



6259 Highway 9
Benton, Arkansas 72019

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

"Let all things be done decently and in order"
1 Corinthians 14:40

CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF STATUTE.....3

DEFINITION OF TERMS.....3

ARTICLE 1: *Establishment of Identity*.....3

ARTICLE 2: *Statement of Faith*.....4

ARTICLE 3: *Church Government*.....4

ARTICLE 4: *Membership*.....5

ARTICLE 5: *Sexual Misconduct*.....7

ARTICLE 6: *Officers of the Church*.....9

ARTICLE 7: *Amendment Rules*.....13

Declaration of Statute

Although we are first and foremost a spiritual body in Jesus Christ (**1 Corinthians 12: 12-14**), we recognize that we are a legal entity according to the governing laws of the United States of America and the State of Arkansas. As an unincorporated nonprofit association, under Arkansas Code Annotated § 4-28-601 *et. seq.*, we submit ourselves as such in the honorable reverence of the LORD Jesus Christ and for His sake (**Romans 13: 1-7**), with the exception that we as a spiritual body cannot and should not silence the free expression of our faith in God (**Acts 4: 19-20; 5:29**). We thus define ourselves with theocratic allegiance in a democratic society, both of which we aspire to the glory of God. Therefore, we establish this constitution & bylaws in the reverence of our God, a spiritual body, an unincorporated nonprofit association, to be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist Convention and for the purpose of preserving the Biblical liberties stewarded to each individual member of this body.

Definition of Terms

Essentially for clear readability and maximum interpretation, “**Constitution**” refers to the governing precedents and purposes contained herein. The “**Articles**” act as a framework to the Constitution and form a statement of existence for us to be identified legally as an unincorporated nonprofit association. The “**Sections**” are considered bylaws that interpret the Articles by elaborating the rules and procedures that govern the unincorporated nonprofit association.

ARTICLE 1: Establishment of Identity

Section 1: The name of this church body shall be: *Gravel Hill Baptist Church*.

Section 2: Gravel Hill Baptist Church exists to bring glory and honor to God in the power of His Holy Spirit through His Son, Jesus Christ, by *knowing* Him relationally (**John 17:3**), *growing* in Him spiritually (**2 Peter 3:18**), and *going* to make disciples for Him daily (**Matthew 28: 18-20**)!

Section 3: Gravel Hill Baptist Church shall be an unincorporated nonprofit association in accordance with the laws of the State of Arkansas’ governing religious bodies and unincorporated nonprofit associations, and the handling of property shall also be in accordance with such laws. Should a division of membership occur, the title to and possession of all property and assets owned by this congregation shall remain with the group holding the doctrinal position common to churches of the Southern Baptist Convention as noted in Article 2, Section 1. Parties of the outgoing group in custody of physical properties shall immediately relinquish the same to proper Church officers. All offices and positions held by the outgoing group shall automatically be declared vacated at the time of the division.

Section 4: The principal office of Gravel Hill Baptist Church, hereinafter referred to as the Association, shall be located at 6259 Highway 9, Benton, Arkansas 72019. The Association may have such other offices at differing locations, either within or without the State of Association, hence granting liberty for Gravel Hill Baptist Church to duplicate itself by planting more churches identical to the constitution & bylaws contained herein, with no limit as to how many churches are established. Thus, each individual church shall remain autonomous in its functionality according to the constitution, but will continue to partner continually in ministry opportunities common to Gravel Hill Baptist Churches. However, so as to always remain unified as one church body regardless of multiple locations, Gravel Hill Baptist Church shall be governed by *The Leadership Team*, and such a team shall consist of both the pastoral (**Titus 1: 5-9**) and deacon (**1 Timothy 3: 8-13**) staff from the founding church campus in Benton, Arkansas. The Leadership Team shall work together in unity for the glory of God through Gravel Hill Baptist Church. All decisions made by the team shall only be approved by

a 75% majority vote within the leadership. The Leadership Team shall aid counsel and accountability to each church plant, but will not control the autonomy of the individual church plant, unless the church plant is to incriminate itself by violating any distinctive of the constitution & bylaws and current vision of Gravel Hill Baptist Church. If violation is to be factually discovered, the leadership team will search the matter out and if no resolution can be mutually consented between the leadership team and the offending church plant, legal and corporate separation will be required from the church plant as well as a change in its church name.

