

# BEREA FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

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## BY-LAWS As Presented August 2010

### ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

#### Section 1 – General

The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership reserves the right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

#### Section 2 - Qualifications and Acceptance

The membership of this church shall be composed of persons who have confessed Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, who have been baptized by immersion, and who have been received by the church.

Members may be received at any worship service:

- upon public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior;
- by transfer of membership from another Baptist church and evidence of baptism by immersion
- by statement of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and baptism by immersion

#### Section 3 – Termination

This church shall dismiss from its membership those who are removed by death, those who ask for a letter of transfer, those who request membership to cease, and those who are found guilty of immoral or unethical conduct, deemed to be beyond restoration.

#### Section 4 – Grievances

From time to time church members may have a concern of a serious nature that requires a clear process for resolution. In keeping with Matthew 18: 15-17, the following process has been established.

- 1) Meet one-on-one with the fellow member.
- 2) If not resolved, meet with a member of the ministerial staff or a deacon, and the fellow member.
- 3) If not resolved, the pastor and deacon chair will convene the active deacon body for the purpose of meeting with the members to reach a reasonable resolution. After meeting with the member, the deacon body may recommend termination if no other reasonable resolution can be achieved.

#### Section 5 - Duties and Membership

Members shall be expected to be faithful in all duties of the Christian life, to be regular in attendance at the services of the church, to give regularly and systematically to its support and to Kingdom causes, and to share in its organized work.

#### Section 6 - Voting Rights of Members

Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, providing the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting.

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### ARTICLE II – CHURCH OFFICERS

#### Section 1 - Pastor

(a) The pastor shall be in charge of the welfare and oversight of the church. He shall be an ex-officio member of all organizations, departments, and committees, and he may call a special meeting of the deacons and any committee at such time as he may in good discretion determine. He shall conduct religious services on stated and special occasions, administer ordinances, minister to the members of the church and community, and perform other duties that usually pertain to the office of pastor. He shall have the responsibility of directing and supervising others on the church staff. The pastor shall assign a staff member to serve as a non-voting member of the various committees. He shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church and shall provide for preachers and workers to assist in revival meetings and other special services and for pulpit supply when he is absent.

(b) In the event the church is without a pastor, or the pastor is unable to fulfill his duties for any reason, the deacon officers, and other elected church officers with the assistance of the ministerial staff, shall direct the division of pastoral duties. If an interim pastor is needed, the active deacons in conjunction with the ministerial staff and personnel committee shall make the recommendation of the person to fill that position. The current deacon chairman shall be responsible for convening the appropriate groups for either reason stated above.

(c) A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The Pastor Search Committee shall seek out a suitable pastor, and their recommendation will constitute a nomination. The Pastor Search Committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one nomination at a time.

(d) The active deacon body shall recommend to the church the Pastor Search Committee. The committee shall be composed of ten people including the Chairman of Deacons, Vice-Chairman of Deacons, Chair of Personnel Committee, Chair of Finance Committee, and six members at large.

(e) The election and call of a pastor shall take place at a called business conference in a Sunday morning worship service after notice as provided for other called or special business meetings. Election and call shall be by written ballot requiring an affirmative vote of three-fourths of members present and voting.

(f) A pastor shall be called by the church to serve until the relationship is terminated at the request of either the pastor or the church. In either case, at least thirty days notice shall be given of termination, unless otherwise mutually agreed, with both the pastor and the church seeking to follow the will of God and the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Voting on termination shall be by written ballot and shall require a majority vote of those present and voting to constitute termination.

#### Section 2 - Deacons

(a) The Body of Deacons shall consist of not less than 45 members. There shall be two

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deacons for every one hundred members of the church, additions to the number of deacons serving to be made only at the regular time of electing deacons. Deacons shall serve on a rotation basis. Each year the term of office of those deacons who have served four years shall expire, and an election shall be held to fill the vacancies. In case of death or removal or incapacity to serve, the church may elect to fill the unexpired term from the most recent list of nominees as described below. After serving a term of four years or after serving two years of an unexpired or partial term, no deacon shall be eligible for reelection until the lapse of at least one year. A deacon must be a member of Berea First Baptist Church at least one year prior to election.

