functions of the ministries of the Church. Committees will reflect a diverse representation of the church membership. Membership of Standing Committees shall be comprised of officers whose duties are related to the functions of a committee and lay members who desire to serve. Membership of Standing Committees shall be composed of a Chairperson who serves a five-year term. Committees will report on activity annually or as needed during a regularly scheduled church meeting.

- A. Worship Committee. This committee of Ministers and Deacons, in conjunction with the Senior Pastor, shall oversee Church services and administration of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

B. Constitutional Review Committee. This committee shall be composed of five (5) to seven (7) Church members selected by the Joint Board. The function of the committee shall be as follows:

1. The committee shall review all proposed amendments to the Constitution and By-laws.
2. The committee shall initiate and conduct a review of the Constitution and By-Laws every three (3) years and advise the Church body of practices that vary from the intent of the Constitution and By-Laws.
3. The committee shall receive and submit all proposed changes to the Joint Board in accordance with Article VII.
4. The committee shall meet at least once a year and be on call as needed to review any recommended adjustments to the Constitution and By-laws.

C. Scholarship Committee. This committee shall be composed of no less than five (5) members selected by the Joint Board. The committee shall establish written application criteria, procedures, amount, and frequency of the awards. The committee can award scholarships to the community, but Ebenezer Baptist church members will have priority.

D. Honors Committee. This committee, selected by the Joint Board, shall be composed of seven (7) members who by virtue of their records of faithful service to Ebenezer Baptist ministries will select recipients of church honors. The committee shall be responsible for identifying and recognizing a member or members who have made outstanding contributions to the quality of Church life through their exemplary leadership and participation in the Church community. Specific duties of this committee shall be to:

1. Establish the criteria for selecting an honoree.
2. Determine the form of recognition (e.g., certificate, plaque, banquet or other ceremony).
3. Establish procedures for managing the form of recognition in a manner that is financially supported by the Board of Trustees and/or supplemented by private contributions that are recorded and maintained by the Financial Secretary.

F. Culinary (Food Service) Committee. This committee, selected by the Joint Board, shall be composed of a Chairperson and Co-Chairperson with five (5) to seven (7) members of the Church. The Chairperson and Co-Chairperson, with the assistance of the Board of Trustees shall have food service management certifications, experience and/or training. Responsibilities of this committee include the following duties:

1. Requisition, inventory, and maintain kitchen equipment and materials.
2. Establish procedures to ensure the security of kitchen facilities and equipment.

3. Organize, prepare, and host special Church events.
4. Monitor and supervise personnel of contracted vendors or commercial services engaged by non-committee persons to provide food service for special occasions (e.g., wedding receptions, anniversaries, retirements, and personal celebrations) that require use of church equipment and materials.

ARTICLE III – VACATING THE PULPIT

SECTION 1. If due to resignation, death and any unusual difficulties and/or violations of the employment contract arise involving the Senior Pastor, the Diaconate shall do all in their power to expedite the filling of the pulpit and/or affect a mutual agreement between the Senior Pastor and the Church. This effort shall include a meeting of the Senior Pastor and the disputant to address the difficulties to bring about a resolution.

SECTION 2. It shall be the right of any one member or any group of members or any group of members who have a grave grievance or allegation against the Senior Pastor/Assistant Pastor, to present said allegation to the Diaconate, in writing, and be prepared to prove said allegation. On receiving the allegation or accusation, the Diaconate will immediately take the necessary steps to examine the validity and truth of the accusation or complaint.

SECTION 3. If the Diaconate finds the grave grievance or allegation to be groundless or not valid, they shall dismiss the matter and consider it closed. If, after inquiry, they find the grave grievance or allegation has merit, they must do all in their power to properly address the matter and reach a mutual agreement with the Senior Pastor/Assistant Pastor and persons bringing the grave grievance or allegation to include a recommendation to the Joint Board before bringing it to the church meeting.

A. If such an agreement cannot be reached, then the Diaconate shall proceed to take the steps necessary to bring the grave grievance or allegation to the Church meeting with the recommendation for action.

