

**THE CONSTITUTION  
OF  
BETHLEHEM CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
ALTAMAHAW, NC  
(Revised ? 2017)**

*<A Constitution Revision Committee was formed by the congregation to act on the advice of the CCCC conference to divide our current combined Constitution and Bylaws document into two separate documents. This requires extensive editing to ensure each document is clear and proper, and that it reflects the actual operation of this church and the will of the congregation. The committee was also tasked with incorporating a membership agreement into these documents and adding a dissolution clause.*

*This is a draft presentation of the Constitution document. We are still working on the Bylaws document, but wanted to give the congregation a chance to review this document so that any **critical objections** can be discussed now before we expend too much time on the Bylaws. We are not proposing ratification of this document yet. That will only occur after the Bylaws document is finished and both documents are presented together for congregational approval.*

***This is the markup version of the draft.** Text that is to be removed is shown as stricken and text to be added is shown in red. Text shown in italics and enclosed in angle brackets, just like this paragraph, are explanatory notes that will not appear in the ratified version.*

*If you have concerns or comments about this document, please submit it in writing to the Constitution Revision Committee (Jacky Lee, Cheryl Madren, Jack Madren, Jay Madren and Nathan Simpson) or by emailing it to [crc@bethlehemchristian.org](mailto:crc@bethlehemchristian.org).*

**ARTICLE ONE - NAME**

The name of this church shall be Bethlehem Christian Church.

Bethlehem Christian Church maintains its principle office at the location and address specified in the Bylaws. The congregation of Bethlehem Christian Church shall have full power and authority to change the location of the principal office from one location to another. The membership shall be notified in writing at least sixty (60) days in advance of a change of address. Such notices shall include the new address, effective date, and telephone number.

Bethlehem Christian Church was incorporated in the State of North Carolina as a non-profit corporation, organized and recognized on October 14, 1991. Bethlehem Christian Church is a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Bethlehem Christian Church shall not be operated for profit, and no profit or any portion thereof, remainder or residue from dues, donations or income from operations shall inure to the benefit of members or officers. Directors, Trustees and Officers shall serve without compensation except that they be allowed and paid reasonable reimbursement for actual or IRS allowable reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of their regular duties as specified in this Constitution and Bylaws.

*<additions based on CCCC recommendations>*

ARTICLE ~~FOUR~~ TWO - DOCTRINE

1. FAITH. This congregation recognizes the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice, and holds that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the true test of fellowship. Members shall have the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of their own conscience, under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The following STATEMENT OF FAITH is not a test but an expression of the spirit in which the congregation interprets the Word of God.

We believe the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, to be the only inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative Word of God written.

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy ~~Ghost~~ Spirit. *<consistent with version placed in hymnals>*

We believe in the deity of Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

~~We believe that for salvation of lost and sinful man regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.~~ We believe regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for the salvation of lost and sinful man. *<consistent with version placed in hymnals>*

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by Whose indwelling power and fullness the Christian is enabled to live a godly life in this present evil world.

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in Christ.

~~Based on the preceding statement of faith, Bethlehem Christian Church has established and accepted the following vision statement:~~

~~To be a congregation whose doctrine is based solely on the Holy Scripture and reaches out to the lost that they might know the joys of salvation and fellowship with God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, to encourage personal involvement of all its members in missions – both home and abroad, to demonstrate Christian love in interaction with fellow believers, new members, and visitors, to support Christian growth of the youth within the congregation, and to actively function day to day in a manner which shows to everyone that Christ lives within us. *<moved to paragraph 3 of Article 3>*~~

~~2. COVENANT. We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scripture and to walk in the ways of the Lord. We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the gospel to all mankind, exalting the worship of the one true God and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of human brotherhood. Depending, as did our fathers, upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the Kingdom of God, and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting. <moved to new Article 5>~~

### 3 2. CARDINAL PRINCIPLES.

- The Holy Bible is our only rule of faith and practice. *<consistent with the Statement of Faith>*
- The Lord Jesus Christ is the only head of the church and our only Savior.
- Christian character is a sufficient test of fellowship and of church membership.
- Christian is a sufficient name for Christ's followers.
- Individual interpretation of the Scriptures is the right and privilege of all Christians.
- All the followers of Christ shall **should** be united as one, even as Christ wished and expressed in prayer.

## ARTICLE ~~TWO~~ **THREE** – MISSION, PURPOSE & VISION

### 1. **MISSION.** The mission of this congregation shall be to:

Love God, love others, and make disciples as we go.