(b) Deacons shall be nominated and elected in the following manner. Prior to the first Sunday of December of each year, the church shall be requested to submit in writing the names of persons who should be considered for the office of deacon. The Pastor and deacon officers shall prayerfully consider all nominees in order from highest to lowest number of nominations and nominate one deacon for each vacancy to be elected by the church. All first time deacons shall be ordained by the church unless they have been previously ordained by another Baptist Church of like faith and order.

(c) Deacons shall serve from the first of January of each year. The deacons shall elect a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. The current deacon chairman shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Personnel and Finance Committees. References in these by-laws to

deacons are to active deacons and not to ordained deacons who are not in active service.

(d) Deacons shall at all times consider themselves with the pastor as servants of the church as the Holy Spirit directs. They are to consider and give council to the staff and committees in all matters pertaining to the work and progress of the church. They shall serve as a council of advice and confer with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the church. It shall be their duty to be responsible for the spiritual well-being and unity of the congregation, to cooperate with the pastor and other officers of the church in the furtherance of their duties, to maintain a caring ministry to the members, and to perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office.

### Section 3 – Trustees

(a) The church shall have a board of five trustees elected from the membership of the church. Since the signature of trustees is the signature of the church on legal documents, trustees may serve indefinite terms but are nominated annually by the Committee on Committees and elected by the church. In case of death or removal or incapacity to serve, the church may elect to fill the unexpired term.

(b) Trustees necessary to fill any vacancy shall be nominated by the Committee on Committees, nominating one person for the vacancy to be filled. The trustees shall elect a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. The trustees shall give bond, at the expense of the church, in an amount to be determined and fixed by the Insurance Committee.

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(c) The duties of the trustees shall be those required by law of trustees and by the by-laws of this church as herein provided. The trustees shall be empowered to transact any business on behalf of the church as may be authorized by the church in conference; to hold title to all church property; to represent the church in all matters of legal responsibility regarding the purchase, improvement, and disposal of church property; to execute all legal papers relating to the church and to the community as the church may direct; and to have custody of all legal documents and evidences of ownership, which shall be held in trust for the use and benefit of the church. All legal documents shall be kept on the church property or in a bank safety deposit box rented by the church. The trustees shall act for the church in the sale, mortgage, or other disposition of real property owned by the church when and only when so authorized by the church. The trustees shall hold title to, invest, manage, and control property given in trust to the church or the trustees upon the terms and conditions of the trust under which the property is given.

### Section 4 – Moderator

A non-staff church member shall serve as moderator of all the business meetings of the church. The moderator shall be elected annually upon the recommendation of the Committee on Committees. The Moderator shall preside at all business meetings and conduct business in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order and the Constitution and By-Laws of Berea First Baptist Church. In the moderator's absence or upon the moderator's inability or refusal to act, the vice-moderator

shall preside. The vice-moderator shall also be a non-staff church member elected annually. In the event neither of the above is available or able to act, the church clerk shall call the church to order and a temporary moderator shall be elected to preside at such meeting.

### Section 5 – Clerk

The clerk and assistant clerk shall be elected annually upon nomination by the Committee on Committees. It shall be the duty of the clerk to attend or be represented at all church business meetings and to keep an accurate record of all business transactions. The clerk shall preserve all papers, valuable letters, and records that belong to the church; preserve a true history of the church; and preserve a record of the constitution and by-laws of the church and any changes or amendments. The clerk shall give notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary as indicated in these by-laws. The church shall afford clerical and secretarial assistance to the clerk. All church records are church property and shall be filed in the church office.

### Section 6 – Treasurer

The treasurer and assistant treasurer shall be elected annually upon nomination by the Committee on Committees. The treasurer shall oversee the receiving of all checks, monies, or other funds of the church. The treasurer shall oversee the disbursement of funds by check in accordance with the approved budget of the church and as approved by the Finance Committee. The treasurer shall have access to all financial records and reports and shall

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present these reports to the church during regular business meetings. The treasurer shall submit all accounts and records to be audited annually and at other times directed by the Finance Committee. The treasurer shall furnish a bond in the amount set by the Insurance Committee, the cost to be paid by the church. The treasurer and assistant treasurer shall be non-voting members of the Finance Committee.

### Section 7 – Other Officers

The church shall have other such officers as wisdom and the Holy Spirit may direct to carry out the purposes of the church. The duties of such officers shall be those pertaining to the offices they fill and according to the instructions of the church.

