

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
of the
CHRIST OUR SAVIOR BAPTIST CHURCH
Adopted May 7, 2017

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

The name of this church is Christ Our Savior Baptist Church.

ARTICLE 2 - PURPOSE

The foundation of this church is the Lord Jesus Christ and it is guided in all its affairs by the Word of God as recorded in both the Old and New Testaments. (1 Corinthians 3:11, Colossians 1:15-19, 2 Timothy 3:16)

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. (John 17:20-26, Romans 15:7, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Ephesians 2:5, 8, 3:21)

This church glorifies Him by loving Him and obeying His commands through:

- a) Worshipping Him; (Matthew 4:10, John 4:23-24, Romans 12:1)
- b) Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study; (Ephesians 4:11-16)
- c) Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture; (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; Philippians 4:6; 2 Timothy 4:2)
- d) Encouraging, supporting, and participating in mission work, local, domestic, and international; (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48)
- e) Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion; (Matthew 26:26-28; 28:18-20, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20, Acts 2:38, 42, 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, Galatians 3:27)
- f) Encouraging biblical fellowship among believers; and (Acts 2:42, Ephesians 4:15-16, Colossians 2:19, 1 John 1:3)
- g) Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 5:43, 22:39, Mark 12:31, Luke 10:25-37, Galatians 6:10)

ARTICLE 3 – STATEMENT OF FAITH

The statement of faith of this church is a modified version of the Revised New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1853). This statement of faith functions as a summary of our beliefs, an agreement of the church's fellowship, and a guard against error, but its authority is only derived from its conformance to God's Word.

ARTICLE 4 – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

Section 2: Admission of Members

To be admitted into membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission and affirmed by the members at any members' meeting or regular public service, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Section 3: Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for the purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote. At such a meeting, a member may only vote in person.

A member on written request, stating the purpose of the request, shall be entitled to examine and copy at the member's expense, in person or by agent, accountant, or attorney, at any reasonable time and for a proper purpose, the books and records of Christ Our Savior Baptist Church.

Section 4: Associate Membership

Students and others temporarily living in the Houston area who are members of an evangelical church may apply for associate membership. Qualifications are identical to

those for full membership as set out above, except that home church membership must be retained. A letter of commendation will be sought from the applicant's home church. Duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for other members except that:

- a) When absent from the Houston area for extended periods of time they are released from the responsibility to attend our church services.
- b) While they will be encouraged to participate in members' meetings, they will not be eligible to stand for any office or to vote. Termination of associate membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other members, except that the elders shall notify the pastor or elders of the home church of that termination. Associate membership will normally terminate immediately upon the ending of the period of temporary residence in the Houston area.

Section 5: Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored (as defined by Scripture and summarized in the church covenant), and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and the example of Scripture. Public church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5). The purpose of such discipline should be:

- a) For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15:5; 29:15; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26-27; 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13-14; James 1:22);
- b) For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24-25);
- c) For the purity of the church as a whole (see 1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 2 Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2);
- d) For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1-14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2

Peter 2:2; 1 John 3:10); and supremely;

- e) For the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18:17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5–6; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12).

Section 6: Termination of Membership

The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership in the following ways. After his or her death, and may do so after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the elders) upon congregational affirmation of the elder's recommendation of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members.

The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

ARTICLE 5 – MEETINGS

Section 1: Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

Section 2: Members' Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration, which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There shall be a regular members' meeting annually, to be announced in weekly services for at least two weeks prior. All such meetings shall be held at the meeting place of Christ Our Savior Baptist Church.

An elder appointed by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members. Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met when at least fifty percent (50%) of the church members are present.

At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

Special members' meetings may be called as required. Such meetings may be called by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of ten percent (10%) of the voting membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church for two weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a

written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

Section 3: Rules Governing Members' Meetings

Robert's Rules of Order shall be recognized as the general pattern for the conduct of the members' meetings of the church. Seeking the Lord's wisdom and blessing through thankful prayer shall be a part of every meeting.

ARTICLE 6 - CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Section 1: General Statement

The purpose of church government is to protect the gospel and ensure spiritual maturity both individually and corporately as a New Testament church (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Section 2: Church Authority

Jesus Christ is the Head - Scripture teaches that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. Jesus Christ has revealed His will for us, as the Church, through His Word, the Bible (Ephesians 5:23).

Section 3: Church Polity

The Government is vested in the body of members who compose the church as further defined in this Constitution. The church is subject to no other ecclesiastical body, but is associated with churches for purposes of fellowship, consultation and cooperation. This and any other voluntary associations with other bodies shall not infringe on the rights of this church.