### 2. **PURPOSE.** The purpose of this congregation shall be to glorify God by:

- Sharing in the worship of God and administering the Sacraments of the church (Worship).
- Making God's will dominant in the lives of this congregation by teaching one another to obey all that Christ commanded and living according to the example as set forth in His life, teachings, death, and resurrection (Formation).
- Being a source of spiritual guidance to all who seek it and exercising Christian care over its members. Binding together the followers of Jesus Christ in Christian fellowship (Fellowship).
- Winning people to Christ and serving as a channel of expression for its membership in extending the kingdom of God throughout the world (Outreach).

To accomplish this purpose, the congregation shall maintain public worship and Christian instruction to serve as a vehicle through which its members might become more effective witnesses for Christ. Further, the congregation shall seek cooperation of other like-minded churches and shall join in the common goal of promoting the cause of the kingdom of God.

3. **VISION.** Based on the preceding **our** statement of faith, Bethlehem Christian Church has established and accepted the following vision statement:

To be a congregation whose doctrine is based solely on the ~~Holy Scripture~~ **Bible** and reaches out to the lost that they might know the joys of salvation and fellowship with God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, to encourage personal involvement of all its members in missions - both home and abroad, to demonstrate Christian love in interaction with fellow believers, new members, and visitors, to support Christian growth of the youth within the congregation, and to actively function day-to-day in a manner which shows to everyone that Christ lives within us.

*<moved from paragraph one of original article four (now article two); "Holy Scripture" changed to "Bible" to make it consistent with the Statement of Faith>*

#### ARTICLE ~~THREE~~ **FOUR** - POLITY

The congregation acknowledges Jesus Christ as its Head and finds in the ~~Holy Scriptures~~ **Bible**, as properly interpreted with the help of the Holy Spirit through reason, faith, and conscience, its guidance in matters of faith and discipline. *<make it consistent with the Statement of Faith>*

Bethlehem Christian Church ~~shall be a part of the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference and shall sustain that relationship according to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference~~ **may elect to be affiliated with other churches as provided for in the Bylaws.** *<moved conference affiliation language to Bylaws>*

The government of this congregation shall be vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs, subject, however, to the ~~Laws of the State of North Carolina relating to corporations not for profit or ecclesiastical corporations~~ **when the congregation acts prayerfully together.** *<stricken text is implied as part of paragraph 3 of Article 1; added text sourced from CCCC>*

#### ARTICLE FIVE – COVENANT

We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in the ~~Holy Scripture~~ **Bible** and to walk in the ways of the Lord. We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the gospel to all mankind, exalting the worship of the one true God and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of human brotherhood. Depending, as did our fathers, upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God, and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting. *<separated from original Article 4; this is now covered by the Membership Agreement Bylaw, but was decided to leave it in the constitution as tradition and to make it more difficult to remove or alter; "Holy Scripture" changed to "Bible" to make it consistent with the Statement of Faith>*

ARTICLE FIVE SIX – MEMBERSHIP

~~1. RECEPTION.~~

- ~~a.1. Membership in this church shall be open to any person who has been baptized or has made public confession of that Jesus Christ as is Lord and Savior, that the Bible is God's Holy Word, and has been baptized. <match the current membership procedure>~~
- ~~b.2. A member shall pledge to attend regular worship of the church and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, to live the Christian life, to share in the life and work of the congregation, to contribute to the support of the congregation and its mission programs, to set a Christian example in day-to-day interaction with others and be an effective witness for Jesus Christ, and to seek diligently the spiritual welfare of the membership and the community. adhere to the membership agreement contained in the Bylaws.~~

*<all remaining membership rules moved to Bylaws>*

- ~~e. Associate Member. An individual with good and sufficient reasons to continue his membership in his home church but who is eager to attend and participate in the work of Bethlehem Christian Church and is recommended by the Pastor, may hold an associate membership by a majority vote of the congregation. He shall enjoy the rights and responsibilities of a regular member and shall adhere to its policies and principles.~~
- ~~d. Honorary Member. An individual who is recommended by the Church Council or Board of Deacons may be granted honorary membership by a majority vote of the congregation. Honorary members do not have voting privileges.~~

~~2. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP. Any one of the following ways may terminate membership in Bethlehem Christian Church:~~