## **ARTICLE III – COMMITTEES: ELECTION, TERMS, AND FUNCTIONS**

### Section 1 – General

All church committees shall be elected by the church upon nomination by the Committee on Committees. Other nominations may be made and received at the time of such election. Committee members shall serve on a rotation system and shall serve from the first of January each year except as otherwise provided. New or temporary committees may be established upon the recommendation of the church staff in conjunction with the Nominating Committee. The staff, in conjunction with the Nominating Committee, may also recommend the dissolving of a committee deemed no longer necessary. Each committee will hold an initial meeting

during the first quarter of the calendar year to organize for their work. Each committee will keep an historical record (minutes) of their meetings and actions to ensure consistency in committee work and function from year to year. A copy of each committee's minutes shall be maintained by the staff representative to that committee. The committee chair shall be responsible for bringing any reports and/or recommendations to the church business meetings. Any member of the church has the right to meet with a church committee. A member requesting such a meeting should contact the committee chair and ask to be placed on the agenda of the committee's next meeting. The member may meet with the committee only for the period of time required to ask a specific question or make a specific suggestion regarding the committee's work. After the specific item is addressed, the member will be excused from the meeting.

### Section 2 – Baptism Committee

The Baptism Committee shall consist of eight members serving three-year terms with both sexes to be represented. The Baptism Committee shall assist in preparing for the Ordinance of Baptism. The committee is responsible for preparing the candidates and the baptistery for the ordinance.

### Section 3 – Lord's Supper Committee

The Lord's Supper Committee shall consist of twelve members serving three-year terms. This committee shall prepare the elements and the equipment for the observance of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. The committee will

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prepare the elements on a schedule approved by the church.

### Section 4 – Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee shall consist of eight members serving three-year terms plus the deacon chair as a non-voting member. The Personnel Committee shall assist the church in matters related to personnel administration including staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, and personnel services. The Personnel Committee, in conjunction with the pastor and the active deacon body, shall recommend to the church a search committee for all vacant ministerial staff positions excluding the pastor which is provided for in Article II Section 1. This committee shall determine salaries of ministers and other employees.

### Section 5 – Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall consist of twelve members serving three-year terms plus the church treasurer, assistant treasurer, and deacon chair as non-voting members.

The committee shall be responsible for encouraging and guiding the church members in Christian stewardship. The committee shall be responsible for preparing and presenting to the church for approval a budget for the church's fiscal year and for administering this budget. The committee shall receive input from the church staff members and appropriate committees in the preparation of the budget. The Finance Committee shall be responsible for the accounting of the church's finances and timely reporting of the financial position to the

church. The Finance Committee will be responsible for recommending to the church all the policies and procedures for the handling of all monies and financial matters of the church. The committee shall be responsible for an annual audit and at other such times as the committee deems necessary and shall make the audit available to the church body. The committee shall be responsible for making the arrangement for any financial commitment or obligation on the part of the church.

The Financial Secretary will be responsible to the Finance Committee for all financial matters. The Finance and Insurance Committees will determine the need for bonding for persons handling church funds and will fix the amount of said bond.

### Section 6 - Flower Committee

The Flower Committee shall consist of six members serving three-year terms. This committee shall be responsible for securing, arranging, and disposing of arrangements for church services and other occasions as needed.

### Section 7 – Housekeeping, Grounds and Property Committee

The Housekeeping, Grounds and Property Committee shall consist of nine members serving three-year terms. The committee is charged with general oversight and care of all church property and buildings. This committee is broken into three subcommittees. They shall have general supervision of the custodial staff, making necessary recommendations to the Personnel Committee.

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### Section 8 – Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of six members serving three-year terms upon nomination by the Committee on Committees. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for enlisting and nominating all officers in the Sunday School, Christian Discipleship, Woman's Missionary Union, Senior Adult Friendship Group, Music Ministry, the members of the Committee on Committees, the church clerk, the treasurer, the moderator, and their assistants.

### Section 9 – Audio Visual Committee

The Audio Visual Committee shall consist of six members serving three-year terms. The committee shall be responsible for the care and maintenance of all audio visual equipment.

### Section 10 – Recreation Committee

The Recreation Committee shall consist of nine members serving three-year terms. This committee shall give direction to recreational activities and shall serve the church in determining that all these activities, whether sponsored by the church or any organizational unit, are properly planned and contribute to the ultimate objectives of the church.

