

**BY-LAWS OF THE
STAR OF BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH**

Article I

NAME AND PRINCIPAL LOCATION

The legal name of this Church is The Centennial Star of Bethlehem Baptist Church. The principal office shall be located at 304 Spring Street, Ossining, NY, 10562. The Church will be referred to as the Star of Bethlehem Baptist Church, or Star. The church is a non-profit, charitable institution functioning within the parameters of the government's guidelines as found in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law). No member will profit financially from the church's assets.

Article II

MISSION

The mission of this church shall be to maintain Public Worship of God, to develop Christian character, to strengthen our fellowship, to encourage Evangelistic activity, and meet the needs of our community. We will work for the liberation of persons spiritually, physically, socially, economically, and civically as governed by the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Article III

FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Polity is the form of government adopted by the Church. Authority to reach decisions for governing the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church being given to us by Christ, we hold that such authority and responsibility is vested in the membership of the congregation. This authority is derived from the Holy Bible, which we believe to be the inspired and irrevocable Word of God and the basis for all matters of faith and practice.

The church is governed by its Congregation, Senior Pastor, Executive Council, and the Diaconate. The congregation determines the spiritual tone, strength, and direction of the Church by wise and prayerful selection of the Senior Pastor, Diaconate and Executive Council. The Executive Council serves the church by setting policy in the management of both the Church's vision (spiritual and financial) and implementation of that vision provided by

the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor serves the Church by providing vision, oversight, and management of the Church and all its operations through wise counsel and faithful teaching of the Word of God, and the Diaconate serve at the pleasure of the Senior Pastor by serving the members of the congregation through counsel, prayer and, if required Church discipline.

Article IV

DOCTRINE

Section 1: Baptist Distinctives

There are eight (8) Baptist Distinctives that function as the core beliefs of our denomination. Distinctives are different from ordinances in that they are not expressed in memorial rituals and/or acts of obedience. Instead, they are historical doctrinal principles that are commonly adhered to in most Baptist traditions.

- **Biblical Authority/Accuracy**

The Supreme Authority and Infallibility of the Holy Scriptures: As Baptists we believe that the Word of God is the foundation and supreme authority for all matters of theological doctrine and church polity. In other words, the Holy Bible is the ultimate authority for faith and practice. *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (II Timothy 3:16-17)*

- **Autonomy of the Local Church**

As Baptists we believe that the church is a self-governing institution. This means that Baptist Churches are not controlled by outside persons or forces. It is by the authority of Christ that is further revealed to the church by the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, that Baptist Churches direct all church-related affairs. *“Then they prayed, ‘Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry’...Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so, he was added to the eleven apostles.” (Acts 1:24-26)*

- **Priesthood of all Believers**

As Baptists, we believe, in contrast to the Priestly Tradition of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), that Jesus Christ is our High Priest. Through Christ, all believers are priests with direct access to God. Every believer may approach God for themselves with prayers of all kinds without a human mediator. As our High Priest, Jesus Christ now stands in the gap for us, mediating between God and humankind. *“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1st Peter 2:9)*

- **Two Ordinances**

An ordinance is a symbol of one's faith expressed as a memorial or an act of obedience. There are two ordinances in the Baptist Church: Baptism by immersion in water and The Lord's Supper. As Baptists, we do not believe that the act of baptism washes away sin. Neither do we believe that partaking in the Lord's Supper confers grace. Rather, both ordinances are outward symbols of an inner change wrought by the Spirit of Christ.

- **Believer's Baptism by immersion** in water is not a requirement of salvation. It is, however, a requirement of church membership that brings believers into community with other followers of Christ. *"At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, He saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'"* (Mark 1:9-11)
- **The Lord's Supper** is the second Baptist ordinance. The bread and wine are symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. By receiving the Lord's Supper, the Christian community participates in the suffering and death of Christ and looks to the future for Christ's return in glory. The Lord's Supper, also known as Holy Communion, is celebrated as a fellowship meal with Christ as its center. It is a symbolic ritual in which Christians remember the final meal that Jesus shared with His disciples before His betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion. It also celebrates the common faith of the church, the Body of Christ *"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.'"* (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)
- **Individual Soul Liberty**
As Baptists, we believe that God has given human beings the freedom to know and respond to God's will. This gift from God enables believers to freely choose to obey or deny the commands of God through Christ. *"...You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it, you will surely die."* (Genesis 2:16-17)
- **Separation of Church & State**
As Baptists, we believe that government is ordained by God to ensure the maintenance of law and order and to protect the interests of all citizens. The nature of the Church is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Government should make no attempt to exert control over the Church. *"Then he said to them, 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.'"* (Matthew 22:21)
- **Two Church Offices**

As Baptists, we believe that two offices are scripturally affirmed: the first is the Office of the Pastor, the second, the Office of the Deacon. Although we believe that all are called to serve the Kingdom of God on the earth, some are “set apart” for specific ministry functions. *“Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them-not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be.; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve;” (1 Peter 5:2) “In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So, the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, ‘It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.’ This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. So, the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:1-7)*

- **Saved Church Membership - The Perseverance of the Saints**

As Baptists, we believe that salvation cannot be lost, no matter what the circumstances. In other words, “once saved, always saved.” Because the Church consists of members who have attained salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, the “saved church” perseveres by the power of God “who is able to keep us from falling. *“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” (Matthew 16:18)*

Article V

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP - DISCIPLESHIP

The New Testament presents a picture of definable groups of people who, once committed to the Lord, identified themselves with and committed themselves to a particular local body. (Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1; Philippians 1:1; Acts 11:26)

In order to implement the principles of accountability and commitment to the local body of Christ, as defined in the New Testament and practiced in the early churches, this Church recognizes the need for formal membership/discipleship.

The membership/discipleship in the Star of Bethlehem Baptist Church, shall be composed

of those persons who, by the profession of their faith and Christian practice indicate their acceptance of Jesus Christ, as Lord and Savior and their desire to become an active member/disciple of the Star.