- ~~a. Death.~~
- ~~b. Transfer. A member who desires to unite with another church may request a letter of transfer from this church.~~
- ~~c. Erasure. A member who is known to have joined another church shall have his name dropped from the membership roll. Such individuals shall be made aware of this action by a letter from the Church Clerk, if possible.~~
- ~~d. Exclusion. A member who becomes an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct or by persistent breach of covenant vows may be recommended for exclusion from the church by the Board of Deacons. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the congregation shall be necessary to terminate the individual's membership. This action shall be taken only after due~~

~~notice and hearing and after faithful efforts have been made to induce such a member to return to a life of Christian living.~~

- ~~3. RESTORATION OF MEMBERSHIP. The membership of any individual which has been terminated may be restored by a majority vote of the congregation. If termination of membership was due to some offense, membership may be restored upon evidence of reformation. If the termination was for any other cause, membership may be restored upon satisfactory explanation of the cause and evidence that it is no longer a factor in the person's life.~~

## ARTICLE ~~SIX~~ SEVEN - SERVICES AND MEETINGS

### 1. WORSHIP.

- a. Services of worship shall be held at given hours each Sunday, ~~except when~~ **unless the Board of Deacons determines that** conditions are unfavorable for attendance ~~as determined by the Board of Deacons.~~ *<make clear who establishes hours versus who cancels a service>*
- b. The Sacraments. This congregation recognizes as Sacraments the two instituted by Jesus Christ.
  - 1) BAPTISM. The Sacrament of Baptism is the outward symbol of an existing faith. For ~~adults~~ **those who profess faith in Jesus Christ** it is a sign of cleansing from sin and spiritual rebirth into a new life in fellowship with Christ. ~~For infants it is the church's seal to the act of consecration in which Christian parents have dedicated their child to God and by which the congregation accepts its duty of spiritual oversight of the child.~~ *<moved to separate "c" item>* The mode of baptism may be ~~determined~~ **chosen** by the candidate - sprinkling, immersion, or pouring.
  - 2) THE LORD'S SUPPER. **The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper commemorates the sacrifice by Christ of His body and blood as atonement for sin. It is observed by His command until He returns and is to be entered into by participants only after prayerful self-examination. The elements used are chosen by the congregation.** ~~The Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday in each quarter and at other times as directed by the congregation.~~ *<frequency information moved to Bylaws>*
- c. **Child Dedication. This is the church's seal to the act of consecration in which Christian parents have dedicated their child to God and by which the congregation accepts its duty of spiritual oversight of the child.** *<separated from Baptism item above>*

- d. Ordination is the authorization of someone to take on the office of pastor or deacon. Deacons and members of the pastoral staff shall be ordained prior to the unsupervised performance of their duties.
- e. Other services for worship, inspiration, prayer, and study may be held as determined by the congregation.

2. BUSINESS CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS. *<remove secular connotation>*

- a. ~~Quarterly Meetings.~~ Quarterly **Regularly scheduled** meetings to conduct the **business** of this congregation shall be held ~~ordinarily on the fourth Sunday night of January, April, July, and October, at times to be announced by the church.~~ Regularly scheduled meeting times may be changed by the Church Council if deemed necessary. At the quarterly meetings, the officers, boards, and committees shall present reports of the important activities of the church. The proposed budget and officers for the coming year shall be presented for approval at the October meeting. Yearly reports of the officers, boards, and committees shall be presented at the January meeting. *<stricken parts moved to Bylaws>*
- b. ~~Budget and Nomination Meeting.~~ A session of the Church Council for the preparation of a budget and the nomination of officers for the ensuing year shall be held at least three weeks before the October quarterly meeting. All officers, boards, and committees whose duties call for the expenditure of money shall submit to the Church Council their estimated needs for the coming year for inclusion in the new budget. An officer, board, or committee, with the exception of the Cemetery Committee, may not incur any expense which exceeds its budget without the approval of the congregation, except for amounts of \$100.00 or less which may be approved by the Church Council. *<moved to Bylaws>*
- c. ~~Special Meetings.~~
- 1-b. ~~Special~~ **Called** meetings may be called **scheduled** by the Pastor, Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, Church Council, or the Church Clerk upon written request of **by written request to the Church Clerk from** five voting members of the congregation. The purpose of the meeting must ~~always~~ be clearly defined. ~~Any~~ **The congregation must be notified of the date, time and purpose of any** called meeting and its purpose must be made public at least two weeks in advance of the meeting date. This may be done by announcement from the pulpit or by being published in the church bulletin. *<grammar corrections and clarifications; leave method of notification up to the congregation>*
- 2 c. Urgent **meetings about** matters for the good of the congregation may be considered without prior notice. The validity of the urgency shall be determined at the time of the meeting. Such meetings require more than one-half the voting members of the congregation be present. *<moved to Definitions below>*

d. ~~Definitions.~~ *<the remainder of this article (Definitions, Voting, Official Year and Language) moved to new Article Eight – Procedures>*

## ARTICLE EIGHT - PROCEDURES

All congregational and board meetings shall follow parliamentary procedures as prescribed in *Robert's Rules of Order*, with modifications as listed below.