ARTICLE 2: Statement of Faith

Section 1: Gravel Hill Baptist Church accepts as “*Articles of Faith*” the Baptist Faith and Message adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Orlando, Florida, June 14, 2000. A copy of such doctrine is kept on file at the premises of the Corporation and can be provided upon request.

Section 2: Regarding marriage and sexuality, Gravel Hill Baptist Church believes that the term “*marriage*” has only one meaning and that meaning is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (**Genesis 2: 18-25; Matthew 19: 4-6**). Gravel Hill Baptist Church believes that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other (**Hebrews 13:4**). Gravel Hill Baptist Church believes that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God (**Romans 1: 24 – 2:2**). Gravel Hill Baptist Church believes that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the surrounding community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this doctrinal statement on marriage and sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly. Furthermore, in compliance with these doctrinal beliefs, the property and facilities of Gravel Hill Baptist Church shall only be utilized by all such peoples who hold to and practice these doctrinal beliefs. Therefore, if any one person(s) desires to use the property and facilities of Gravel Hill Baptist Church and yet be in direct violation of upholding the doctrinal beliefs of marriage and sexuality contained herein, he or she will not be permitted to use the property and facilities, which includes but is not limited to marriage ceremonies, marriage retreats, and / or marriage counseling. This is not to discriminate against an individual based upon his or her sexual orientation or marital status, but rather this is a principal of Gravel Hill Baptist Church to obey God in religious freedom so as to abide by such doctrinal beliefs. Gravel Hill Baptist Church will continue to advocate with utmost, sincere conviction that, by divine precepts, same-sex marriage should not be condoned. The First Amendment ensures that religious organizations, such as Gravel Hill Baptist Church, are given proper protection as we seek to teach the principles that are central to our life and faith. Although opposition to comply with the practice of these doctrinal beliefs of marriage and sexuality is to sin against God, Gravel Hill Baptist Church believes that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE 3: Church Government

Section 1: Gravel Hill Baptist Church recognizes its individual church government as that of a *Leadership Team*, where pastoral staff are scripturally recognized as pastors of the church (**Acts 20:17; Titus 1: 5-9; James 5:14**), assisted by servant-minded, God-called, ordained men scripturally recognized as deacons (**Acts 6: 1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-13; Philippians 1:1**), hence a Biblically-balanced Leadership Team of pastoral and deacon staff of the church authorized to lead, serve, administrate, shepherd, and / or teach the church body. The Leadership Team covenants together with the congregation

for the development of the spiritual life of the church, functioning as protectors and encouragers of a positive spiritual climate within the church body, fostering an environment that maintains stability in unforeseen challenging circumstances. The Leadership Team recognizes its leadership from the Senior Pastor who determines the spiritual tone, strength and direction of the church, yet only in conjunction with and accountability to the Leadership Team of his fellow pastor(s) and deacon(s). Such leadership from the team shall not be exclusively without accountability to the church body as seen with the bureaucratic nature of the body's approval of any such matters that require democratic attention through vote casting. Thus, the Leadership Team operates only within the liberties afforded them by Scripture and for the body's benefit, but humbly submits to decisions without sin vested by the body of believers through all such matters as necessary through a business meeting.

Section 2: The cooperation of Gravel Hill Baptist Church shall be with the *Central Baptist Association*, the *Arkansas Baptist State Convention*, and the *Southern Baptist Convention*, or such similar Christian bodies that the church may become affiliated with, so long as such cooperation does not violate the autonomy of the church nor challenge it to compromise its doctrines.

ARTICLE 4: Membership

Section 1: To become a member of Gravel Hill Baptist Church, a person is to exhibit the following essentials:

