

REVISED BY-LAWS  
OF  
NEW COVENANT BAPTIST CHURCH  
(Denham Springs, Louisiana)

ARTICLE I

CORPORATE NAME

The name of this corporation shall be New Covenant Baptist Church, or otherwise if amended in the Articles of Incorporation by due form of law.

ARTICLE II

CORPORATE PURPOSES AND POWERS

This corporation will exercise the purposes and powers granted and conferred upon not for profit corporations by the laws of the State of Louisiana, or any other state in which this corporation (hereafter referred to as “church”) may legally be authorized to conduct its business. The purposes and powers set forth in the Articles of Incorporation will be exercised.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

A. General

Church membership is helpful for the practical outworking of the covenant relationship between believers. This covenant relationship is established when believers are immersed by the Spirit into the body of Christ. Church membership is not the entering into covenant; rather, the covenant is entered into when faith is exercised in Christ and testified to by baptism. In Christ, believers already belong to one another. Church membership underscores the reality of that relationship and facilitates the practical outworking of it.

Church membership is helpful and necessary to provide Christ-like watchcare over individuals and over the body as a whole. Membership facilitates the following:

1. Defining who belongs to our local fellowship
2. Knowing who is entitled to the privileges and responsibilities of our local fellowship
3. Providing adequate watch care and shepherding for every individual

belonging to us

4. Exercising authority in restoration and discipline of the wayward among us

The nature of any fellowship of believers is to love, accept, and forgive one another even as God has done so for us through Christ Jesus. We are to encourage one another, provide teaching and ministry opportunities, and make available other resources to grow one another into all the fullness of God. In this way, we will fulfill the ministry He has already ordained for each of us to carry out. Therefore, the requirements for church membership should be:

- a. Repentance from sin
- b. Faith in Jesus Christ
- c. Obedience in baptism

The following statement of faith and commitment in Christ Jesus is found on each membership card as a record and reminder of our commitment to Him and to one another: “By the grace of God and through repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, I have become a child of God. I am, therefore, committed to obey Him. In obedience to Jesus Christ, I commit my life to this church body to receive watchcare, to give watchcare to others and to give to its ministry as God directs me.”

Each member is entitled to one vote.

B. Requests for Membership

1. Candidacy

Persons may present themselves as candidates for membership at any time if they meet the following requirements: (a) new birth into God’s family and (b) baptism by immersion.

2. Orientation Requirement

The purpose of new member orientation is for candidates to understand, accept and freely affirm the mission, vision, ordinances, and organization of this church. Prior to becoming members, candidates for membership must complete the church’s new member orientation program under the direction of an assigned elder. Any question regarding the candidate shall be referred to the elders for clarification.

3. Presentation

New members shall be presented to the church by the elders, after the member has completed the orientation requirements. At this time, the candidate becomes a voting member.

### C. Children's Membership (under eighteen)

#### 1. Parents are members

When a child becomes old enough to understand the content of the membership orientation classes (this must be determined by the child's parents) and the church by-laws, they may become a member of the church.

#### 2. Parents are not members

When a child under 18 years of age wishes to become a member and his or her parents are not members, the following procedure must be used:

(a) The prospective member should complete the membership requirements.

(b) An elder must visit with the member and his/her parents. The elder must carefully explain about the church, its ministries, and its government, paying particular attention to membership termination.

(c) All of the parents'/guardians' questions must be satisfactorily answered.

(d) A child whose parents do not agree to his/her becoming a member will be counseled about his/her Christian responsibility to be submissive to parents.

### D. Termination of Membership

Membership in this church body may be terminated in any of the following ways:

1. Death.

2. When a member joins another church and/or when a transfer letter request is received from another church of like faith and belief.

3. When a member moves outside the community area for more than eighteen months. This is to encourage members to become active in another part of the body of Christ while away.

4. When a member presents a written expression to terminate. The exception to this termination is when disciplinary action is in process; then the disciplinary action shall be carried through to its conclusion (Art. III-D-5).

5. The elders may terminate the membership of anyone who becomes an offense to this church and the body of Christ by unscriptural conduct. This termination may be carried out only after faithful effort has been made by the elders to bring said member to repentance and restitution (Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1). If the member is deemed to be non-repentant, then the elders shall report to the church that that person's membership has been terminated.