1. QUORUM. A quorum of at least ten percent (10%) of the voting members shall be required to conduct business at ~~quarterly~~ **regular** or called meetings. Urgent meetings require **a quorum of more than one-half fifty percent (50%) of the voting members of the congregation be present to conduct business.** *<last sentence moved from previous paragraph>*
2. Active **VOTING MEMBERS.** An ~~active voting~~ member shall be a member **sixteen (16) years of age or older** who attends **Sunday morning worship** services at least once a quarter unless prohibited from doing so due to military, **educational** or professional obligations or health of self or family. **Members who do not meet these qualifications are non-voting members.** *<additions moved from Voting paragraph below>*
3. ~~Inactive Members.~~ An ~~inactive member~~ shall be a member who attends church less than once a quarter unless prohibited from doing so due to military or professional obligations or health of self or family. An individual classified as inactive shall be advised of this by letter, if possible. An inactive member shall not be eligible to vote until his status has been changed from inactive to active. Once an inactive member has satisfied attendance requirements necessary for a return to active status, he shall be advised of this change. Return to active status shall be by annual review of attendance records by the Church Clerk or a decision by the Board of Deacons. *<moved to Bylaws>*

### 4 3. VOTING.

- a. ~~Only active members, sixteen years of age and older, shall be eligible to vote. A list of inactive members shall be maintained and be available at all business meetings in order to verify that any vote shall be by eligible voting members of the congregation.~~ *<first sentence moved to Voting Members definition above; remainder moved to Church Clerk description>*
- b. ~~a.~~ A member must be present to vote. There shall be no absentee ballots.
- c. ~~b.~~ Elections **All votes** shall be by open vote, except a ballot may be used in the case of a call for a Pastor, a Minister of Christian Education, **the call or dismissal of a member of the ministry staff** or when an expenditure of more than **\$10,000.00 ten percent (10%) of the current annual budget** is being considered. The Church Clerk shall keep ballots for three months following the ~~business session~~ **meeting** in which they were used. *<the \$10,000 limit was added in 1976, which at that time was 33% of the annual budget>*

~~d~~ c. A majority vote shall be decisive, unless otherwise specified in this Constitution **or Bylaws.**

~~e~~ d. **An affirmative vote of at least two-thirds affirmative of the votes cast shall be required for purchasing, selling, mortgaging, leasing, or transferring church property. A two-thirds vote shall also be required for excluding a person from church membership, calling a Pastor or Minister of Christian Education, and amending the Constitution and Bylaws. any of the following actions:**

- 1) acquiring or disposing of real property
- 2) incurring secured or unsecured debt
- 3) entering into a long term lease
- 4) calling a member of the ministry staff
- 5) excluding a person from church membership
- 6) amending this Constitution
- 7) amending the Bylaws without the advance notice prescribed in the Bylaws for such amendments
- 8) Incurring an unbudgeted expenditure exceeding ten percent (10%) of the current budget

~~f.~~ A two-thirds affirmative vote as used in this Constitution shall mean more than two-thirds of eligible ballots cast, excluding blanks. *<defined in Robert's Rules>*

~~5~~ 4. OFFICIAL YEAR. ~~The official year of the church shall begin on the first Sunday in January and all officers, boards, and committees shall assume their duties at that time and continue in office until their terms expire.~~ **All officers, boards and committees shall assume their duties at installation. The church fiscal year shall begin on January 1.**

~~6~~ 5. LANGUAGE. The language of this Constitution **and Bylaws** shall not limit any office, board, or committee to male members of the congregation.

6. BUDGET. Expenses not explicitly authorized by a congregational meeting shall be limited to those in the budget approved by the congregation. No officer, board, or committee may incur any expense which exceeds its budget without the approval of the congregation, except as described in the Church Council article of this Constitution.