1. **Born-Again Salvation:** This body is composed of people who profess that they have sinned against God (**Romans 3:23**) and have discovered forgiveness through Christ's death for their sins (**Romans 5:8**). Such a profession is characterized by repentance of sin (**Acts 17: 30-31; 2 Peter 3:9**) and faith in Jesus Christ to save (**Romans 10:9**). There is no other way to be saved from Hell except through Jesus Christ (**John 14:6**). No good works will save a person (**Ephesians 2: 8-9**), but rather one must come to Christ in repentance, believing His death on the cross and resurrection from the grave, and surrender one's life to Him. This is what it means to be born-again, or have a new birth spiritually to begin the Christian life (**John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17**).
2. **Scriptural Baptism:** All members of Gravel Hill Baptist Church are people who have been baptized by immersion, or under the water. We recognize this as the physical practice of baptism found in the Bible (**Matthew 3:16; Acts 8: 38-39**) and we believe it best represents our testimony to Christ's death and resurrection (**Romans 6: 3-4**). Therefore, our membership is based upon baptism by immersion only.
3. **Gravel Hill Connection Class:** It was common in the Bible for people to be respectfully oriented by others towards things that involved God's purpose and plan (**Luke 14:28; Acts 2:42; 18: 24-28**). In like manner, we as Gravel Hill Baptist Church host a membership class that is designed as an "*orientation*" to expose the attendee to the church structure, doctrine, vision, and ministry expectations so as to equip the potential member with accurate information reflective of our church membership. The class also provides expectant opportunity for the potential member to connect to a Sunday School Class, Dream Team, and sign a covenant with the Church, so that he or she may grow in relationship with Christ (**2 Peter 3:18**), serve on a ministry team with his or her spiritual giftedness to help the Church body fulfill its vision (**Ephesians 4:16**), and covenant with the body to live for Christ (**Philippians 1:21**). Therefore, if the potential member has testified to salvation by grace through faith in Christ and baptism by immersion (or will be immersed), he or she will be presented to the church body as a *new* member. There will be no voting necessary to approve each new member once presented because the

church body endorses the *Gravel Hill Connection Class* as their means to authenticate membership. Moreover, when choosing a Dream Team that involves serving the children of Gravel Hill Baptist Church (*Nursery Ministry, Children's Ministry, Awana Ministry, or Youth Ministry*), it will be required of the potential member to participate in and be legally cleared by a criminal background check before service in any of such ministries is permitted. Such a process shall fall into compliance with the guidelines of *Article 5*, so as to maintain the best interest for the church as well as the potential member. If the attendee has personal differences as to the membership process of Gravel Hill Baptist Church, he or she will certainly continue to be encouraged to attend worship services but respectively not yet be granted membership until such differences are resolved.

Section 2: Members of Gravel Hill Baptist Church are expected to be faithful to follow the Lord Jesus Christ daily (**Luke 9:23**), to consistently attend the worship services of this church (**Hebrews 10:25**), to give weekly tithes and offerings for the support of its cause (**1 Corinthians 16: 1-2**), and to always be found diligently making disciples (**Matthew 28:19**).

Section 3: The continuance of membership at Gravel Hill Baptist Church is subject to the principles of Scripture. The body adopts as its authority the Holy Bible and aligns all precepts and conviction based upon its teaching. If a member of this body chooses to jeopardize such teachings, it causes spiritual injury to the body and by necessity loving action must be taken towards the member with offense (**1 Corinthians 5: 6-13**). This is better known as *Church discipline*. Restoration of a sinning member, not removal, is the goal of church discipline. However, removal of membership can be a result of such discipline, and such termination can be effected only by vote from the body and never by private exhortation of any one member or church leader. Church discipline has as its aim to be accountable to members, not judgmental of them. Therefore, to maintain purity in the church body, all such discipline shall be as follows:

1. **Unresolved Conflict:** If there is conflict between 2 or more members, the resolution shall be pursued according to Scripture (**Matthew 18: 15-17**).
2. **Immorality:** If there is any form of factually known and / or documented sexual immorality in a member's life, church discipline will be lovingly acted upon in effort to rescue the member from destruction (**James 5: 19-20**). Should the sexual immorality involve a child, church discipline will work in compliance with the guidelines of Article 5.
3. **Disunity:** If there is any factually known causes of disunity, verbal or non-verbal, church discipline will be lovingly acted upon to reach the sinning member (**Romans 16:17**).
4. **Marriage:** We value the sanctity of marriage. If a church member is factually known to be found practicing a same-sex, homosexual or lesbian relationship and / or abandons the heterosexual relationship of his or her spouse for homosexual, "same sex" tendencies and / or relationship(s), church discipline will be lovingly acted upon towards the sinning member (**Romans 1:24 – 2:2**). Not only will such discipline follow a homosexual relationship among a member(s), but likewise we will not so much as permit a member nor a non-member ascribing to a homosexual, "same sex" union to use our property for any such homosexual marriage union or other activities as listed in Article 2 Section 2. Also, if a member abandons his / her heterosexual marriage through unbiblical divorce, church discipline will be pursued with the sinning member (**Matthew 5:32; 1 Corinthians 7: 12-15**).