Section 1: Admission of Members (Disciples)

Individuals shall be received into this fellowship by any of the following:

- 1. Baptism:** A person who confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who adopts the views of faith and principles of this church, who has completed baptismal training; and is baptized by immersion.
- 2. Christian Experience:** Any Believer, who has formerly been baptized (by immersion), held membership in any Christian church and who is in substantial accord with the views of faith and Baptist doctrine.
- 3. Transfer by Letter:** A believer who is in substantial accord with the views of faith and the principles of this Church may be received into the fellowship of this Church by letter from any other Christian Church.
- 4. Restoration:** A former member of Star may be restored to this body upon their desire to recommit themselves to this Christian fellowship.
- 5. Watch Care:** A member who is presently living in the community on a temporary basis and does not desire to **sever** ties with their home church. This individual may be a member by watch care for a period not to exceed four to six (4-6) years. A watch care member shall have all the rights of an active member, including voting privileges after a period of 1 year, based on their service to the church which is outlined in Section 3 and 4 of Article V.

Section 2: Responsibilities of Members (Disciples)

A responsible member (disciple) must:

- 1.** Upon joining this body of believers, new disciples are expected to participate in the church's new member/disciple orientation, which is conducted by an appointee of the Senior Pastor.
- 2.** Be in complete agreement with the church's purpose, as reflected in its' Mission and Vision.

3. Actively seek to develop and use their spiritual gifts and talents in the ministries of the church.
4. Live a life pleasing to God - be diligent to live according to the statement of faith and church covenant.
5. Be faithful in attendance to worship services and Sunday School and/or Bible study.
6. Make a commitment to personal evangelism and discipleship.
7. Actively support the church's ministries and missions financially by tithing consistently. The expectation is that all disciples tithe (defined as 10% of one's gross income). (Malachi 3:9-10)

Section 3: Authority of Members (Disciples)

This Body (The Star of Bethlehem Baptist Church) by majority representation, shall have sole authority, except where authority has been given to other bodies by the provision outlined in the By-Laws, over making decisions that impact the Pastor and all Church issues in keeping with this Constitution and its By-Laws.

Section 4: Status of Membership (Disciples)

1. Active Member: This designation shall include any person who substantially keeps the precepts of the Church covenant as set forth in the Church Constitution.

- **In-Person Active Member:** Regularly attends worship service and study opportunities in person or virtually.
 - Generously gives of their time, talent, and treasure to the work of the ministry.
 - Has met the requirements of this Church by one of the methods set forth in Article V, Section 1.
- **Virtual Active Member:** Regularly attends worship service and study opportunities online.
 - Generously gives of their time, talent, and treasure to the work of the ministry.

- Has met the requirements of this Church by one of the methods set forth in Article V, Section 1.

2. Inactive Member: this designation shall include any person who fails to support the Church with time, talent, and treasure and attendance for twelve (12) consecutive months. Members/disciples who are away at school, armed forces, job assignments, incarcerated, homebound due to medical reasons, or other extenuating circumstances are not included in the inactive membership category.

3. Sick and Shut in Member: this designation shall include any person who is unable to attend worship service and activities due to physical/health ailments.

Section 5: Voting Rights

All active members/disciples shall have the right to vote on Church matters which are submitted to the church congregation for approval. Only active members/disciples of the church, 16 years of age and over, are entitled to vote. Members/disciples shall have the right to vote in person or virtually.

Section 6: Termination of Church Membership

1. By Death: Dissolves and physically and spiritually removes an individual from the church here on earth.

2. By Written Request: Members/disciples may have their names removed from the church roll upon their request. The request must be submitted to the church office in writing. This process is required whether the member has chosen to join another church or if they simply have decided to leave this church.

3. By Inactivity: Any member/disciples who has been physically and/or financially inactive for any consecutive 12-month period can be placed on the inactive membership list and shall lose the right to vote, to hold office and to represent the church in any capacity; they will be notified by a letter. Members/disciples who are away at school, armed forces, job assignments, incarcerated, homebound due to medical reasons, or other extenuating circumstances are not included in the inactive membership category.

4. Discipline: A person may be removed from the membership of this Church if their

doctrinal stance is no longer compatible with the position of the Church or if their lifestyle is consistently contradictory with the teaching of the word of God and the person refuses after several attempts to be reconciled to true faith and practice. The process of discipline shall be discharged according to the Scripture with utmost prayer, love, wisdom, sensitivity, discretion, and concern by the Senior Pastor and Diaconate.

a. Scriptural Procedures for Termination of Church Membership. Scripture teaches us to demonstrate, promote and encourage spiritual health and vitality in one another. One of the means for facilitating spiritual health is the loving, compassionate confrontation of one believer by another. (2 Corinthians 11:29, Luke 17:3 and Galatians 6:1).

Any action or activity that threatens the spiritual vitality and health of another believer, obstructs their walk with the Lord, disrupts the unity and fellowship of the local church body will ultimately weaken the witness of the Church in the world and must be prayerfully approached and compassionately confronted. (1 John 1:7 and 2 Corinthians 6:3). This Church recognizes the following biblical procedure for attempting to restore persons to the spiritual health and vitality that is our inheritance as a person of faith:

- i. If any person has a concern that the spiritual health or vitality of another is threatened or that the unity and fellowship of the church is being disrupted or a person's witness as a believer is being compromised through some action or activity, the first step is to, lovingly and promptly, confront the individual in private. (Matthew 18:15).*
- ii. If the concern continues unabated, the person believed to be in error should then be confronted in the presence of two or three witnesses. (Matthew 8:16).*
- iii. If the concern still continues, Scripture teaches that the matter should be brought before the Church. In this Church's structure, the matter at this point should be brought before the Senior Pastor and Diaconate, as representatives of the Church. (Matthew 18:17).*
- iv. If there is no evidence of genuine change after attempts at restoration by the Pastor and members of the Diaconate, the Pastor and Diaconate should bring the matter before the entire membership.*