### E. Restoration of Membership

1. A person excluded from fellowship and removed from membership for an offense against the body of Christ shall be restored to fellowship upon satisfactory evidence of repentance presented to the elders and re-completing church membership requirements.

2. Membership may be restored by the elders upon the return to New Covenant

(excluding those mentioned in E-1 above) of a previous member without the person completing Membership Orientation classes.

## ARTICLE IV

### CHURCH GOVERNMENT

#### A. General

We recognize Christ as the ultimate authority, the head of the church (Colossians 1:18). Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit the congregation of the church has the final decision-making power. This responsibility is exercised through the decision-making process (Art. V). Serving the church shall be in the same spirit Jesus described in Matthew 20:24-28 when he told the disciples “you know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you, instead...be servants.”

#### B. Meetings

##### 1. Assemblies

Regular assemblies (Hebrews 10:25) for the purpose of worship, fellowship, teaching, and edification shall be held as the elders direct.

##### 2. Business Meetings

The membership shall meet annually in business session on the third Sunday in January to be informed, updated on the previous year, and make decisions on previously announced concerns. Special meetings may be called at any time by the elders for discussion and/or action on pressing concerns. Interim reports may be given at any regular assembly as requested.

##### 3. Small group meetings

(a) Attendance of all small group meetings within the church shall be open to church members. There may be times when the elders, deacons, and/or the personnel team declare themselves in executive session and no non-team member may be present.

(b) A designated group member shall take brief minutes at all deacons', elders', and ministry team meetings. Minutes shall contain a record of all actions and decisions made. These minutes shall be on file in the church office. All but executive sessions' minutes shall be accessible, upon request, to the members of the church body.

#### C. Senior Pastor

##### 1. General

When the senior pastor is selected, he becomes the one whom Christ, the Head, has chosen, and the one the membership should embrace to lead the church. In our church,

there is a difference in the office of senior pastor and elder. Lay elders do not have the same responsibilities that accompany their calling from God, nor do they share the same duties or responsibilities as the senior pastor.

## 2. Duties

(a) The senior pastor has the responsibility of leading the church in achieving the overall mission of the church.

(b) He shall lead the pastoral staff and elders to oversee and shepherd all individuals and ministries in achieving their objectives.

(c) He, or his designee, shall oversee the daily administrative operations of the church.

(d) He shall have the ultimate responsibility for all content brought to the church body from the pulpit.

(e) He shall help formulate the proposed budget by reviewing all requests before they are forwarded to the finance team.

(f) The senior pastor, together with any assistance he requests, may select other pastors and staff. The elders will work closely with the pastor and must be in unity with his selection before the additional staff member can be employed.

## 3. Selection of Senior Pastor

The elders, or any elder approved ministry team, shall have the authority to make the selection of a senior pastor, subject to the approval of the membership using the decision making process set forth elsewhere in this document. The approved pastor automatically becomes an elder.

## D. Elders

### 1. General

Men in the church recognized by God as spiritual leaders may be set aside as elders to provide spiritual guidance to the church. There shall be at least three (3) elders, each of whom must be members in good standing within the church. The senior pastor shall be an elder. The elders shall be elected by the church after each member has carefully reviewed the scriptural qualifications of an elder (I Timothy 3:1-7; I Timothy 5:22).

### 2. Duties

(a) The spiritual affairs of this church shall be conducted by and through the elders. (I Peter 5: 1-7, Acts 20: 28-31). As they sense God's direction for the church, they should share on a timely basis and lead the church in that direction. Open communication between the congregation and the elders is vital to the well being of the church.

(b) The elders shall oversee the watchcare ministry of the church. Each member and candidate will have an elder provided to minister to their needs.

(c) The elders shall assign additional duties and responsibilities, as needed, to the deacon body, which may be for a specified period, or may be permanent.

(d) In the selection of new deacons, the elders shall pray and discern which men presented by the deacon body meet scriptural qualifications (I Timothy 3: 8-13).

(e) On any matter, the elders shall hear and counsel, and then discern whether a

dissenting vote made by a member should be upheld or voided.