Section 4: Membership at Gravel Hill Baptist Church shall only be terminated until the sinning member has evidenced repentance and restoration (**Galatians 6:1**). We have as our goal to restore members back to the fellowship of the Church body. If a member is restored accordingly, he / she will be presented to the church at a business meeting so the members can cast a vote in regards to reinstating membership.

Section 5: Gravel Hill Baptist Church shall meet every Sunday for worship services as well as throughout the week for Bible Studies and youth and children's activities. In addition from these reoccurring gatherings, we will have business meetings on a monthly basis. All business meetings must be announced publicly by a leader amongst our Leadership Team during worship services no less than 1 week prior to the called meeting, or by written notice from our Leadership Team sent to the membership of the Church body. Upon receiving notice of an upcoming business meeting, all such members shall contact any of the Leadership Team to discuss questions and / or concerns regarding the agenda for the business meeting. Thus, the agenda for a business meeting will be established in this manner along with any other items as deemed necessary by the Leadership Team. All business matters to be discussed during such meetings will be guided primarily by the Holy Bible and secondarily by the customary rules as stated in Roberts Rules of Order. If an emergency meeting is needed that does not fit the monthly required timeframe contained herein, the Leadership Team of the church body shall be permitted to act upon their discretion to handle all such matters pertaining to the emergency. Minutes shall be recorded and given to the church clerk to be read at the next business meeting of the church body.

Section 6: Since Gravel Hill Baptist Church is democratic in its membership polity, voting will be the means by which all church business meetings shall be accomplished. Each business meeting will be led by a moderator, namely a pastor, a deacon, or someone elected from the church membership. A business meeting shall only be held if no less than 10% of the current month's active membership (*average Sunday worship attendance*) is present. However, in such a business meeting setting, the standard quorum required for the calling of a pastor, ordaining a deacon, hiring employees of the church, purchase or sale of property, amendments or additions to the constitution, or for any other such matters designated by the church body shall be no less than 25% of the active membership of Gravel Hill Baptist Church. The church clerk shall count the members present and notify the moderator of the numbered value. If the amount of members in attendance meets the minimum percentage for a general business meeting (10%) or special business meeting (25%), then the meeting shall be called to order and proceed prayerfully by the will of God. However, if such a percentage is not realized, then there shall be no church business to be voted on until the proper quorum is met.

ARTICLE 5: Sexual Misconduct

Section 1: Gravel Hill Baptist Church recognizes *sexual misconduct* as that of a form of sexual abuse inflicted upon a child and / or an adult that encompasses a range of behavior used to obtain sexual gratification against another's will or at the expense of another, such as in sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any conduct of a sexual nature that is without consent, or has the effect of threatening or intimidating the person against whom such conduct is directed. We believe Jesus our Lord forbids a child to be harmed in any kind of way (**Luke 18: 1-9**) so as to affect him or her for life. There is indeed forgiveness for the offender because of Christ (**1 John 1:9**), but there is respectable consequences that follow (**Galatians 6: 7-8; 2 Samuel 12: 1-15**). We believe firmly in forgiveness and consequence for either church member or attender or both: *forgiveness* by reaching out to those incriminated with sexual misconduct as well as *consequences* of not permitting their involvement with children indefinitely while affiliated with Gravel Hill Baptist Church.

Section 2: We understand that sexual misconduct can devastate the victim and the victim's family, as well as destroy the trust, credibility, and reputation of Gravel Hill Baptist Church for years to come. Therefore, we commit ourselves to exercise cautious compassion towards any of such persons of which sexual misconduct is incriminated, whether the occurrence took place before or during membership with the church. We further commit ourselves to take the proactive measure of a Criminal Background Check (*see Article 5, Section 4*) as a church so as to help prevent sexual misconduct from occurring and minimize the risks associated with an incident. We seek to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. Our goal is to protect the children of Gravel Hill Baptist Church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers from false accusations. We recognize the terms "child" or "children" to include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years old.