If there is still no evidence of change, Scripture teaches that the individual should be

removed from the body and believers should break fellowship with such a person while continuing to intercede for them, until such time as there is genuine repentance. (2 Thessalonians 3:14, 1 Corinthians 5:11, Titus 3:10-11 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6)

b. Principles for Restoration: In addition to these procedures, Scripture teaches that restoration must always be approached and carried out with an attitude of love, concern and humility and must always be motivated by a sincere desire to see repentance and restoration of fellowship. Reflecting the grace and forgiveness of Christ, believers are taught to be quick to forgive when there is a genuine expression of repentance on the part of a fellow believer. (Galatians 6:1, Matthew 18:21, Matthew 6:14, Ephesians 4:32 and Luke 17:3)

These same biblical principles and procedures for restoration apply in attempting to resolve relational conflicts within the body. In such cases, Scripture indicates that it is the responsibility of the believer to go promptly and prayerfully to his or her brother or sister when one has been offended, or when one has reason to believe that he or she may have offended another and to seek reconciliation. (Matthew 5:23, Ephesians 4:26)

Article VI

MEETINGS

The objective of the Star of Bethlehem Baptist Church regarding meetings and administrations is to conduct all meetings in a Godly manner. "Let all things be done decently and in order." (1 Corinthians 14:40) The Senior Pastor, church officers, and committee leaders shall start all meetings with prayer, and they should exhibit integrity.

Section 1: Place

Meetings and worship services for the congregation shall be held at the present church location, or at another location deemed appropriate by the Senior Pastor or the Diaconate.

Section 2: Worship Services

The Senior Pastor shall conduct all worship services in accordance with the Holy Bible. They should be directed by the Holy Spirit. Public worship services shall be held on Sundays, and at other times as determined by the Senior Pastor and the Diaconate. Holy Communion service shall be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month, or as determined by the Senior Pastor and the Diaconate. Believers Baptism will be celebrated at such times as determined

by the Senior Pastor and the Diaconate. Members of the Diaconate shall assist with these services as needed and determined by the Senior Pastor.

Section 3: Special Worship Services

1. The celebration of special worship services such as consecration, revivals, anniversaries, and holidays, such as Good Friday, Thanksgiving, and Christmas will be determined by the Senior Pastor.
2. Weddings/Funerals/Child dedications will be scheduled by the Senior Pastor and/or their Designee.

Section 4: Business Meetings

1. Fiscal year - January through December of each year.
2. Regularly Quarterly Church Meetings – shall be held each quarter (at least one will be a Budget and Finance meeting).
3. Executive Board Meeting – shall meet 2 weeks prior to the quarterly meeting.
4. Planning Meeting – shall be held in December consisting of the Pastor and the Executive Council.
5. The membership will be given adequate notice, being at least 2 consecutive weeks prior to the meeting through the normal church means of communication i.e., bulletin, from the pulpit, announcements, social media.
6. **A Quorum will be 50 members of the active church membership.** In order to conduct business at any meeting, a quorum must be present.
7. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the membership in good and regular standing must be present for the purpose of calling or dismissing a Pastor. To call or dismiss a pastor, it must be passed by a 2/3 vote majority.
8. For calling or dismissing a Pastor a public notice shall be announced and posted on two (2) consecutive Sundays, prior to the meeting.
9. Minutes of the meetings will be recorded by the church secretary, clerk, or designee.
10. The Senior Pastor or their designee shall serve as the meeting's moderator.
11. All ministries will present yearly reports.
12. Robert Rules of Order shall be the accepted pattern for the transaction of church business, except when they are inconsistent with Scripture.

Section 5: Special Meetings (traditionally referred to as “Call Meetings”)

Special meetings of the congregation can be called at any time only by the Senior Pastor or in the event the church is without a Senior Pastor, the Chair of the Diaconate Ministry. If the meeting is concerning the Pastor, the Diaconate Chairperson, with the approval of the Deacons Ministry, has the authority to call a meeting.

Section 6: Notice of Certain Agenda Items:

Approval by the members on any of the following extraordinary proposal shall be valid only, if the notice or agenda specifies the general nature of the proposal, and such proposals must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) of the quorum present entitled to vote at a meeting or a **special meeting** where a quorum is present. Extraordinary proposal shall be defined as:

1. Calling or removing the Senior Pastor
2. Amending or replacing the Bylaws
3. Amending the constitution
4. Disposing of all or substantially all the church's assets
5. Approving the acquisition or real property or related indebtedness
6. Approving the election to dissolve the Church

Section 7: Voting requirement guidelines

1. All person's voting must be active members of the church.
2. Members voting must be in good financial standing.
3. Members must be present to vote (including virtual members)
4. The majority vote rule will be fifty-one (51%) present active members.

Article VII

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Jesus Christ alone is the Head of the Church and as head has ordained that individual churches should be blessed with the spiritual rule and ministry of office bearers. Therefore, it is the duty of the Church to seek to discover those to whom Christ has imparted the necessary gifts for service to appoint ministry leaders. (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5)

Section 1: Leadership Qualifications

All ministry leaders whether appointed or elected shall be active members who exhibit a deep commitment to God, and the Church by subscribing to the Church covenant, prior to accepting the position of leadership and shall remain members throughout their term of service. Each term of service shall be for a period of three years (except for members of the Ministerial Staff, Diaconate, Trustee Ministries, and a pastoral appointee), in which they serve as outlined in these By-laws. Ministry Leaders shall be eligible to be re-elected to serve an additional consecutive three-year term. All leaders, whether elected or appointed, must be approved by the Senior Pastor prior to term of service.

All ministry leaders, whether appointed or elected, shall be biblically qualified according to 1st Timothy 3:1-13. The Senior Pastor and the Executive Council shall establish written policies and guidelines for compliance with the qualifications for church ministry leadership.

Section 2: Resignations

Any ministry leader of the Church may resign at any time by giving written notice of his or her resignation to the Pastor. Any such resignations shall take effect at the time specified therein or, if the time when it shall become effective is not specified, immediately upon receipt. A verbal resignation must be accompanied by a written letter of resignation in order to be recognized.

Section 3: Terminations

Except as otherwise provided herein, the Senior Pastor, in consultation with the Diaconate Ministry, maintains the right, power, and authority to remove a ministry leader from office with cause.