#### ARTICLE NINE – PASTORAL STAFF

*<new article – covers common elements of all pastoral staff>*

1. Any pastoral staff member shall be called for an indefinite time by the congregation. When a vacancy occurs in a pastoral staff position, and the congregation desires for the position to be filled, the Church Council or a special committee appointed for this purpose by the Council, after seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, shall obtain and evaluate applicants, select one deemed worthy of consideration, introduce that candidate to the congregation, and call a congregational meeting to consider the

candidate's election. At the first opportunity, the new staff member shall join the church if they have not already done so.

2. While the term of any pastoral staff member shall be indefinite, the congregation may request that member's resignation by a majority vote with the expectation that his services will be terminated within ninety days of said vote. Likewise, the staff member shall be expected to give the church ninety days' notice in the event of a desire to voluntarily leave the church. Should the staff member lose good standing due to personal conduct, an immediate resignation shall be required.

*<individual pastoral job descriptions moved to Bylaws>*

## ARTICLE SEVEN TEN - OFFICERS

~~The Officers of the Church shall be~~ **All corporate officers shall be voting members of this church. Because of their essential roles in conducting meetings or other corporate business, the following positions are designated as officers of the corporation:** *<state voting member requirement once and remove this phrase from all officers, and show why these specific positions were selected for inclusion in the constitution>*

- 4-1. **CHURCH CLERK.** ~~The Church Clerk shall be an active member of this church and elected annually for a term of one year. There shall be no restriction on the number of consecutive terms an individual may serve in this office.~~ *<moved to Bylaws>* **The duties of the Church Clerk shall include the following:**

- a. Keep an accurate record of all ~~business~~ **congregational** meetings of the church. **At a minimum, such record shall include information required in *Robert's Rules of Order* if the meeting audio is being clearly recorded. Otherwise full summaries of all reports and discussions are required.**
- b. Notify officers, members of boards and committees, and delegates of their election or appointment.
- c. Give notice of all ~~business~~ **congregational** meetings.
- d. Maintain the membership roll to include ~~active and inactive status,~~ dates of baptism, dates and methods of reception, and dates and methods of termination of membership. A list of ~~inactive~~ members shall be ~~maintained and be~~ available at all ~~business~~ **congregational** meetings in order to verify that any vote shall be by eligible ~~voting~~ members of the congregation. *<last sentence moved from Voting section>*
- e. Request letters of transfer of membership.
- f. Issue letters of termination of membership **due to transfer, erasure or exclusion.**
- g. Present **and distribute** an annual membership report **at a regular congregational meeting.**
- h. Serve as secretary of the Church Council **in the absence of the Assistant Church Clerk.**

- i. **Serve as secretary of the Corporation.**
  - j. Perform other duties as requested by the Church Council or congregation.
- 5 ~~2.~~ **ASSISTANT CHURCH CLERK.** ~~The Assistant Church Clerk shall be an active member of this church and elected annually for a term of one year. There shall be no restriction on the number of consecutive terms an individual may serve in this office. <moved to Bylaws>~~ **The duties of the Assistant Church Clerk shall include the following:**
- a. **Serve as secretary of the Church Council (non-voting).**
  - b. Assist the Church Clerk as needed.
  - c. Function in place of the Church Clerk when necessary.
- 6 ~~3.~~ **CHURCH TREASURER AND CO-TREASURER.** ~~The Church Treasurer shall be an active member of this church and elected annually for a term of one year. There shall be no restriction on the number of consecutive terms an individual may serve in this office. <moved to Bylaws>~~ **The shared duties of the Church Treasurer and Co-Treasurer shall include the following:** *<since the treasurer duties are usually split between the two, combine both positions into one description>*
- a. Receive all monies for the congregation, with **the exception of Special Projects, Cemetery, and Cemetery Endowment funds those designated for funds with a separate treasurer.** Give receipt of ~~same~~ **these monies including acknowledgement of contributions given in memory or honor of someone as appropriate.** Maintain an accurate, up-to-date record of ~~same~~ **all income** and issue reports concerning collections as requested. *<add common practice for memory/honor donations>*
  - b. **Deposit non-budgeted funds for any church group into the same depository, maintain an accounting of these funds, and make payments from these funds as directed by each fund administrator.**
  - ~~b~~-c. Deposit funds received in such depository as the Board of Trustees shall order.
  - ~~e~~-d. Have custody of all documents relating to **intangible church property, with the exception of those that have a separate treasurer,** as the Board of Trustees shall order.
  - ~~d~~-e. Make payments of financial obligations ~~based on the budget~~ **as directed by the congregation or by the Church Council acting for the congregation.** Make **information available to** individuals, boards, and committees ~~aware of depletion of~~ **about the status of the budgeted funds which relate to them. If any budget limit is exceeded, the Treasurer shall ensure that the Church Council is notified as soon as possible so that the Council can determine what action is needed to address the excess.** *<prevent the Treasurer from having to be a "budget cop">*
  - ~~e.~~ Contract for investment of endowment funds (with exception of cemetery endowment(s)), legacies, trust funds, and securities as the Board of Trustees shall order. Deposit income from same in treasury funds. Investments shall be