Section 3: Gravel Hill Baptist Church adopts as its policy a 4-step process to minister to a person who is legally identified as a registered sex offender. **First of all**, we will familiarize ourselves with the laws of the State of Arkansas so as to establish clearly legal allowances as a congregation. We will research the laws and ordinances of our jurisdiction regarding sex offenders. While these laws typically involve restrictions on where an offender can live, some also prohibit an offender from having any contact with minors, or being anywhere that children congregate. **Second of all**, once we clearly understand the laws and ordinances, we shall formulate a plan from such information and parallel it with our approach towards the offender. Unless laws or legal counsel forbids us, we shall welcome the offender with Christ's compassion while setting a boundary line in which the offender cannot work with any ministry and / or activity in which children are present. **Thirdly**, utilizing our formulated plan, when the congregation becomes aware of the attendance of a sex offender either through private communication or the Gravel Hill Connection Class (*see Article 4, Section 1, Paragraph 3*) and / or his or her identity is verified through the National Sex Offender Public Registry (www.nsopw.gov), at least 2 members of the Leadership Team shall schedule a meeting with the individual. Such a meeting serves the purposes of properly communicating with the offender the love of Jesus Christ we desire to provide to him or her and his or her family, the guidelines we have in place as a congregation for him or her, to discuss his or her personal needs unique to their situation, to ensure signing authorization for a criminal background check (*see Article 5, Section 4*) and release of probation / parole information to be kept confidentially on file at the church, and discuss who, if necessary, may need to be aware of the situation. If the individual will not agree to the guidelines, or is prohibited by the terms of his or her probation or parole from going where children congregate, by default the individual will be excluded from participation in the congregation's services and activities. However, if the guidelines are agreeable to the offender, we shall move towards our **fourth and final step**: implementing the plan. The offender's accountability shall be with members of the Leadership Team. The team should function cohesively to minister to the individual, while at the same time working to safeguard the congregation and its children. Even a seemingly innocent violation of the agreed guidelines will be taken seriously. While the precautions mentioned herein may seem extreme to some, there is little margin of error for the church. Although under these guidelines we would not expect it, but if an incident was to repeat itself, we as a church with knowledge of an individual's past sexual misbehaviors with children will face enormous legal liability if we provided the setting for a later crime. Therefore, in the delicate balance between ministering to the needs of an offender and providing for the safety of the church's children, we choose to err on the side of the children, respectively.

Section 4: A Criminal Background Check is required for all paid employees as well as for all such volunteers in the church that serve in any ministry or activity of which children are present. We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for minors who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities of Gravel Hill Baptist Church. Thus, in these cases, the teenage worker(s) must be at least age 14 years old, be screened with a criminal background check (*if legally applicable*), and always under the supervision of an adult so as to never be left alone with children. After the criminal background check is complete with results, what constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the Leadership Team on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children, indecency and / or any conduct contrary to our spiritual convictions as a Church will preclude someone from being permitted to work at least with children. The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at the church. Moreover, if an individual declines to sign the authorization form, he or she will not be permitted to serve in any ministry capacity with the church, regardless of the type of ministry.

Section 5: In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at Gravel Hill Baptist Church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the Leadership Team using the *Incident Report* for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law. All church employees and volunteers that work with children in any capacity at Gravel Hill Baptist Church shall be provided training in the guidelines of Article 5 herein as well as how to fill out the *Incident Report*. In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at this church location or during our sponsored children's ministries or activities regardless of location, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified and an *Incident Report* on file in the church office shall be recorded immediately.

2. The employee and/or volunteer alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
3. Civil authorities will be notified, and the church will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as according to Law. The church will discernably cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will supply any information requested from the incident report. Any other documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. If media attention is necessary, a member of the Leadership Team will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved. We will first of all seek the counsel of the Lord in prayer and secondly seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children as well as pursued with Church discipline according to *Article 4, Section 3*.

ARTICLE 6: Officers of the Church

Section 1: Gravel Hill Baptist Church recognizes its officers as members of the church that have been appointed by the Leadership Team, interviewed by either the Personnel Team (*compensated staff*) or the Nominating Team (*volunteer staff*), and elected by the body to serve in accordance to the duties of such offices and in view of the instruction of Scripture. These offices include but are not limited to pastors, deacons, trustees, clerk, treasurer, moderator, and employees.

Section 2: Each officer shall hold office until a successor has been duly elected and qualified. Consequently, an officer can at any time be removed from office by the church body whenever in its judgment the best interests of the body would be served thereby. Such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the officer removed.

