

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH  
CONSTITUTION

*Words in italics are the same ones used in the current Constitution or Bylaws prior to these revisions that began on 3-5-19*

**PREAMBLE**

*We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.*

**1. NAME**

*This body shall be known as the Bethel Baptist Church of Oakway, located at 160 Bethel Church Road, Westminster, Oconee County, South Carolina, and is so incorporated by the State of South Carolina and recorded in the office of the South Carolina Secretary of State.*

**2. Mission**

The mission of Bethel is to connect with God and build relationships with others, leading ourselves and others to love the Lord our God with all of our hearts, souls and minds, and love our neighbors as ourselves. We become disciples of Christ who make disciples by baptizing them and teaching them to obey all that He has commanded. We prepare others to use their gifts to serve the community and the Lord faithfully in order to be Great Commission Christians in a Great Commission Church.

**3. STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS**

*We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired word of God and the basis for our beliefs. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of The Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper.*

*We believe the word "marriage" means only a legal union between one naturally born man and one naturally born woman as husband and wife, and the word "spouse" refers only to a person of the opposite sex who is a husband or wife. Marriages outside of these parameters will not be performed by church ministers or on church property. The use of church facilities is not a right of membership but is limited to **Covenant Members** and shall only be approved by the Pastor or his designee that are in agreement with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.*

**4. Core Values**

**4.1 Biblically Faithful**

The Bible is our guide, given to us, and written for us by God himself. The Bible is our source of truth and the foundation for everything we do. It explains how life is designed to work including how we should relate to God and to all people.

**4.2 Passionate About Worship**

We believe our weekly worship time should be an overflow of our daily walk and time with the Lord. We worship and honor God with our whole heart, mind, body and spirit. We support our pastor's allocation of his time to studying the Bible and praying so that he can lead us in Bible centered preaching that comes from an overflow of what God is doing in his life. We lead our weekly worship times to honor and praise God in ways that will bring unity in our church and attract those in our community that are not yet in our church family. We are passionate about worship and passionate about effectively bringing the message to all people. We do this by staying relevant and adaptive within biblical parameters to best reach our community with a special focus on reaching the teens and young adults. Though we have set times to

1 worship as a church family, we also make worship our everyday lifestyle; our daily actions are inspired by  
2 our desire to worship the Lord.

### 3 4 **4.3 Spiritually Growing**

5 We are passionate about growing spiritually in our relationship with God. We are intentional about  
6 studying Scripture, praying, and training to prepare ourselves to be effective followers of Christ. We  
7 conduct each ministry to grow our relationship with God by following our mission (connect, love, disciple,  
8 and serve) and using our discipleship process. To grow spiritually we have ministries, programs and  
9 activities that motivate all of us to walk with the Lord all the time.

### 10 11 **4.4 Discipling the Next Generation**

12 We let God use us to raise up God-centered, Jesus-magnifying, Bible-saturated, culturally-winsome  
13 disciples of Jesus Christ in the next generation. Ministry to the next generation will never be pushed to the  
14 margins at Bethel. We are not content just to offer “something” to keep our children occupied. We want  
15 God to give them hearts full of wonder, awe, and fascination with the bigness and power and beauty of  
16 God, with affections that will not be overwhelmed by the pleasures and promises of the world. That is why  
17 we are committed to developing an intentional, gospel-infused strategy aimed at winning the heart, mind,  
18 and will. Our aim is to partner with parents, who have the primary responsibility to disciple their children,  
19 and help them lead their children to connect, love, disciple, and serve God by faith in Jesus Christ.

20  
21 We believe one of the primary reasons those in the next generation stay in church after their teen years is  
22 because they develop meaningful relationships and a sense of community. We also believe they are more  
23 likely to be engaged in church if they have a mentor; a relationship in which a more experienced or more  
24 knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. Therefore, we  
25 devote significant resources of time and money to build these mentor relationships.

### 26 27 **4.5 Committed to the Uncommitted**

28 Because we have a personal relationship with God it motivates us to help others experience that same  
29 relationship. God sent His Son to seek and save the lost. We choose to live in such a way that when others  
30 see our daily lives, they want to have the same relationship that we have with God also. As we grow more  
31 and more in our relationship with God our lives will reflect this conviction. We are passionate about  
32 meeting the spiritual needs in our community and sharing the love of Christ with those, both young and old,  
33 who may not know Him.

### 34 35 **4.6 Connected through Ministry Teams and Prayer-Bible Study Teams**

36 We believe spiritual growth and uncommon unity with each other happens best in the context of deep and  
37 honest relationships. These kinds of relationships can be developed and maintained best in Ministry Teams  
38 and Prayer-Bible Study Teams. In our Prayer-Bible Study Teams (PBS Teams) of caring people,  
39 individuals share and encourage one another in their walk with God. By engaging in prayer, Bible study,  
40 and fellowship within these teams. We develop these uplifting relationships with other Christians who will  
41 pray, support, and mentor however needed. Here, individuals come together, build one another up during  
42 the week, sharing life together at a time that best fits their schedule and their communication method.  
43 Ministry Teams minister in ways that use their God given gifts, talents, and interest to help move people  
44 through the discipleship process.