~~controlled by banking laws of the State of North Carolina. <Investments are managed by the new Investment Committee – specified in Bylaws>~~

- f. Present **and distribute** a financial statement at the ~~quarterly~~ **each regular congregational** meetings.

~~7. ASSISTANT CHURCH TREASURER. The Assistant Church Treasurer shall be an active member of this church and elected annually for a term of one year. There shall be no restriction on the number of consecutive terms an individual may serve in this office. He shall assist the Church Treasurer as needed and function in place of the Church Treasurer when necessary. <Combined above>~~

*<Officers not listed here are moved to the Bylaws>*

14 4. MODERATOR. ~~The Moderator shall be an active member of this church and elected annually for a term of one year. An individual may serve for three consecutive terms before becoming ineligible for one year. <moved to Bylaws>~~ The Moderator shall preside over all **business congregational** meetings of the church and shall make temporary committee appointments relative to situations not resolved on the floor during **business congregational** meetings. The Moderator shall be a non-voting member of all boards and committees, **and may attend their meetings at his discretion.** *<make it clear that the Moderator is not obligated to attend meetings of boards or committees>*

15 5. ASSISTANT MODERATOR. ~~The Assistant Moderator shall be an active member of this church and elected annually for a term of one year. An individual may serve for three consecutive terms before becoming ineligible for one year. <moved to Bylaws>~~ He shall assist the Moderator as needed and function in place of the Moderator when necessary.

16 6. PARLIAMENTARIAN. ~~The Parliamentarian shall be an active member of this church and elected annually for a term of one year. An individual may serve for three consecutive terms before becoming ineligible for one year. <moved to Bylaws>~~ It shall be the duty of the Parliamentarian to rule on questions of parliamentary procedure at **business congregational** meetings, according to ~~the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.~~ *<the latest edition is neither necessary nor practical; see Bylaws for additional specifications>* **The Parliamentarian shall also inform the congregation if any motion, before a vote is taken, is a change or addition to this Constitution or Bylaws.**

17 7. ASSISTANT PARLIAMENTARIAN. ~~The Assistant Parliamentarian shall be an active member of this church and elected annually for a term of one year. An individual may serve for three consecutive terms before becoming ineligible for one year. <moved to Bylaws>~~ He shall assist the Parliamentarian as needed and function in place of the Parliamentarian when necessary.

*<Officers not listed here are moved to the Bylaws>*

24 8. CORPORATE PRESIDENT. The Corporate President shall be the ~~Board of Directors-~~  
~~member who is the~~ chairman of the Board of Trustees. Subject to the required  
congregational approval specified elsewhere in this Constitution, this corporate officer  
is empowered to implement the congregation's decision for the corporation on real  
property transactions.

25 9. OTHER OFFICERS. Other officers may be elected or appointed as the ~~needs of the~~  
congregation ~~dictate~~ desires.

*<new article for the Church Council since it is neither a board nor committee>*

### ARTICLE ELEVEN – CHURCH COUNCIL

Voting members of the Church Council shall be the chairman of the Board of Deacons as  
council chairman, one representative from each of the other boards, the Church Clerk, the  
Church Treasurer, one member from the Women's Fellowship(s), one member from the  
Men's Fellowship(s), and one member from the Youth Fellowship.

Non-voting members of the Church Council shall be the Moderator, all pastoral staff, and  
the Assistant Church Clerk who shall serve as council secretary.

Members of the council must be voting members of the church. In the absence of the  
chairman of the Board of Deacons, the Moderator shall serve as chairman of the council.