Section 3: The church body may at any time elect more officers whenever necessary to carry on the work of the Church. Such staffing can be either compensated positions or volunteer positions or both. For staffing that becomes compensated, such staff shall be identified as employees of the church. The process by which paid staff will be hired will begin first by the appointment for the position from the *Leadership Team*. Secondly an assessment from the *Personnel Team* will follow, whom of which will write a detailed "job description" for the needed area of ministry. Upon completion of this description, the *Finance team* will be presented with the information and will be expected to, after assessment of the information, determine what level of compensation is achievable. If the position can be thus established, the Senior Pastor alongside the Personnel Team will seek candidates that meet the qualifications of the written job description. When a suitable candidate is found, the Personnel Team will present the candidate to the church during a business meeting for hiring in accordance with Article 4, Section 6. If termination is ever necessary for the paid staff member, it shall be in accordance to Article 6, Section 2, so long as it is in compliance with the rules and procedures for removal according to Article 6, Section 4.

Section 4: Gravel Hill Baptist Church recognizes not only the staffing of such positions to serve the church body, but also the functions of those positions as described herein.

1. Pastor(s):

- a. As a spiritual overseer to the Church flock, the Pastor is to determine church policy (**Acts 15:22**); oversee (**Acts 20:28**); participate with Gravel Hill Baptist Church ordaining men called by God (**1 Timothy 4:14**); lead, teach, and preach (**1 Timothy 5:17**); exhort and refute (**Titus 1:9**); and act as a shepherd, setting an example for all (**1 Peter 5:1-3**). The Pastor has as his aim to develop the spiritual life of the church, fostering a positive spiritual climate that is fortified to protect the body with sound doctrine (**Titus 2:1**) and administrative stability (**Titus 1:5**). The foundational basis for his election to serve as an officer of Gravel Hill Baptist Church shall be according to the evidenced integrity of **Titus 1: 6-9**.
- b. When the church body shall choose to elect a pastor, the process shall first of all begin with the church body electing a pastoral search team from within the Gravel Hill Baptist Church membership, so as not to exceed a 5-member team, of which at least 2 of the 5 members are deacons. The prayerful search process for pastoral candidates shall be governed by majority vote, until the team is ready to present to the Church body 1 pastoral candidate by majority vote. The church body shall be notified of the upcoming vote no less than 2 weeks in advance. At the business meeting, the Pastoral Search Team shall present detailed information about the pastor candidate as well as answer any questions from the church body. A vote of $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) is required to bring the pastor in view of a call. He shall preach and teach in both morning and evening worship services and be available to answer questions from the church body between the 2 worship services. Finally, at the close of the evening worship service and alongside the aid of anyone from the Leadership Team, the chairman from the Pastor Search Team shall come forth to assimilate a secret ballot vote for the pastor candidate. Election of the pastor candidate shall be no less than an affirmative vote of $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) of the church body in agreement for him to begin his pastorate with Gravel Hill Baptist Church. His compensation is calculated through the Finance Team and only approved by vote from the church body. He shall be expected to take vacation time yet not to the negligence of the church body and only in accountable communication with the Leadership Team.
- c. Should anyone, member or non-member, bring an accusation against a pastor, the response to the accusation must first be approached with the direction of **1 Timothy 5: 19-20**. If there is valid proof from “two or three witnesses” that the accused pastor is sinning, then discipline is in order that he may be restored (**Galatians 6:1**). Such discipline is to follow the order of **Matthew 18: 15-17**. If the accused pastor repents, he will be restored, yet his continued function as a pastor of Gravel Hill Baptist Church will be according to the discretion of the church body after hearing a discerning recommendation from the Leadership Team. However, if he is not repentant, then he will be rebuked “in the presence of all” and therefore removed as an officer to the church body. In the event that removal is necessary, the process to call a new pastor shall be according to the direction contained herein. During the interim, the remaining Leadership Team will be responsible for sustaining the pulpit teaching ministry for the church body until otherwise informed by an elected pastoral search team.

2. Deacon(s):

- a. The New Testament uses three primary words to refer to deacons: *diakonos*, which means "servant"; *diakonia*, which means "service"; and *diakoneo*, which means "to serve." The original use of this group of words seems to have been specific, meaning the service of waiting on tables or serving people food. But it broadened beyond that and came to mean any kind of service. Furthermore, the Greek words

diakonos, *diakoneo*, and *diakonia* refer to any kind of service that supplies the need of another person. The words are used at least 100 times in the New Testament, and they are usually translated with variants of the English words *serve* or *minister*. Therefore, we at Gravel Hill Baptist Church recognize that a Deacon is a God-called servant to the Church, helping administrate, shepherd, and care for the needs of the flock in accordance with the leadership from the pastor(s).