Section 4: Emeritus

There shall be an honorary position of “Emeritus” which the Church may confer upon a Church Leader who having faithfully served the Church, but is presently prevented by virtue of age, health, or some other valid reason and unable to faithfully perform the responsibilities of his or her office. This honorary position is for “life” and carries with it no voice or vote for the office which the member served.

Article VIII

PASTORATE

The Senior Pastor shall provide spiritual leadership to the entire congregation in teaching and preaching and otherwise ministering the Word of God. He/She will lead worship, and direct and oversee all the religious and worship services of the Church. The Senior Pastor will administer the ordinance of Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, Homegoing services, the sacred vows of matrimony and baby dedications. Furthermore, he/she will be responsible for the oversight and coordination of all the various functions of the Church. He/She shall render pastoral care, comfort, and counseling to the bereaved and troubled.

The Senior Pastor shall minister to the personal, spiritual, and emotional needs of members of the congregation. He/She will advise and counsel those engaged to be married and those in need of marriage counseling. As Senior Pastor, he/she will be responsible for the training

of workers and lay leaders for the work of the Church. The Senior Pastor will preside as the Chairman at all official Executive Board Meetings and Church Conferences and/or special Call meetings. He/She will also serve as spiritual advisors for all Church ministries, having the freedom of voice and counsel (ex-officio member). The Senior Pastor shall be the Chief Operating Officer of the Church and as such shall be responsible to the Congregation for all Church Administration, including the management, hiring, and firing of Church employees, all of which shall be done within the Church budget as established by the Trustee Ministry and consistent with the Church's By-Laws, personnel, and fiscal policies.

Section 1: Qualifications

The Senior Pastor of Star of Bethlehem shall be a baptized believer who is firmly committed to the purpose of and dedicated to the total ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Senior Pastor's life should match up to the qualifications outlined in 1st Timothy 3:1-7. The Senior Pastor shall be a believer of the Holy Bible, led by the Holy Spirit, a preacher, and teacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Senior Pastor shall be ordained to Christian Ministry, subscribe Baptist doctrine and polity, additional qualifications are subject to the Pastoral Selection Committee and the congregation in the event the church is without a Senior Pastor.

Section 2: Duties of the Senior Pastor

1. The Senior Pastor shall lead Star of Bethlehem. His/her primary tasks shall consist of the instructions in Ephesians 4 to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, and Acts 20:28, to be the overseer and under-shepherd of the Church.
2. The Senior Pastor shall lead the congregation, all church councils, boards, committees, ministries, affiliates, and church staff, to perform their tasks. This purposeful leadership is provided through preaching, teaching, guiding members, leaders, and officers. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all church ministries, committees, and organization units.
3. The Senior Pastor shall serve as overall administrator of the entire church program, including but not limited to hiring, firing and supervision of all Staff Ministers and administrative staff in accordance with adopted personnel policies.
4. The Senior Pastor shall normally administer the New Testament Ordinances of Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper and shall perform other duties according to a job description developed by the Joint Board and approved by the Church.
5. The Senior Pastor shall be the moderator or presiding officer of the church at business meetings, except in the case when matters pertain or related to the Senior Pastor. In such an event, the Chair of the Diaconate shall serve as moderator.

Section 3: Selection & Succession of a Senior Pastor

The following procedure shall apply in all cases of pastoral transition:

1. Pastoral Selection Team
 - a. Immediately after a vacancy occurs in the pulpit, the Chairman of the Deacon Ministry shall call an Executive Council meeting for the purpose of appointing a Pastoral Selection Team.
 - b. A Pastoral Selection Team shall be established consisting of two (2) Deacons, one (1) Trustee, four (4) members of the church at large, and two (2) alternates.
 - c. Duties of the Pastoral Selection Team shall include:
 1. Interview and investigate the merits of potential pastoral candidates in consideration of the candidate's religious beliefs, personal character, background checks including law enforcement and financial history checks, education, ministerial records, commitment to the total ministry of Jesus Christ, and preaching and teaching ability.
 2. Advising the Diaconate in the identification and/or selection of potential pastoral candidates.
 3. Invite potential pastoral candidates to the church to preach and interact with Church leaders and members.
 4. Recommending individual(s) for consideration as pastoral candidates.
3. The **Pastoral Selection Team** shall present at least two pastoral candidates to the congregation at any special meeting. Any pastoral candidate presented to the congregation shall be an ordained minister.
 - a. The congregation shall vote by written ballot to approve the recommended pastoral candidate. The approval of any pastoral candidate shall require the affirmative vote of the majority (at least 51%) of all members entitled to vote as required by Section VII of Article 6.
 - b. The approved pastoral candidate shall be installed as the Senior Pastor with an appropriate installation worship service and ceremony in accordance with Scripture.

Section 4: Compensation of Senior Pastor

The terms of his/her employment, including, but not limited to, salary, allowances, vacation, retirement, benefits, and insurance shall be outlined in writing in an employment agreement

unless otherwise determined by the Executive Council. The Senior Pastor's compensation package shall be presented at the same time as the candidate is presented.

The salary and benefits shall be paid on a regular basis as stipulated in the Senior Pastor's employment covenant unless otherwise determined by the Joint board. Annually, the Senior Pastor's compensation package will be reviewed by the Contract Review Committee and its recommendations shall be submitted to the Joint Board for approval.

Section 5: Employment of Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor of the church shall be an employee of the church for as long as the Senior Pastor and Church agree to such a relationship.

The relationship of the Senior Pastor and the church is sacred and should not be ended abruptly by either party. In the event that the Senior Pastor wishes to end his/her relationship with the church, he/she must give a minimum of thirty (30) days written notice. In the event that the Church wishes to sever its relationship with the Senior Pastor it must also give a minimum of sixty (60) days (30 days still serving and 30 days paid leave) notice in writing upon the recommendation of at least a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Executive Council (excluding the Senior Pastor) for cause by the church:

1. The termination shall be described in a notice of a special meeting of the members published and announced in all worship services for four (4) successive weeks and subject to Section 6 of Article VI.
2. Proper prayer, searching God's Word for answers and seeking the Holy Spirit shall govern all actions in such matters. Should reconciliation occur at any point of the process, the removal process shall be terminated. The Diaconate shall attempt to mediate any difference between the Senior Pastor and the church.
3. The members shall **approve** such termination by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members entitled to a vote at a meeting where a quorum is present as outlined in Article VI, section 6.