B. The meeting of the Diaconate in which the vote is taken to recommend to the Church action involving the Senior Pastor/Assistant Pastor must conform to Article I, Section 4, paragraph B of the By-Laws, "Duties of Diaconate."

SECTION 4. At the Church meeting in which the vacating of the pulpit is involved, the meeting must conform to Article III of the By-Laws and IV and V of the Constitution, "Meetings" and "Quorum."

SECTION 5. The Church may terminate the Senior Pastor's services only after the Senior Pastor has a fair chance (provided he/she requests one) to defend himself/herself before the Joint Board and the Church at a meeting in which the dismissal of the Senior Pastor is on the agenda.

SECTION 6. After deliberation of the case by the Diaconate and the Senior Pastor, the membership shall vote by ballot to retain or dismiss the Senior Pastor.

SECTION 7. The Diaconate shall count the votes in the presence of the Board of Trustees and announce the results of the same to the Congregation and the Senior Pastor. The result of the vote will be officially transmitted to the Senior Pastor in writing with a copy filed for Church records. A majority of the voter's present shall be sufficient to terminate the services of the Senior Pastor.

SECTION 8. If the vote is in favor of terminating the services of the Senior Pastor, his/her duties will cease immediately.

ARTICLE IV – FILLING THE PULPIT

SECTION 1.

Upon notice of a pending vacancy or immediately after a vacancy occurs in the pulpit, the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Diaconate, in consultation with the Diaconate, shall appoint a Pulpit Committee, according to the latest edition of (Goodwin, The New Hiscox Guide for Baptist Church), of not more than seven (7) members of good and regular standing, whose duty will be to:

- A. Select a chairperson of the committee.
- B. Establish screening and selection criteria for pastoral candidates.
- C. Review the credentials and experience of each candidate.

SECTION 2. The Pulpit Committee shall present candidate(s) to the Diaconate. The Diaconate shall review candidate(s) and, if approved, present them to the church for consideration.

SECTION 3. All reports from the Pulpit Committee must be submitted in writing and entered into the official Church records by the Church Clerk.

SECTION 4. If the Church fails to elect a Senior Pastor from the candidate(s) presented by the Diaconate, the matter of selection of a candidate(s) will then be referred to the Joint Board and/or to the Pulpit Committee to reinstitute the process.

SECTION 5. No Senior Pastor can be elected or considered for election unless he/she has been investigated as herein provided and has been presented to the Church as a candidate for election by the Diaconate.

SECTION 6. Election Committee-The Diaconate shall appoint an Election Committee for selection of Senior Pastor and Assistant Pastor, of not more than seven (7) full members of good and regular standing, excluding Joint Board members, whose duty will be to present the election process to include eligibility and voting platforms to the Joint Board for approval.

SECTION 7. The position of Assistant Pastor will be filled following the same guidelines as outlined above in Article IV-Fulfilling the Pulpit.

ARTICLE V – CHURCH DISCIPLINE

SECTION 1. The objective and purpose of discipline is to preserve the fundamental beliefs, by-laws and covenants of this Church and shall be administered in Christian love and with purpose of

reconciliation between aggrieved parties and the Church. Differences between members may always be resolved privately. If resolution cannot be achieved and it affects the member's relationship to the Church, the offended or the offender may seek intervention by the Church. The Church is always held in high esteem by its members, and more respected by the world, when a high standard of Christian morals is maintained, and a zealous watch care is exercised over the faith and conduct of its members. (Goodwin, The New Hiscox Guide for Baptist Church)

The way in which discipline is affected must always be governed by gentleness, compassion, and love and never exercised in spirit of arrogance, dictatorial power, vindictiveness, or moral superiority. (Goodwin, The New Hiscox Guide for Baptist Church)

SECTION 2. The Church has a right to exercise a watchful supervision over its members to reprove them when erring and withdraw fellowship from the unrepentant. This is a necessity arising from the very constitution of this organization and has scriptural authorization based on:

- A. For the offended, The Law of Forgiveness (Luke 17:3-4)
- B. The Law of Love (John 13:34-35)
- C. For the offender, The Law of Confession (Matthew 5:23-25)
- D. Dealing with a sinning brother (Matthew 18:15-17)

SECTION 3. Any member of this Church may file a grave grievance or allegation against any other member of the Church. These charges shall be put in writing and signed by the accuser and filed with the Senior Pastor and the Diaconate for resolution.