- b. Much like a pastor, the foundational basis for his election to serve as an officer of Gravel Hill Baptist Church shall be according to the evidenced integrity of **1 Timothy 3: 8-13**. Although teaching is not a required function for deacons, they are no less spiritually qualified, honored, or respected. They relieve pastors who are likely more skilled in teaching so those men may be free to pray and study the Word of God without restraint. In a special sense, the deacon's task sums up the essence of spiritual greatness as described by the Lord Jesus Christ (**Matt. 20:26-28**). Deacons work with the pastor(s) as a part of the Leadership team to help serve individuals and families of the church body.
- c. Deacons are to be zealous in guarding the unity of the Holy Spirit within the Church in bonds of peace. Each Deacon shall freely confer with the Leadership Team about all matters and cases of discipline which in his judgment would be most wisely and spiritually handled in private. Together with the Leadership Team they shall consider and formulate plans for the constant effort and progress of the church in all things pertaining to making disciples. They shall seek to know the moral, physical, and spiritual needs and burdens of the Church that could potentially jeopardize her unity, and shall communicate any of such information to the Leadership Team, thus serving the whole church in relieving, encouraging, and developing all who are in such need. They shall meet regularly with the pastor(s) and come alongside the pastor(s) to help serve Communion during a Sunday worship service.
- d. As the church grows and the need arises, the Leadership Team may at any time seek, teach, and train qualified men to add to the body of Deacons pending the process of election through the church body. The pastor(s) will prayerfully counsel with the Leadership Team and by faith confidentially consult with men from the membership of the Church as prospects to the Deaconship. Upon their prayerful acceptance of the nomination, the Leadership Team will present the deacon prospect(s) to the church body for vote, and for those whom receive a $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) majority vote, an undesignated period of prayer and testing (**1 Timothy 3:10**) will begin for the deacon prospect(s) and be led by the Leadership Team to prepare the nominee(s) for service as a Deacon. Upon completion of the teaching, training and the deaconate affirming his calling, the prospective Deacon candidate(s) will be presented to the congregation at a business meeting. The church shall be notified of the business meeting no less than 2 weeks prior, and the deacon shall be voted on by ballot and duly elected with a $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) majority vote and eventually ordained to the ministry of Deacon at a future date.
- e. Should anyone, member or non-member, bring an accusation against a deacon, the response to the accusation must first be approached with the direction of **1 Timothy 5: 19-20** as guidelines for an ordained officer in the Church body. If there is valid proof from “*two or three witnesses*” that the accused deacon is sinning, discipline is in order that he may be restored (**Galatians 6:1**). Such discipline is to follow the order of **Matthew 18: 15-17**. If the accused deacon repents, he will be restored, yet his continued function as a deacon of Gravel Hill Baptist Church will be according to the discretion of the church body after hearing a discerning recommendation from the Leadership Team. However, if he is not repentant, then he will be rebuked “*in the presence of all*” and therefore removed as an officer to

the church body. In the event that removal is necessary, the process to seek and ordain a new deacon(s) shall be according to the direction contained herein. During the interim, the pastoral staff will be responsible for delegating the removed deacon's responsibilities evenly to the remaining Leadership Team in place until the vacancy is filled. Understandably, a deacon's vacancy of office may not be related to unrepentant failure, but to his inability to fulfill his duties due to hindering circumstances or age or infirmities. Thus, honorable resignation is permitted if needed.