Section 6: Staff Ministers

In the event the Church considers it wise, the Senior Pastor is given authority to employ or appoint one or more staff ministers (i.e., assistant pastor, youth minister, Christian education minister) to fill and provide specific ministerial functions. If employed by the church their employment should be in accordance with the Church's personnel procedures for church employees.

Section 7: Licensing & Ordination of Ministers

Any active member of Star by their piety, zeal, and aptness to preach and teach that gives evidence that they are called of God to the work of the ministry may after completion of the

minister in training program by the Senior Pastor or his/her designee, will be recommended to the church to be licensed to the gospel ministry. As a minister, he/she are to provide ministerial support through:

1. Preaching
2. Teaching
3. Visitation
4. Counsel
5. Serve as a ministry leadership.
6. Or any other responsibility assigned by the Senior Pastor.

In the event a Licensed minister(s) has proven his/her commitment to the ministry through education (seminary or bible college), fruitful service and/or an employment opportunity in a church or ministry agency the Senior Pastor shall convene, authorize, and direct an ordination council to perform the appropriate examination of the minister. Upon successful completion of said examination a subsequent ceremony to ordain the minister to the Christian ministry shall take place in the presence of the Star of Bethlehem Baptist Church for its approval and vote.

Article IX

NON-MINISTERIAL EMPLOYEES

In the event the Church considers it wise, the Senior Pastor is given authority to employ individuals to fill positions that are vital to the ongoing growth of the Church's Ministry, i.e. (office staff, custodial staff, music staff, consultants etc.) in accordance with the Personnel Committee procedures and the approval of the Joint Board. The duties and responsibilities of employees will be created and assigned by the Senior Pastor and/or the designee and the Personnel Committee.

Article X

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

In accordance with scripture (Exodus 18:13-26): Executive Council shall have general advisory oversight to all matters pertaining to the life of the Church and performs the usual function of an Executive Council. The Council shall have the authority to appoint special committees if the need should arise.

The Members of the Executive Council as well as its composition is set forth in the By-Laws.

a. Membership

The Executive Council shall consist of the Senior Pastor, Members of the Diaconate and Trustee Ministries, Associate Ministers, the Church Clerk, Church Treasurer, Church Financial Secretary, and all Ministry Presidents and/or Vice Presidents.

b. Duties

1. Support the Senior Pastor in setting policy, goals, and objectives for the Church.
2. Support the Senior Pastor in promoting and carrying out God's vision for the Church.
3. Review, coordinate and approve any new or revised program plans recommended by Church Officers, Ministry Leaders, Boards or Committees at the direction of the Council's Moderator.
4. To approve all Leadership recommendations and appointments and report them to the Church for approval.
5. The Senior Pastor shall act as Moderator of all meetings. The Senior Pastor has the authority to designate the Chair of Deacons or Trustees as an officiant over a meeting in the event of his/her absence.
6. The Executive Council shall meet quarterly at a place, day and time as designated by the Senior Pastor, the Council and approved by the Church. A quorum of any meeting of the Executive Council shall be (1/3%) of its members. For approval of any matter before the Council, in any meeting at which a quorum exists, a majority vote of those members of the Executive Council who are present shall be necessary unless specified elsewhere in the By-laws. Every action taken or decision made by a majority of the Executive Council present at a meeting held at which a quorum is present shall be the action of the Executive Council. Individual members shall have no power as such.

Article XI

CHURCH OFFICERS

Scriptural Officers (based upon scripture) are the Senior Pastor and Diaconate. Under the leadership of the Senior Pastor, they are responsible for the pastoral, administrative and care ministries of the church. The Corporate officers of the Star of Bethlehem Baptist Church shall be Senior Pastor, Diaconate Ministry, Trustees Ministry, Treasurer and Church Clerk and the members of the Executive Council. All officers of the Church shall subscribe to the constitution and by-laws, qualifications of leaders, as well as the Mission and Vision of the Church.

Section 1: Diaconate Ministry

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament (Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:8-13), Deacons are the Servants of the Church. Deacons shall fulfill their spiritual calling by providing the ministry of service to the membership and support of the Pastor.

1. Requirements:

- a. The Deacons are selected by the Senior Pastor and affirmed by existing Diaconate Ministry and their appointment shall be ratified by the Church Body.
- b. The new Deacon in Training must successfully complete a series of Training Sessions for not less than (12) months, led by the Senior Pastor or their designated facilitator.
- c. After completing the training sessions, the candidate shall be examined by the Ordination Council arranged by the Senior Pastor. The result of the Council's examination and recommendation shall determine the outcome of the candidate's ordination to the Diaconate Ministry. If the Council's recommendation is in favor of the candidate's ordination, the Senior Pastor shall arrange an ordination service for the candidate. If the Council's recommendation is not in favor of the candidate, the Senior Pastor shall continue to pray for and prepare the candidate for another examination at the Senior Pastor's discretion.

2. Diaconate Ministry Officers:

The Ministry shall include but not limited to a Chairperson, Vice Chairpersons, and a Benevolent Treasurer to be approved by the Pastor and the Church body.

3. Duties:

1. The Deacon's purpose to serve the Lord by assisting the Pastor by caring for the spiritual and temporal needs of the congregation.
2. Deacons shall be the principal administrators of the benevolent ministry which reviews all requests and appropriately distributes assistance for those in need once approved by the Chairs and the Senior Pastor.
3. Deacons shall visit and minister to the sick and shut-in and the bereaved and assist in the administration of the communion elements to the homebound on behalf of the Pastor and the Church.
4. Deacons shall keep track and maintain contact with the members assigned to their Tribe.
5. Deacons are to zealously guard the Church's unity of the Spirit of peace, being responsible for overseeing steps of correction, discipline, and restoration in the church. They are to heighten the spiritual tone in the church by example and word.