It shall be the duty of the Church Council to visualize the entire task of the congregation, to  
provide guidance on the general direction of the church's programs, and to act for the  
congregation on trivial matters. The Council may also act for the congregation in urgent  
matters when the Council believes that there would likely be a broad consensus were the  
congregation to decide the issue directly. This authority also includes spending money to:

- replace or repair existing equipment and facilities
- approve, no more frequently than once per year per budget item, requests from  
officers, boards, or committees to exceed their budgets
- take other action that the Council deems appropriate

with limits on such spending authority as stated in the Bylaws. Any non-trivial cases in  
which the Council acts for the congregation shall be reported at the next regular  
congregational meeting.

It shall be the duty of the Church Council to make nominations for all officers, boards, and  
committees, except those that are appointed by the Moderator during congregational  
meetings, and to present this slate to the congregation for adoption. The Council shall have  
the power to fill all vacancies occurring in these positions between elections.

It shall be the duty of the Church Council to hire and manage all non-ministry staff. The Church Council shall create and maintain written job descriptions for all staff, both ministry and non-ministry.

The Church Council shall be the Board of Directors of Bethlehem Christian Church, Inc.

## ARTICLE ~~NINE~~ TWELVE - BOARDS

All board members, except for the Board of Stewardship, must be voting members of this church. The number of members and term definitions and limits for each Board are stated in the Bylaws.

1. BOARD OF DEACONS. ~~The Board of Deacons shall consist of nine active members of this congregation. Three Deacons shall be elected annually to serve three year terms. After serving a full term, a Deacon must remain off the board for one full year before becoming eligible for reelection. All members shall remain active participants of the board for the full three year term. A majority of the members of the board must be present for the board to conduct business.~~ *<moved to Bylaws>*

~~A board of Deacons Emeritus shall be used to honor members who have obtained 70 years of age and who have given years of faithful service to the church through the board of deacons. The Board of Deacons Emeritus shall consist of no more than six members presented to the church for approval by the Board of Deacons. A deacon emeritus shall have, for life, all privileges of an active member of the board of deacons and is encouraged to participate in all board meetings and activities.~~ *<Deacon Emeritus paragraph moved to Bylaws>*

It shall be the duty of the Board of Deacons to cooperate with the Pastor in ministering to the spiritual interests of the congregation and community, to assist in the preparation and administration of ~~ordinances~~ **the Sacraments**, to care for the ~~poor,~~ sick, and the sorrowing **of the congregation**, and to provide assistance which is possible to the indifferent and the stranger **to members of the community as the Board of Deacons deems appropriate**. ~~The Board of Deacons shall assume all duties traditionally performed by the Board of Deacons.~~ *<substitute clearer modern language and remove unnecessary items>*

2. BOARD OF TRUSTEES. ~~The Board of Trustees shall consist of nine active members of this congregation. Three Trustees shall be elected annually to serve three year terms. After serving a full term, a Trustee must remain off the board for one full year before being eligible for reelection. All members shall remain active participants of the board for the full three year term. A majority of the members of the board must be present for the board to conduct business.~~ *<moved to Bylaws>*

~~It shall be the duty of the Board of Trustees to be responsible for the care and custody of church property and for the financial affairs of the congregation as authorized by the~~

congregation oversee the financial affairs of the church and the care of church property, except as limited elsewhere in this Constitution and Bylaws. All financial affairs must be conducted according to regulations prescribed by the Laws of the State of North Carolina. *<implied in Article 1>* The Board of Trustees shall not have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer property without the authority provided by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the congregation. *<covered by Article 8 - Procedures>*

*<entire Church Council section rewritten as new Article Eleven (above)>*

~~3. CHURCH COUNCIL. The Church Council shall consist of the chairman of the Board of Deacons as chairman, the Church Clerk as secretary, the Church Treasurer, the chairman of the Board of Trustees, the chairman of the Board of Christian Education, the chairman of the Board of Outreach, the chairman of the Stewardship Committee, the Chief Usher, one representative from the Women's Fellowship(s), one representative from the Men's Fellowship(s), one representative from the Senior Youth Fellowship, and the Minister of Christian Education. Members of the council must be members of the church. In the absence of the chairman of the Board of Deacons, the Moderator shall serve as chairman of the council. A majority of the members of the council must be present for the board to conduct business.~~

~~— It shall be the duty of the Church Council to visualize the entire task of the congregation and to advise the Pastor on the general direction of the church's programs. The Council may act for this congregation in matters concerning replacement or repair of existing equipment and related supplies not to exceed \$5,000.00 and the authority to approve officers, boards, and committees request to exceed the budget in amounts of \$100.00 or less.~~

~~— It shall be the duty of the Church Council to make nominations for all officers, boards, and committees, except those that are appointed by the Moderator during business meetings, and to present this slate to the congregation for adoption at the October quarterly meeting. The Council shall have the power to fill all vacancies occurring in these positions between elections.~~

The Church Council shall be the Board of Directors of Bethlehem Christian Church, Inc.