### Section 11 – Youth Committee

The Youth Committee shall consist of nine members, serving three-year terms. This committee shall give direction to youth activities, and shall serve the church in

determining that all these activities sponsored by the church, or any organizational unit are properly planned and that they contribute to the ultimate objectives of the church.

### Section 12 – Committee on Committees

The Committee on Committees shall consist of six members, serving three-year terms. The membership of the committee shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee. This committee shall be responsible for nominating and enlisting all other committee personnel and presenting the names to the church in conference for election.

### Section 13– Benevolence Committee

The Benevolence Committee shall consist of six members serving three-year terms. This committee shall assist the church in matters relative to those requesting aid.

### Section 14 – Bereavement Committee

The Bereavement Committee shall be composed of three members serving on a non-rotational basis. They will determine the needs of church families in time of death and be responsible for planning and serving meals at this time.

### Section 15 – Cemetery Committee

The Cemetery Committee shall consist of six members serving on a non-rotational basis. It shall be their responsibility to serve as a Board of Trustees for the cemetery.

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### Section 16 – Child Care Committee

The Child Care Committee shall consist of nine members serving three-year terms. This committee serves as the Board of Trustees for the Child Development Center.

### Section 17 – Insurance Committee

The Insurance Committee shall consist of four members serving four-year terms. The committee shall study the needs of the church in relation to insurance and recommend, purchase, and monitor the insurance program.

### Section 18 – Music Committee

The Music Committee shall consist of six members serving three-year terms. It shall be the duty of this committee to work with the Minister of Music to coordinate the church music program.

### Section 19– Reaching Center Committee

The Reaching Center Committee shall consist of six members serving three-year terms. They shall serve as a Board of Trustees for the Reaching Center.

### Section 20 – Wedding Committee

The Wedding Committee shall consist of six members serving three-year terms. It shall be the responsibility of the Wedding Committee to work with pastor and staff in formulating, coordinating, and supervising the wedding policies of the church.

## Article IV – Program Organizations

### Section 1 – General

All organizations of the church shall be under church control and report regularly to the church. The church shall provide for the following ministries: Bible teaching; discipleship; missions education, action, and support; fellowship; outreach and evangelism; music education, training, and performance; recreation; and personal and family ministries. Other program organizations shall be created upon recommendation of the staff and approval of the church. All leaders of these program organizations shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all church organizations.

## ARTICLE V – MEETINGS

### Section 1 – Worship Services

The church shall conduct regular worship service(s) on Sundays and Wednesday evenings unless otherwise agreed by the church. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at those times determined by the pastor and deacons. The ordinance of baptism will be scheduled as needed by the Pastor in consultation with the candidates. The church shall provide all other necessary services for the educational, stewardship, missionary, evangelistic, and promotional functions of the church.

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### Section 2 – Business Meetings

The church shall hold regular business meetings during each quarter of the year. Special business meetings may be called by the pastor or deacon body. All meetings must be announced publicly at a service of the church at least two weeks prior to the called meeting or by personal written notice sent to the resident membership of the church at least one week prior to the called meeting. No matter shall be discussed at a special meeting except that for which it is called. The elected moderator shall preside over the business sessions except as otherwise provided in Article II, Section V. Reports from various committees and organizations shall be given in writing on a quarterly basis as needed by the committee chair or their designee.

### Section 3 – Quorum

A quorum for the conduct of the church business shall be those members of the church present at any called business meeting given proper notice. Except where otherwise provided in the constitution and these by-laws, any question shall be determined by a majority of those members present and voting.

### Section 4 – Parliamentary Procedure

The rules of order by which the church is governed in conference shall be Robert's Rules of Order, Revised.

## **ARTICLE VI – ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS**

### Section 1 – Adoption

These by-laws shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect when a majority of the members present at the business conference at which the vote is taken shall vote in favor of adopting them. Two week notice of such meeting will be announced from the pulpit and publicized in the regular church publication.

### Section 2 – Amendments

These by-laws may be amended, altered, or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any business meeting of the church, provided that such proposed amendment, alteration, or repeal be given to the clerk in writing and that such proposed change shall be presented to the church at least thirty days prior to the time when the vote is taken.

## **CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS STUDY COMMITTEE**

JJ Arrowood

Harriet Baker

Rick Fisher

Sonya League

Bill Mathis