45  
46 We grow spiritually when we study God’s word in community and share what God is teaching us. We  
47 nurture and care for each other in these PBS Teams. In these teams we share what is going good in our  
48 lives and where we need help. In the Ministry Teams we carry out an intentional outwardly focused  
49 ministry regularly and consistently.  
50

1 We use these Ministry Teams to carry out the ministries of our church. The God focused disciplines of  
2 prayer, Bible study, fellowship, and ministry are the foundation of our discipleship process. Because of  
3 this, our leadership team aligns our ministries, programs, and activities so that personal prayer and Bible  
4 study, family prayer and Bible study, and the team prayer and Bible study, and the outwardly focused  
5 ministry are maintained. This ensures that the people and financial resources God has entrusted to us are  
6 used effectively.

## 7 8 **5. CHURCH COVENANT**

9 *Having been convicted by the Holy Spirit, we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and, on the*  
10 *profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we*  
11 *do now in the presence of God and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another*  
12 *as one body in Christ.*

13  
14 *We commit, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the*  
15 *advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to*  
16 *sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and discipline; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of*  
17 *the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.*

18  
19 *We also commit to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in God's truths; to seek the*  
20 *salvation of our family and friends; to walk uprightly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our*  
21 *commitments and exemplary in our lifestyle; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.*

22  
23 *We further commit to watch over one another in Christian love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one*  
24 *another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be*  
25 *slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without*  
26 *delay.*

27  
28 *We moreover commit that when we, as Christians, depart from this fellowship we will as soon as possible unite*  
29 *with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.*

## 30 31 **6. POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS**

32 *The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the*  
33 *members shall constitute the membership.*

34  
35 *This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations*  
36 *of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. In so far as is practical, this*  
37 *church will cooperate with and support the Beaverdam Baptist Association, the South Carolina Baptist*  
38 *Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.*

## 39 40 **7. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

### 41 **7.1 CHURCH MEMBERSHIP General**

42 This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership  
43 retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of  
44 this church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this  
45 church and the conditions of such membership.

46  
47 Membership in the body of Jesus Christ is a sacred duty, involves full commitment to Jesus Christ, and has  
48 significant meaning, privileges, and responsibilities. It is the responsibility of Covenant Members of Bethel  
49 Baptist Church to ensure that every person accepting Jesus Christ as their savior and deciding to join the  
50 body of Christ at Bethel Baptist Church has a clear understanding of the life changing decision they are  
51 making.

1  
2 Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership in the body of Christ at Bethel Baptist  
3 Church. A person requesting membership in Bethel Baptist Church will be accepted as a “Membership  
4 Candidate under watch care” of the church. A “Membership Candidate” may request this membership in  
5 following ways:  
6

- 7 (1) By profession of faith in Jesus Christ and requesting to be baptized by immersion.
- 8 (2) By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church of like faith and practice.
- 9 (3) By acceptance upon a statement of a prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion.

10  
11 If baptism by immersion is physically not possible for an individual, the pastor and the deacons will  
12 evaluate the situation and reach a conclusion that best meets the needs of that individual to be agreed upon  
13 by the church body.  
14

15 A Membership Candidate will be mentored thorough a New Member Process to ensure they understand and  
16 agree with the meaning, privileges, and responsibilities of membership in the body of Christ at Bethel as  
17 well as the beliefs, mission, and core values of Bethel Baptist Church.  
18

19 The Pastor will direct this New Membership process through the appropriate Ministry Teams (See the  
20 Bylaws for Ministry Team details).  
21

22 Upon successful completion of this process, upon committing to the mission, core values, covenant, and  
23 beliefs as stated in this Constitution, and after being baptized by immersion (if not done previously) the  
24 Membership Candidate will be presented to the church in a Business Meeting. It shall require a majority  
25 vote of those Covenant Members present for the person to be accepted as a Covenant Member or  
26 Watchcare Member.  
27

28 **7.2 Membership types:** There are three types of membership in Bethel Baptist Church:  
29

30 **Covenant Member** – Persons who are 12 years of age or older who qualify as stated in the  
31 following section of the Constitution. Only Covenant Members have the privilege and responsibility  
32 to vote on all matters brought before the church in church conferences.  
33

34 **Inactive Member** – Persons who are 12 years of age or older, who at one time, were Covenant  
35 Members but have not renewed their Covenant Membership as stated in the following section of the  
36 Constitution. Inactive Members do not vote on matters brought before the church in church  
37 conferences.  
38

39 **Watchcare Member** – Persons who are less than 12 years of age who qualify as stated in the  
40 following section of the Constitution. Watchcare Members do not vote on matters brought before the  
41 church in church conferences.  
42

#### 43 **7.2.1 Covenant Membership Requirements**

44 It is the desire of Bethel Baptist Church to freely extend its fellowship to all individuals. At the  
45 same time, Bethel Baptist Church desires to uphold the principles of commitment to Christ and to  
46 His church that Scripture teaches must accompany true membership in the body of Christ.  
47

48 7.2.1.1 The family of Christians at Bethel Baptist Church serve God through their  
49 relationship with God, with each other and strive to let Jesus live through them to reach  
50 other people with the gospel. We covenant together to do this by holding each other  
51 responsible to live according to God’s word in the life of our church. To this end we will

1 maintain our **Covenant Membership** in Bethel Baptist Church. We will do this by  
2 establishing the following responsibilities to be a Covenant Member.