(f) They shall oversee the establishing of the budget each year and the establishing of guidelines and controls on non-budget giving.

(g) They shall approve all teachers and outside speakers.

(h) They shall select the senior pastor, as set forth in Art. IV-C-3.

(i) They shall nominate members of the Board of Directors, as set forth in Art. IV-E-3.

(j) For decision making process see Article V C

(k) Meetings of the elders shall be scheduled and held on a regular basis as determined by the elders. Meetings shall be open to members of the church, unless personal matters are being discussed, at which time the meeting will be declared in an executive session and will be therefore closed to non-elders. Members attending an elders' meeting must request the right to speak.

### 3. Selection

(a) The existing elders shall announce to the church body that men are being considered to serve as new elders.

(b) The existing elders shall pray and discern who should be added to the elders from those scripturally qualified to serve.

(c) The existing elders shall meet individually with any man selected in order to determine if he desires to serve and to obtain his permission for placing him before the church body for approval and support.

(d) The elder candidate must then be confirmed by the decision making process (Art. V B) of the church body.

(e) The existing elders shall then complete the appointment process by the laying on of hands to set aside the men to their task.

### 4. Term

The term of the office of elder shall be indefinite and shall continue until resignation, death, termination of membership, or conduct that violates the scriptural qualifications of the office. Charges brought against an elder must follow in accordance with I Timothy 5: 19-21.

## E. Board of Directors

### 1. General

The Board of Directors serves as the officers of this corporation. The Board of Directors shall consist of a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. A director cannot be a staff member or employee of the church. Persons serving as directors should have knowledge and skills in business management and legal matters.

### 2. Duties

(a) The Board of Directors shall hold in trust the property of the church and shall be authorized to execute legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or

rental of property or to execute any other legal documents where the signatures of officers of this corporation are required. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a vote of the church authorizing such action.

(b) Under the direction of the elders and the finance team, the Board of Directors shall execute the financial affairs of the church by determining and establishing the method for handling and depositing all money collected by the church.

### 3. Selection

The elders shall nominate the members of the Board of Directors, which shall consist of an elder, a deacon, and two members from the church body. The nominations for directors (officers) shall be made known to the church body at least two weeks before the annual meeting when they will be elected by the church. (For the purpose of instituting the revisions within the by-laws, a one-time delay of sixty days will be allowed to appoint a Board of Directors.) Officers shall serve three-year terms and can be re-elected to serve additional terms.

## F. Deacons

### 1. General

(a) The need for deacons is set forth in Acts 6: 2-4.

(b) The deacon body shall consist of no less than seven (7) members of the church, and as many as are scripturally qualified and elected.

(c) The term a deacon shall serve shall be indefinite and shall continue until resignation, death, termination of membership, or conduct that violates the scriptural qualifications in I Timothy 3: 8 - 13.

### 2. Duties

(a) The affairs of this church, as designated by the elders, shall be conducted by the deacons. The deacons shall serve the congregation in ministry, oversee the maintenance of the buildings and property, and perform any other duties assigned by the elders.

(b) Any decisions made by the deacon body must be approved by unity. (Art. V-C)

(c) Meetings shall take place on a regular basis, as determined by the deacon body. Meetings shall be open to the members of the church, unless personal matters are being discussed, at which time the meeting will be declared "in executive session." Prior to the meeting, members desiring to address the deacon body should inform the chairman of the content of their address.

### 3. Selection

(a) As needed, the deacons shall choose men whom they determine to be qualified to serve as new deacons. The deacon body shall submit these names to the elders.

(b) The elders shall pray and discern which men submitted by the deacon body meet the scriptural qualifications. (I Timothy 3: 8 - 13)

(c) The elders shall meet individually with the men whom they deem qualified to serve. Those willing to serve shall be presented to the church body for approval.

(d) The church body decision-making process (Art. V-B) must then confirm the deacon candidate.

(e) The elders shall then complete the appointment process by the laying on of hands to set aside the men to their task.

## ARTICLE V

### DECISION MAKING

#### A. General

A church comes to know God's will when the whole body comes to understand what Christ wants them to do. Individual opinions are not that important, but the will of God and His timing are very important. The spiritual leaders (Elders) encourage the body to go to Christ to confirm what Christ, who is the Head of the church, is saying. The church body shall continue to meet, pray and discern until the elders sense that God's timing is right for a vote.