3. **Moderator:** All such matters of church business during any business meeting of Gravel Hill Baptist Church shall be conducted by a *moderator*. Since moderating church business involves the administration of the church and its ministries, a member of the Leadership Team (*pastors or deacons*) shall be elected by default to the office of moderator. The primary function of moderator shall come from deacon leadership as servants to the Church. However, if any of the deacons should be absent or unable to moderate, any one of the pastoral staff shall lead as the moderator. Additionally, regardless of whoever is moderating, if Biblical disorder should ever occur during a church business meeting, any officer of the pastoral staff is to immediately moderate and Biblically address any disorder to church unity and restore it however he believes is necessary in the fear of the Lord. Moreover, in the event that both pastoral and deacon staff are absent, the Church Clerk shall call the meeting to order and entertain a motion to elect a moderator from those members in attendance. Upon a second to the motion, the body may nominate potential moderators. Votes shall be by raised hands. Whoever has the most votes will be elected to serve as moderator for the church business meeting.
4. **Church Clerk:** As a member of the church body, the clerk is to keep a record minute book for all church business matters, and with such information register it as would be essential in preservation of both discussed and decisive content, all of which is subject to the discussion of the church. The church body shall elect a clerk during a business meeting and shall remain in place until either resignation from office, removal from office through majority vote of the church body, or any other such unknown matters that would jeopardize the position. Should the clerk be absent from a church business meeting, the body shall proceed to elect a temporary clerk for the meeting in like manner to that seen with an absent pastoral or deacon moderator in Article 6, Section 4, Paragraph 3.
5. **Financial Secretary:** As a member of the church body, the financial secretary (*treasurer*) shall keep a record of financial transactions, all of which shall detail receipts and disbursements on behalf of Gravel Hill Baptist Church. The financial secretary is authorized to disburse funds only as set forth in the church budget, unless otherwise stated during a church business meeting, and all disbursements shall be in accountability to the Finance Team so long as there is such a team. Financial transparency shall be expected from the financial secretary, which shall include but not be limited to reports to the Finance Team and Leadership Team upon request, reports to be provided to the church in a business meeting, and annual reports if they are needed. The financial secretary and a member of the finance team together shall count all tithes & offerings received by the church. The financial secretary or a member of the finance team shall be the depositing agent of all such tithes and offerings received by the church, and secure the deposit as early as the next business day, if possible. If the church body and / or Finance Team confers, an audit shall be made of the financial secretary's books at the end of each year, and the choice as to who shall perform this audit shall be at the discretion of the Finance Team and/or the church body through a majority vote. The church body shall elect a Financial Secretary during a business meeting and he or she shall remain in place until either resignation from office, removal from office through majority vote of the church body, or any other such unknown matters that would jeopardize the position. Should the financial secretary be absent from a business meeting or at any such meeting where his or her report is needed, the financial secretary assistant or a member of the finance team are to account for his or her report in place of such absence.

6. **Trustee:** As a member of the church body, a trustee is someone in which there is found trustworthy character and reliability, essentially a steward of the church facilities due to the nature of oversight in legalities of property and function. Such manner of function can be seen in Scripture with men like Adam (**Genesis 1:26**) and Joseph (**Genesis 39: 1-4**). Thus, as the Leadership Team shepherds the church, the trustee(s) shall be responsible to assist in the business endeavors of the church body, ensure that no part of the church property is sold, mortgaged, or otherwise encumbered or disposed of without approval of the church body, attend to legal issues of the church, assure that all church property is adequately covered by insurance, help in the safekeeping of all legal documents belonging to the church, affirm that all state and federal documents are reported to authorities annually, and any of other such responsibilities as deemed necessary by the Leadership Team and / or church body. Through a business meeting, the church body shall elect 3 trustees. There shall be one-year, two-year, and three-year terms of service. Whoever is elected to serve a three-year term will by default assume responsibilities as the Chairman of the board of trustees. The others being elected will serve for either the two-year or one-year terms, respectively, and any of the 3 trustees may succeed themselves upon re-election to office. If any meetings are necessary from the board of trustees, the Leadership Team is to be both notified and a part of such meetings so as to properly discuss relatable matters of concern and deal with such matters scripturally.
7. **Employee(s):** An employee is to be a member of the church body or become a member on a Sunday worship service contingent with beginning employment with Gravel Hill Baptist Church. On the contrary, services to the church body may be contracted in such a way that employment is not recognized by the church. As much as possible, the ministry functions of the church will be carried out by volunteer staff. The pastoral staff oversees the volunteer ministries of the Church exhaustively. However, due to the ongoing growth and changes of ministry, such volunteer support may at an unforeseen time not be adequate based upon the experiential demands for needed areas of church ministry. Thus, it will then be considered to either establish and / or fill positions of which paid compensation will be justified (**1 Timothy 5:18**) and in accordance to Article 6, Section 3.

ARTICLE 7: Amendment Rules

Section 1: This constitution of articles and bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed, and new articles and / or bylaws may be adopted during a business meeting by 25% vote of active members present as well as by secret ballot, in accordance to Article 4, Section 6. All requests of changes to any of the articles and / or bylaws contained herein must first be presented to the *Leadership Team* (see *Article 1, Section 4*) in writing that they may properly assess the request and accurately present it to the church body at a future business meeting. A 2-week notice at minimum to the church body is required before any such changes can be addressed in a business meeting. In the notice, proposed changes must be explained in writing by the Leadership Team and copies made available upon request to all members for review prior to being addressed at a business meeting. All questions and / or concerns from the proposed changes shall be addressed to the Leadership Team prior to the business meeting.