3  
4 7.2.1.1.1 Must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration

5  
6 7.2.1.1.2 Must complete the Bethel New Member class for Covenant Membership

7  
8 7.2.1.1.3 Must have been baptized by immersion in obedience to Christ, following  
9 his or her regeneration

10  
11 7.2.1.1.4 Must be twelve years of age or older

12  
13 7.2.1.1.5 Must commit to the mission, core values, covenant, and beliefs as stated in  
14 this Constitution

15  
16 7.2.1.1.6 Must renew their Covenant Membership annually

17  
18 7.2.1.1.7 Are strongly encouraged to be an active participant in a Prayer and Bible  
19 Study Group and to minister through a Ministry Team. These roles are defined in the  
20 Bylaws

21  
22 **7.2.2 Watchcare Membership Requirements**— Persons less than 12 years of age but meet all other  
23 items under section **7.2.1 Covenant Membership** Watchcare Members do not vote.

24  
25 **7.2.3 Membership Records system** – Covenant Membership renewal and Watchcare Membership  
26 renewal is accomplished each year in person in any regular scheduled worship service.

27  
28 This is done by recommitting to the Bethel Baptist Church mission, core values, covenant, and  
29 beliefs as stated in this Constitution. This is accomplished by signing a statement of this and placing  
30 it in the designated receptacle or in an offering plate during the service.

31  
32 Covenant Membership and Watchcare Membership are effective for the calendar year, January 1  
33 through December 31. During January and February of each year members are encouraged to make  
34 this renewal. During the first week in March each year, any member not renewing their Covenant  
35 Membership/Watchcare Membership during the period January to February of that year will be  
36 removed from the Covenant Membership/Watchcare Membership Role of the church and placed on  
37 the Inactive Membership Role of Bethel Baptist Church.

38  
39 At any regular scheduled worship service during the remaining months in that calendar year an  
40 Inactive Member can renew their Covenant Membership/Watchcare Membership for the remaining  
41 days of that calendar year.

42  
43 The Deacon Ministry Team (see the Bylaws) will evaluate situations where it is not reasonably  
44 possible for a member of any status to renew their membership due to situations beyond their  
45 control (sickness, rest home, etc.). Through appropriate interaction with the individual, a Deacon  
46 may complete the renewal on behalf of member.

47  
48 A list of Covenant Members, Inactive Members, and Watchcare Membership will be available in  
49 the church office at any time.  
50  
51

1  
2 **8.0 Termination of Membership**

3 *Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:*

- 4 (1) *Death of the member*  
5 (2) *Letter of recommendation to another Baptist church*  
6 (3) *Exclusion by action as defined in Section **9.0 Discipline***  
7 (4) *Deletion upon request*  
8 (5) *Deletion upon proof of membership in a church of another denomination*  
9 (6) *If a church member unites with another church, their membership in Bethel Baptist Church shall be*  
10 *terminated*

11  
12 **9.0 Discipline**

13 *It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to*  
14 *assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel*  
15 *and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than*  
16 *punishment.*

17  
18 *Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the*  
19 *church, the pastor and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the matter in accord with Matthew*  
20 *18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the members*  
21 *present is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the*  
22 *church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.*

23  
24 *The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and*  
25 *by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.*

26  
27 **10.0 License**

28 *When a member announces to the church that he feels the call to the ministry, the church, by majority vote, may*  
29 *license him as an acknowledgment of his call to the ministry and an encouragement to make preparation for it. The*  
30 *clerk of the church may furnish the member with a copy of the minutes or a certificate of license as his credentials.*  
31 *It is understood that the performance of civil duties by the member shall be governed by state law.*

32  
33 **11.0 Ordination**

34 *In the event this church, be requested to ordain a member who has been called as a pastor of a Baptist church, the*  
35 *following procedure shall be followed. The church will express its approval by a vote of three-fourths of the members*  
36 *present at any regularly arranged business meeting of the church. Then the church shall invite pastors and deacons*  
37 *from sister Baptist churches to form an Ordination Council to examine the candidate concerning his fitness for the*  
38 *ministry. If the report of the Council is favorable, the church shall proceed with the ordination.*

39  
40 **12.0 Bylaws** – Additional details of the operation of Bethel Baptist Church are maintained in the Bethel Baptist  
41 Church Bylaws

42  
43 **13.0 Constitution and Bylaws church approval and amendments**

44 *Changes in the Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church provided each*  
45 *amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed*  
46 *amendment shall have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the*  
47 *Constitution shall be by two-thirds vote. Amendments to the Bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority.*

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- 2 Approved in Conference April 21, 1996
- 3 Amended in Conference October 11, 2015
- 4 Amended in Conference \_\_\_\_\_, 2019