~~4 3. BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. The Board of Christian Education shall consist of nine active members of the congregation including the Sunday School Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent, the Youth Director, the Children's Director, and six elected members. Two members shall be elected annually to serve three-year terms. After serving a full term, a member must remain off the board for one full year before becoming eligible for reelection. The Minister of Christian Education shall be a non-voting member of this Board. All members shall remain active participants of the board for the full three-year term. A majority of the members of the board must be present for the board to conduct business. *<moved to Bylaws>*~~

It shall be the duty of the Board of Christian Education to supervise and direct the educational work of the congregation. It shall present to the congregation for adoption a system of religious education covering, if possible, all ages and classes in its aspects of Social Service and Missions. **It shall create a system of Christian education covering all aspects of Biblical Christian life.** It shall be the duty of this board to secure or approve Sunday School teachers **instructors for all educational activities** through high school age, Vacation Bible School teachers, and project leaders. Adult classes shall have the option of securing **recommending** their own teachers **instructors**.

- ~~5 4. BOARD OF OUTREACH. The Board of Outreach shall consist of nine active members of this congregation. Membership of the Board shall include nine members elected annually to serve three year terms. After serving a full term, a member must remain off the board for one full year before becoming eligible for reelection. All members shall remain active participants of the board for the full three year term. A majority of the members of the board must be present for the board to conduct business. <moved to Bylaws>~~

It shall be the duty of the Board of Outreach to supervise and direct the **local** outreach ~~(both local and global)~~ ministry of the congregation. The responsibilities of the Board of Outreach shall include the following:

- a. ~~To~~ **Plan and coordinate outreach and follow up ministries to unchurched **unsaved** people in the community of the church, and the various communities represented by the church members, and to unreached people around the world.** <implied part of new Missions Committee>
  - b. **Ensure that visitors and newcomers at church services and events are greeted and provided with information and services they need.**
  - c. **Make the church's voice heard by defending Biblical principles in public.**
  - ~~b. To evaluate and allocate the yearly budget allotment for missions and to oversee the distribution of special gifts. <part of new Missions Committee>~~
  - ~~c. To plan and coordinate mission events at the church to raise awareness and encourage participation in the world mission of the church. <part of new Missions Committee>~~
  - ~~d. To educate the congregation concerning the mission of the church in cooperation with the Board of Christian Education. <see revised Board of Christian Education description>~~
- 5. BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP.** The Stewardship Committee shall consist of twelve active members of this congregation. Four members shall be elected annually to serve three-year terms. After serving a full term, a member must remain off the committee for one full year before becoming eligible for reelection. All members shall remain active

~~participants of the committee for the full three year term. <moved to Bylaws>~~ It shall be the duty of ~~this committee~~ **the Board of Stewardship** to ~~plan special programs and outreach in an effort to encourage congregational fellowship, Christian service, tithing and all forms of stewardship within the church~~ **encourage Christian service, tithing, and the discovery and use of each church member's spiritual gifts. This board shall also plan and coordinate annual events to raise funds for purposes designated by the congregation. This board's officers and Church Council representative must be voting members of this church.**

#### ARTICLE ~~TEN~~ **THIRTEEN** – AMENDMENTS

Amendments to ~~the~~ **this** Constitution and ~~Bylaws~~ may be made at any ~~business~~ **congregational** meeting by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the congregation. ~~A public announcement of the~~ **The exact** text of the proposed amendment(s) shall be made **available to the congregation at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which it is to be considered. The congregation shall also be notified of the intent to propose the amendment at each Sunday morning worship service beginning two weeks prior to the date of the meeting.** *<make the notification procedure more clear>*

#### ARTICLE FOURTEEN – DISSOLUTION

Upon the dissolution of Bethlehem Christian Church, Inc., any assets which do not have their own dissolution instructions shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code. These purposes shall be restricted to those that advance the principles of **our doctrine as stated in this Constitution.** *<recommended by CCCC for avoiding regulatory issues and to ensure assets go to appropriate organizations>*