SECTION 4. Offenses for which a member of this church may be disciplined are the violations of the Covenant of the Church in The New National Baptist Hymnal.

SECTION 5. Resolution of Offenses

All grave grievances and/or allegations must be stated with a reasonable degree of certainty and made so explicit that the accused will have a fair understanding of the allegation(s).

- A. The offended member presents his/her written complaint to a Deacon who, after reasonable discussion and deliberation, resolves the complaint between the aggrieved parties or, if unsuccessful, refers the complaint to the Senior Pastor. If no resolution can be found the matter is referred to the Diaconate.
- B. The Diaconate shall meet with the accuser, followed by a meeting with the accused. The Deacons shall in the name of the Church, do all in their power to settle and reconcile all controversies and charges preferred. If they fail in their attempt at reconciliation because of the unchristian attitudes of a member or members, the Diaconate may request a special meeting with the Senior Pastor.
- C. The Senior Pastor and Diaconate shall meet with both the accused and the accuser to hear both parties and attempt to resolve the matter jointly. If this attempt is unsuccessful, the Senior Pastor and the Diaconate shall deliberate in private and render a decision to either dismiss the matter or to refer the matter to the Church body for action. If the Senior Pastor and

Diaconate discover that the allegations are manifestly too vague or without merit or foundation, they may summon the accuser to a special meeting called by the Senior Pastor and Diaconate. The Secretary of the Diaconate will read the decision of the Diaconate and dismiss the case. If they fail in their attempt at reconciliation because of the unchristian attitudes of a member or members, the Senior Pastor and Diaconate may request a special meeting of the Church.

- D. Should the congregation of the Church vote to dismiss the member(s), the dismissal(s) shall be communicated in writing, giving the disciplined member(s) an opportunity for reinstatement within a specified period and upon expressing repentance and forgiveness.

SECTION 6. Modes of Terminating Membership

- A. By letter. Upon request, a full active member may request a letter of recommendation to join another fellowship of believers.
- B. By exclusion. By reason of inactivity (See Constitution, Article II, Membership) or discipline, the member's name may be removed from the membership roll.

ARTICLE VI – CHURCH CEMETERY

Any regular member shall have a right to be buried in the Church cemetery. The Cemetery shall be primarily restricted to members of Ebenezer Baptist Church. Special consideration shall be given to the less fortunate in our community when the need presents itself.

ARTICLE VII – OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

A special committee, selected by the Joint Board, of no less than five (5) members, shall develop an operational manual for the church to include policies, procedures, and organizational charts. This document shall be available in the administrative office for use by any member. The Church Clerk and the Administrative Assistant shall be responsible for maintaining the document. Any member or ministry can make recommended changes. The Joint Board or a special committee appointed by the Board shall review the document at least once a year and approve/disapprove recommended changes in the document.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1. All proposed amendments and alterations to the Constitution and By-Laws shall be submitted in writing, signed by the member proposing said amendment and shall be submitted in a regular business meeting. Notice of the proposed amendment(s) shall be given by the proposing member to the Joint Board at least one month (30 days) before the business meeting in which the proposed amendment(s) shall be submitted. The Joint Board shall report its review and recommendations regarding the proposed amendment to the Constitution and By-Laws at the Church meeting following receipt of the proposed amendment. The Joint Board will submit the proposed amendment, if applicable, to the Church Clerk as specified in Article VIII, Section 2.

SECTION 2. Upon receipt of the proposed amendment at any Church meeting, the Clerk of the

Church shall read such amendment and it shall be announced at said meeting that the submitted proposed amendment will be voted upon at the next regular meeting.

SECTION 3. Notice of all proposed amendments shall be published in the Church bulletin for at least two (2) weeks prior to the regular Church meeting where said amendment will be voted upon.

SECTION 4. All amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws must be adopted by the majority of Church members present at said business meeting, either in person or electronically, where said amendment is presented for adoption.