ARTICLE 7 – OFFICERS

Section 1: Summary

The biblical offices in the church are elders (shepherds, pastors, overseers) and deacons. The elders shall serve as the board of directors.¹

Section 2: Elders

The elders shall be comprised of not less than three² men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. Should circumstances arise that leave the church with fewer than three elders, the remaining elders shall act as soon as possible to propose qualified elders to the congregation, and shall also appoint directors who shall serve until the minimum number of elders are serving.

Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1–6 and 1 Peter 5:1–4, the

¹ State law requires a board of directors, but it does not specify that the directors need to be the elders.

² State law requires a minimum of three directors.

elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, nominated to a three-year term by the body of elders, and affirmed by the congregation according to the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. After an elder, other than the preaching pastor or staff elder(s), has served two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be elected to the office of elder after a sabbatical of at least one year.

An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and 1 Timothy 5:17–21. Subsequent to the fulfillment of the process those texts require, any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the congregation at any members' meeting of the church.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and oversee nominations of all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and teams, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, and mobilize the church for world missions. The elders are to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

Elders may establish or eliminate other offices, ministry teams, or staff positions, in accordance with the approved budget. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the position of pastor. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position. The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

Each year the elders shall propose to the church an itemized budget. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.

The elders shall appoint a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also appoint one of their numbers to serve as moderator of members' meetings.

Section 3: Deacons

The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 and Acts 6:1–7. Members who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service shall be nominated to a three-year term by the body of elders, and affirmed by the congregation according to the constitutional provisions on elections. They shall be

received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. After deacons have served two consecutive three-year terms, they may only be elected to the office after a sabbatical of at least one year.

Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration.

Section 4 – Secretary

It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate role of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the pastor, the elders, the deacons, or the church.

The clerk shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year.

In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk.

For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of Texas, the clerk shall serve as the secretary of the corporation.

The church clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members.

Section 5 – Treasurer

The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder or paid church staff member, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each members' meeting. The responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by an officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year.

ARTICLE 8 - ELECTIONS

Section 1: Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:

- a) Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process.
- b) Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders.
- c) All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members.
- d) The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2: Selection of Officers

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as elders and deacons shall be presented by the elders at the previous members' meeting (providing that the previous meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting.

The moderator shall declare elected all individuals receiving a two-thirds majority of all votes cast. This and all other action of the congregation must be taken with at least the approval of a majority of the members present and eligible to vote, not merely a majority of members present and voting.³ The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

ARTICLE 9 - INDEMNIFICATION

Section 1 – Mandatory 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 costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and (d) the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification

At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

³ Texas law requires that officers be elected by a majority of all members present and eligible to vote. To reach a majority, a candidate for office must receive more affirmative votes than the total of votes in opposition plus abstentions.

Section 3 – Procedure

If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

ARTICLE 10 – DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 6:1-8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflicts among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities.

ARTICLE 11 - COOPERATION

We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a local, state or national convention, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a convention is voluntary and may be terminated at any time.

ARTICLE 12 - FINANCES

Section 1: Summary

The elders shall present an operations and missions budget for approval by the membership at a members' meeting not more than three months after the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level.

Section 2: Fiscal year

The fiscal year of the church shall begin January first and end December thirty-first.

ARTICLE 13 - AMENDMENT

Amendments to the Certificate of Formation or Constitution may be introduced through written motion at any members meeting, with the exception of Article 3 regarding the Statement of Faith, which may only be amended subsequent to a recommendation of the elders to the church. Amendments shall not be acted on until the following special or annual members' meeting, at which time affirmative vote of a two-thirds majority of those members present at the meeting and voting shall be required for acceptance, provided that notice of the proposed change or amendment be given from the pulpit on at least two Sundays prior to the meeting, and the previous members' meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior.

ARTICLE 14 - DISSOLUTION AND DISBURSEMENT OF ASSETS

The church may be dissolved or merged with another congregation by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting at a meeting called for this purpose, subsequent to at least two weeks notice following the recommendation of the elders, or a motion proposed and adopted by the congregation at any regular or appropriately called special members' meeting. In the event of dissolution of the church, no part of the church's earnings or assets shall inure to the benefit of any of its members; a two-thirds majority of members present and voting at the meeting of dissolution may designate any portion or all assets to one or more organizations which themselves are exempt as organizations described in Sections 501(c)(3) and 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue code of 1986, or corresponding sections of any prior or future law, or to the federal, state or local government exclusively for public purpose.