6. The Deacons shall assist the Senior Pastor in the administration of the Ordinances, in the training of candidates for baptism and serving the Lord's Supper.
7. The Deacons shall help free up the Senior Pastor so that he/she may focus on prayer, the ministry of the Word, and the equipping of the saints. Their service should facilitate the spread of the gospel and promote unity within the church.
8. The Deacons shall serve the Church for an indefinite period, as long as their service is satisfactory to the Pastor and the Church Body.
9. A majority of the active Deacons shall constitute a quorum for a meeting.
10. The Deacons will unite with the Trustees to establish the Joint Board for the purpose of assisting the Pastor in providing and strengthening the leadership role of the Church as outlined in the Church Constitution and By-Laws.
11. In the event the Church is without a Pastor, the Chairperson of this Ministry and the Chairperson of the Ministry of Trustees shall have authority to provide leadership for the Church until a Pastor is called in accordance with Article (VIII, Section 5).
12. No new Deacons shall be added to the Ministry when the Church is without a Pastor.

Section 2: Trustees

1. Requirements:

- a. The Trustees shall be selected by the Senior Pastor and the Executive Council and their appointment shall be ratified by the congregation.
- b. A Trustee must be twenty-one (21) years of age or older and shall be in good and regular standing both spiritually and financially in accordance with Article V, Section 2.
- c. The Ministry shall consist of not less than (7) and not more than (14) members. The Members shall be elected or re-elected for (5) year term. No trustee may be elected to more than three (3) consecutive full terms without a one-year absence from service upon the recommendation of the Pastor and the Executive Council at the Annual church conference.
- d. The Trustee Chairperson and Treasurer shall be bonded under the Church's insurance coverage. No personal coverage is necessary.
- e. The Trustee Ministry shall be committed to cooperate with the Pastor to achieve unity in all business transactions of the Church.

2. Trustee Ministry Officers and Associates

The Ministry shall include but not limited to a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Finance Chairperson, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Building and Ground Supervisors, Envelope Secretary, Assistant Envelope Secretary. All to be approved

by the Pastor and the Church Body.

2-A: Trustee Duties

- a. The Trustee Ministry shall meet monthly on a day to be determined by the Chairs and agreed upon by the membership.
- b. A majority of the active Trustees shall constitute a quorum for a meeting.
- c. Trustees will maintain the buildings and grounds of the church.
- d. Trustees will assist the Executive Council, when requested, in all areas associated with the maintaining all the church's real property for ready use, recommended policies regarding the use of any real property and acquisition of real property for the furtherance of the mission of the church.
- e. The Trustees shall manage the properties of the Church, the business and temporal affairs of the Church and function as the Corporate Body as required under the New York State Religious Corporations Law.
- f. The Trustees shall receive and secure all funds of the Church by depositing the funds into a financial institution selected by the Trustee Ministry and the Pastor. All funds are to be deposited immediately upon receipt.
- g. The Trustee shall have emergency executive authority to make a contract for service or the purchase of essential equipment on behalf of the Church up to **\$10,000.00**, provided that 51% of the membership of Trustees agree. Any amount above this sum, authority must be granted by the Church body.
- h. The Trustees shall retain and secure all required documents and records of the Church and of the corporate body securely in the Trustee office or a safe deposit box at the financial institution where the Church's accounts are held.
- i. The Trustees shall have the authority to seek information on investing Church funds through CD's, mutual funds, and other channels of investments.
- j. The Trustees will unite with the Deacons to establish the Joint Board for the purpose of assisting the Pastor in providing leadership for the Church as outline in this Constitution and By-Laws.
- k. The Trustee members shall not receive any compensation for their service with exception of those member who are full or part-time employees of the Church.
- l. In the event a Trustee is found to be untrustworthy, he/she shall be dismissed from the Ministry immediately.
- m. The Trustee Ministry shall work closely with the Pastor as advisors and make recommendations for the financial good for the ministry of Jesus Christ.
- n. In the event the Church is without a Pastor, the Chairperson of this Ministry along with the Chairperson of the Diaconate Ministry shall provide leadership for the Church body. The Trustee Chair has the authority to recommend that the existing

Ministry members remain until the Church has called a Pastor. The recommendation must be submitted to the Church for approval. In the event some members are not willing to serve, the Chairperson shall maintain the Ministry without adding any new Trustees to the Ministry until a new Pastor is called.

- o. The Trustee Ministry shall be committed to obeying and enforcing this Constitution and By-Laws to its fullest extent.

Section 3: Treasurer

The Treasuries shall operate under a three (3) Treasury system. **General Treasury** (General Fund/Tithes, Offerings, and other Income), **Benevolent** (Mission and Relief Support), **Scholarship** (Educational Assistance). The Treasurers shall be selected by the Pastor or in some cases recommended by the Chairpersons of the Trustees (General) and Diaconate (Benevolent) Ministry and the President of the Scholarship Ministry (Scholarship). Their appointment must be approved by the Pastor and Executive Council and ratified by the Church Body.

Duties

- a. The Treasurer shall serve for a period of three (3) years, as long as their service proves satisfactory to the Pastor and the Church Body. No Treasurer may be selected to more than two full terms without a one-year respite from service.
- b. The Church Treasurer shall be the custodian of all Church monies. He/she shall oversee the counting team, and shall be responsible for all counting procedures assuring that they are carried out effectively.
- c. The Church Treasurer shall deposit all monies in a bank specified by the church, and into accounts that are held by the Star of Bethlehem Baptist Church.
- d. The Treasurer shall maintain separate accounts of all monies received from the church or legacies entrusted to their care.
- e. The Treasurer shall disburse all monies by **check only**. All checks for disbursements shall be signed by the Treasurer and a countersigner. The countersigners are as follows: **General Fund**: Church Treasurer/Trustee Chairperson, **Benevolent Fund**: Diaconate Chairpersons or Church Treasurer, **Scholarship Fund**: The Chairperson/The President or Church Treasurer.
- f. The Church Treasurer, in coordination with Financial Secretary, shall be responsible for the recording of all financial transactions in permanent records and shall provide weekly reports to the Pastor and semi-annual and annual reports to the church.
- g. The Benevolent and Scholarship Treasurers shall be responsible for the recording of all transactions in permanent records and shall provide semi-annual and

- annual reports to the church and report to the Pastor upon request.
- h. The Church Treasurer will assist the Finance Committee comprised of members of the Executive Council and Trustee Ministry to create and monitor an annual church budget.
- i. The Church Treasurer along with his/her team shall be responsible for presenting a Church Budget at the Annual Church Meeting.
- j. In the event of a financial emergency the Trustee Ministry is authorized to borrow funds from the Benevolent and then Scholarship accounts based upon the approval of the Joint Board and the individual ministries that oversees those accounts.