#### B. The Process for the church body

##### 1. Actions requiring a vote by the body:

- (a) Elect the Board of directors, elders and deacons.
- (b) Approve the call of the senior pastor and his salary package.
- (c) Approve all salary packages for new pastoral or staff positions, not currently in the budget.
- (d) Approve all property transactions.
- (e) Approve any revisions of the by-laws.

##### 2. Actions not requiring a vote:

The church shall approve all ministry team leaders other than the deacons and elders. There shall be no ballot; however, candidates shall be made known to the church body. From that time, any voting member has two weeks to make known to the elders any reasonable cause as to why a person should not serve as a leader of the team. If no one comes forward, or if the elders determine there was not reasonable cause, then the person or persons shall be deemed approved by the church body to be the leader of the specified team.

##### 3. Dates for votes

(a) The Board of Directors' elections, when needed, shall take place at the annual meeting.

(b) Voting on all other issues may occur at any time, as deemed necessary. However, a two week time period shall occur between the elders' announcement of the vote and the vote itself.

(c) In the event of an emergency decision, the two week time period may be waived.

#### 4. The Decision

(a) The following statement should appear on the top of all decision cards:

“A member who has not *had the opportunity to pray through this matter or has not been adequately informed on this matter* should not vote.

(b) The available choices on the decision card should be emphasized before the voting, including the statement at the top of the card ((a) above).

(c) The decision cards are distributed and marked without further discussion.

(d) The decision card gives three choices:

“A”. I have prayed through this decision and I do believe it is God’s will for us at this time.

“B”. I have prayed through this decision, but I do not have any direction. I will, however, submit joyfully to the direction God has given others.

“C”. I have prayed through this decision and I do not believe it is God’s will for us at this time.

#### 5. The Results

(a) The assembly shall be informed immediately of the results.

(b) If there are no “C” votes, the action shall be taken.

(c) In the event there are votes contrary to the majority, the following procedure will be explained to the church:

1. The church body is asked to pray that God’s will be done in the matter.
2. Those who voted in the minority are encouraged to meet with an elder or elders to express their concerns.
3. After hearing the concerns, the elders in unity will decide what action to take. The church will be informed by an announcement from the elder body concerning the action that will be taken.
4. If no one comes forward, the vote of the majority will be acted upon.

#### C. Decision making process for boards, teams, committees, deacons and elders

1. All discussion of issues must occur in open or executive sessions.
2. For a decision to be made, a quorum of the members (2/3) must be present.
3. Unity is needed for approval.

## ARTICLE VI

### MINISTRY TEAMS

#### A. General

1. Ministry teams are established to meet the needs of the church by ministering to the church body, to the community, and to Christ’s kingdom.

2. Ministry teams, both called and appointed, shall be approved by the elders.

Teams serving in an “as needed” capacity may be appointed by elders or deacons.

3. Each ministry team must be directly related to the church’s current purpose, vision and values.

4. Each ministry team will be assigned to a pastoral staff member and elder who will monitor and provide direction to the team leader and team.

5. A new ministry will be considered for implementation when an appropriate leader is identified, guidelines for the work are established, and a pastoral staff member/elder is assigned as the sponsor.

6. For decision making process see Article V C

#### B. Duties

The ministry team’s specific purpose and duties must be approved by the elders and stated in its mission statement.

#### C. Selection

Ministry team members serve as led (based upon gifts, passion, and personal style) or on invitation from the pastoral staff/elders or appropriate ministry director.

#### D. Term

1. Ministry teams may form and organize as needed with a specific time frame or task for existence.

2. The ministry will be reviewed and evaluated periodically. It will dissolve when its purpose is accomplished, the original need no longer exists, its effectiveness has diminished, or it no longer is directly tied to one of the church-adopted core values or ministry strategies.

## ARTICLE VII

### ADOPTION OF REVISED BY-LAWS

Copies of the revised by-laws shall be distributed in regular assemblies. After sufficient time for review, discussion and prayer they shall be voted on using the decision making process of the church.