Section 4: Financial Secretaries

The Financial Secretaries shall serve for a period of three (3) years, as long as their service proves satisfactory to the Pastor and the Church Body. No Financial Secretary may be selected to more than two full terms without a one-year respite from service.

Duties

- a. The Financial secretary shall serve for a period of three (3) years, as long as their service proves satisfactory to the Pastor and the Church Body. No Financial Secretary may be selected to more than two full terms without a one-year respite from service.
- b. Work according to the policies and procedures established by the Trustee Board or Finance Chairperson.
- c. To accurately record the intake of funds from all sources and report them to the Finance Chairperson, Trustee Board and Pastor upon request.
- d. Assist with the collection of offerings during worship services and count them at the conclusion of the services, ensuring that more than one person is involved collecting and counting the offerings.
- e. In the absence of the Treasurer, ensure funds are deposited in a bank as soon as possible after they are received.
- f. Establish a procedure to collect and record funds received other than through regular offerings, including funds received by mail or electronically.
- g. Report regularly to the Trustee Board or Finance Chairperson regarding total funds pledged and received for the year.
- h. Assist the Treasurer in reporting to the congregation at Annual Church Conferences regarding total funds received for the year.

- i. Inform and encourage regular, systematic giving by congregation through providing information regarding electronic giving.
- j. Maintain confidentiality of all financial information pertaining to receiving, recording and depositing funds.

Section 5: Church Clerk

The Church Clerk and Assistant Church Clerk shall serve for a period of three (3) years, as long as their service proves satisfactory to the Pastor and the Church Body. No Clerk may be selected to more than two full terms without a one-year respite from service.

Duties

- a. Shall record complete and accurate Minutes for all semi-annual and annual Church Conferences.
- b. Shall record Minutes for special Meeting that are called by the Pastor.
- c. Shall prepare notices of Executive Council and Church Conferences two (2) Sundays preceding the meeting.
- d. Shall be responsible for all correspondence and communications, in the absence of a Church Secretary.
- e. Prepare all documents for Baby Dedications and Baptism
- f. Participate in the readings and presentation of family members during Baby Dedication services.
- g. In the absence of the Church Clerk, the Assistant Church Clerk shall assume the above responsibilities and shall also assist as directed by the Clerk.

Section 6: Church Staff

- 1. The church staff shall also include non-pastoral staff members. All staff members shall be appointed/hired by the Senior Pastor. All staff members will be responsible to the Senior Pastor via their assigned supervisor.
- 2. The Senior Pastor and the individual(s) designated to assist with personnel decisions shall have the authority to employ and terminate approved and budgeted non-pastoral staff members. Such employment and termination of services shall be with the recommendation of the immediate supervising staff member and as appropriate, with consultation of related committees of the church.

Article XII

OFFICIAL BOARDS, COUNCILS AND CHURCH MINISTRIES

Section 1: Deaconess Ministry

Deaconess are Servants of the Church. The Deaconess shall fulfill their spiritual calling by providing support services to the membership, Deacons, and the Pastor.

Requirements

1. The Deaconess may be selected by the Senior Pastor or a nominating committee and their appointment is ratified by the Church Body.
2. The new Deaconess in Training must successfully complete a series of Training Sessions lead by the Senior Pastor or a designated facilitator.
3. After completing the training sessions, the candidate shall be examined (verbal or written) by the Pastor or his appointee. The result of the examination shall determine if the Candidate will be Consecrated to the office of Deaconess. If the Pastor or his appointee's recommendation is not in favor of the candidate, the Pastor shall continue to prepare the candidate for another examination at the Pastor's discretion.

Duties

- a. The Deaconess shall serve for an undefined period, as long as their service proves satisfactory to the Pastor and the Church Body.
- b. Shall select its own officers to be approved by the Pastor and the Church.
- c. Shall prepare and assist candidates for Baptism.
- d. Shall prepare the Communion elements and table.
- e. Assist with the distribution of Communion elements when necessary.
- f. Minister to the sick and shut in.
- g. Prepare families for Baby Dedications.
- h. Assist in ministering and keeping track of Tribe Members.

Section 2: Joint Board

Membership

The Joint Board shall consist of the Senior Pastor, Members of the Diaconate, and the Trustee Ministries. The Pastor shall serve as the chairperson of this Board. The Chairperson of Deacons shall serve as First Vice-Chair and the Chairperson of Trustees shall serve as Second Vice-Chair. The purpose of the Board is to assist the Pastor in providing quality leadership in all functions of the Church.

Duties

- a. The Board shall always demonstrate unity within this Body and shall strive to provide quality leadership for the advancement of this Church
- b. The Board shall meet as the business of the Board and the Church deems necessary. The

- Pastor and/or his Vice-Chair shall have the authority to schedule Board Meetings. The Board meeting shall be announced two (2) weeks prior to the meeting date.
- c. The Pastor and/or the First Vice-Chair of Deacons shall have the authority to call an Emergency Church Meeting in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws.
 - d. The Board can make recommendations to the Executive Council and the Church on behalf of the Pastor in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws. All recommendations shall be submitted to the Church for Approval.
 - e. In the event the Church is without a Pastor, this Board shall provide leadership for the Church Body. The Deacon Chairperson shall provide leadership over the spiritual function of the Church. The Trustee Chairperson shall provide leadership over the business transactions of the Church. This team of leaders shall continue to provide leadership for the Church until a Pastor is called.
 - f. The Board shall be committed to obeying and enforcing this Constitution and By-Laws to its fullest extent.

Section 3: Board/Council of Christian Education

The duties of the Council of Christian Education are to correlate all Christian Education programs, plans and activities with the Teaching Staff and Church Executive Council, maintain the Christian Education calendar of activities, train and work closely with the Nominating Committee in selecting and enlisting qualified leaders for the educational ministry, serve as resource and liaison for Ministries related to the educational programs, plan special emphases in educational programs (i.e. Attendance Campaigns, Leadership Recognition, Leadership Training, VBS, Promotion, Workshops, Bible Study, Bible Institutes etc.), assist in choosing and securing the most suitable educational and curriculum materials available.

Members shall include: The Pastor, Director and Assistant Director of Christian Education, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Sunday School, Youth Ministry Directors, Diaconate Representative, Trustee Representative, New Members Representative, Outreach Representative, and (3) Members at Large.

Section 4: Personnel Committee

The duties of the Personnel Committee are to prepare and update ministry position description for all employees, organize a manual relating to the church's employed personnel, prepare job descriptions for vacancies to be advertised in public publications and on social media, interview and recommend candidates to fill staff vacancies, develop and recommend salaries for full and part-time employees, benefits (according to NYS Laws) for full-time employees with the exception of the Pastor, develop and recommend policies and

procedures to the church for employed personnel administration, support the Pastor or the employee's immediate supervisor in assessing ministry (job) performance being sensitive to job insecurities that the employee may be dealing with.

Section 5: Nominating Committee

The duties of the Nominating Committee are to evaluate the performance of and recommend individuals to a specific office or committee. Ministries should submit their slate of officers to the Nominating Committee by December 1st. The nominations shall be reviewed by the Pastor and presented to the church at least (2) weeks prior to the Annual Church Conference for approval. The Nominating Committee shall be comprised of at least (5) members (Diaconate and (2) members at large) appointed by the Pastor at the 3rd Quarterly meeting.

Section 6: Envelope and Assistant Envelope Clerk

The Envelope Clerk and Assistant Envelope Clerk shall serve for a period of three (3) years, as long as their service proves satisfactory to the Pastor and the Church Body. No Clerk may be selected to more than two full terms without a one-year respite from service.

Duties

- a. Shall receive the name of New Members/Disciples from the Membership Clerk.
- b. Shall keep accurate and current records of each member's financial contributions.
- c. Shall provide each member with a statement that reflects their total giving in the beginning of each year (January no later than February). The statement will reflect the member's total giving from the previous calendar year.
- d. Shall prepare requested Offering envelopes for the upcoming calendar year by labeling with the members name (no later than December 1st). In the absence of the Envelope Clerk, the Assistant Envelope Clerk shall assume the above responsibilities.

Section 7: Ministry Officers

Ministry Office shall serve for a period of three (3) years, as long as their service proves satisfactory to the Pastor and the Church Body. No Officer may be selected to more than two full terms without a one-year respite from service.

7-A: President

The Ministry President is responsible for calling and presiding over the regular meeting of the Ministry. The President assures that the Ministry fulfills its responsibility to the Church. The President partners with the Pastor to achieve the mission of the Church through his/her ministry. The President along with his/her officer develops ministry goals that lineup with the Church's Mission that will help move the ministry forward.

7-B: Vice President

The duties of the Ministry Vice President are to support the President and to stand in for the President in his/her absence. The Vice President should be able to conduct a business meeting. The Vice President meets with the President for the purpose of planning and receiving assignments as it relates to the work of their ministry.

7-C: Secretary

The duties of the Ministry Secretary are to record accurately minutes during all ministry meetings, be prepared to read the previous minutes during ministry meetings, conduct business meetings in the absence of the President and Vice President, maintain contact information on all ministry members. inform members of any information that is related to the ministry work, respond to all correspondence and communications related to the ministry work.

7-D: Treasurer

The duties of the Ministry Treasurer are to maintain adequate records of all assessments received and record individual assessments, inform members when their assessments are delinquent, make financial reports during ministry meeting, disburse funds as directed by the President and agreed upon by the ministry members.

Ministries should submit a yearly budget to be reviewed by the Trustee Ministry that will be approved by the church body. All ministry monies will be handled in accordance with the Star of Bethlehem budget procedure as promulgated by the Trustee Ministry and ratified by the Joint Board and the Pastor.

7-E: Chaplin

The duties of the Ministry Chaplin are to open all meetings with Prayer, pray for the ministry leaders and members on an ongoing basis, send out cards to those members who are sick and shut-in or bereaved.

Article XIII

AMENDMENTS

It is the responsibility of the Senior Pastor and the Executive Council to review the constitution and bylaws, at least once every five (5) years and propose any revisions or adjustments necessary to maintain their effectiveness, and to bring these changes to the Church in a church Meeting.

The congregation shall be given **two weeks** advance notice of the time of such meeting. Further, a copy of the proposed changes shall be made available to members at **two (2)**

consecutive weeks of corporate worship services in advance of the meeting. This Constitution may be amended by a vote of 2/3 of the active membership present at a regular or special meeting.

Article XIV

INDEMNIFICATION

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee or agent of the Church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and cost incurred in defending against the claim if the Executive Council determine that the person acted:

1. In good faith
2. With the care that an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances.
3. In a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church.
4. In a manner the person had no reasonable cause to believe their conduct was unlawful.

Article XV

LEGAL CORPORATION

This Church shall be incorporated in accordance with the laws of the State of New York governing religious bodies (so long as the laws do not conflict with the teachings of the Holy Bible), and the handling of property shall be in accordance with such laws.

Article XVI

DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

The Church is deemed in dissolution state when it is unable to effectively function according to the Church's purpose and mission statement. Provisions shall be made to pay all liabilities associated with the Church. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or any other individuals but shall be irrevocably designated to a vote of 2/3 of the active membership present to dissolution to such other non-profit religious corporations as are in agreement with the covenant adopted by this Church, and in conformity with the requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Service Code of 1954, Section 501 C-3.

