

Bethel Baptist Church of Missouri

A Missouri Non-profit Religious Corporation

Bylaws

Article I: Congregational Identity

Section A: Name

The name of this Corporation is Bethel Baptist Church of Missouri. This Corporation will be further referred to in the Bylaws as “the Church” and consist of the members of Bethel Baptist Church. The Church shall have full power and authority to minister under other aliases (“dba”).

Section B: Principal Office

The Church office is presently located at 4301 NE Vivion Rd, Kansas City, MO 64119. The Church shall have full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another.

Section C: Purpose

The purpose of the Church is to glorify God by obeying Jesus Christ as Lord and advancing His mission on earth (Matthew 28:18-20). This includes peaceable assembly for worship, proselytizing, demonstration, community service, and whatever other means the Church deems necessary, in accordance with the Christian Scriptures. All the Church’s activities, including the Church’s allowance of its facilities to an external party, are religious in nature and purpose and must be done in full accord with the Church’s statement of faith and official doctrinal resolutions.

Section D: Statements of Faith and Church Covenant

The Church affirms the Holy Bible as the very Word of God and the only authoritative rule for faith and practice. The Church adopts [*The Baptist Faith and Message 2000*](#), and the *New Hampshire Confession (1853)*. The Church adopts the Church Covenant as found in Appendix 1 of these Bylaws.

Section E: Affiliations

The Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in world mission, this Church voluntarily affiliates with the Clay-Platte Baptist Association, the Missouri Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention in its local, state, and national expressions.

Article II: Membership

Section A: Identification of Membership

Membership in the Church shall consist of all persons who are listed on the church membership roll. Members shall be added to, removed from, or restored to the Church membership roll, with all its responsibilities and rights, according to the following guidelines:

1. Members shall be added to, removed from, or restored to the Church membership roll by a two-thirds congregational vote.

2. Members who request to be released from membership in order to join the membership of another Gospel-preaching church shall be submitted to the congregation by the Elders and released by a two-thirds congregational vote.
3. Upon death, members shall be released from the membership roll automatically.

Section B: Qualifications for Membership

New members of the Church will be added to the membership roll upon meeting all the following qualifications:

1. Having a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, submitted to the congregation
2. Baptized by immersion after the aforementioned faith
3. Eighteen years of age or older
4. Affirming the Church's Statements of Faith and Church Covenant
5. Nominated by the Church's Elders
6. Accepted by a two-thirds congregational vote

Section C: Associate Membership

Those who desire to retain membership at another church may be granted associate membership temporarily according to the following guidelines:

1. Associate members must be members in good standing of another church.
2. Associate members may observe business meetings but shall not vote on any matters requiring a congregational vote.
3. Associate members shall not serve in any elected office of the Church and shall only serve in other ministries of the Church with the express approval of the Elders.
4. Associate members shall be accountable to the church discipline process set forth in these Bylaws.
5. Associate members shall meet the qualifications for membership as set forth in Article II, Section II.

Section D: Duties and Privileges of Membership

In addition to the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, and in the spirit of holy fellowship set forth therein, all members of the Church shall have the right to give prayerful counsel and cast one vote on each of the following matters as proposed by the Elders:

1. Financial Stewardship:
 - A. The annual budget of the Church, summarized by functional operations.
 - B. Any departure greater than 5% of the total annual budget.
 - C. The disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the Church
 - D. The acquisition of property by the Church
 - E. The acquisition of a loan by the Church
2. Constitutional/Doctrinal Faithfulness:
 - A. The amending of these Bylaws by three-fourths majority
 - B. The addition or subtraction of any doctrinal statement by three-fourths majority
 - C. The merger or dissolution of the Church by three-fourths majority

3. Institution of Leadership:
 - A. The voting in of Elders by three-fourths majority vote
 - B. The voting in of Deacons by three-fourths majority vote
 - C. The yearly reaffirmation of leadership by three-fourths majority vote
4. Membership and Removal:
 - A. Voting in new members by two-thirds majority.
 - B. The removal of member by two-thirds majority.

Section E: Discipline of Members

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

Members found to neglect their duties (as found in the Church Covenant), accept false teaching, or dishonor Christ with grievous and unrepentant sin shall be subject to church discipline according to the following guidelines:

1. Personal admonishment should be sought for personal sin (Matt 18:15-20).
2. Congregational admonishment should be sought for public sin (Matt 18:15-20; 1 Tim 5:20).
3. Accusations against Elders should be established by multiple witnesses (1 Tim 5:19).
4. In cases concerning alleged lawbreaking, the governing authorities shall be properly and immediately notified and met with appropriate cooperation (Titus 3:1; Rom 13:1-7; Mark 12:17).
5. Where personal and congregational admonishment have not occasioned repentance, the Elders shall submit the name of a disciplined member for a congregational vote of termination (Matt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:1-5).
6. If the Elders of the Church find an excommunicated member to be consistently repentant and discern that restoration to fellowship in this local church is wise for all parties involved, the Elders shall bring such restoration to the congregation for public repentance and a congregational vote.

Section F: Meetings of Members

Business meetings of the members shall be held in the times, in the manner, and for the purposes set forth below:

1. The members of the Church shall conduct at least six regular business meetings each year.
2. An Elder of the Church shall preside over members' meetings as moderator, as decided by the Board of Elders.
3. An annual meeting of the Church shall be held prior to the beginning of the calendar year to receive and adopt the annual report and the annual Church budget.
4. Members shall be given proper notification of all meetings at least 7 days in advance. The Elders of the Church may change the location of any scheduled meeting or postpone its date by properly notifying the members at least 7 days in advance unless exigent circumstances exist. Proper notification consists of either (a) verbal and/or written

announcement at any business meeting or worship service of the Church, or (b) written announcement by standard postage and/or electronic message.

5. A quorum shall consist of those members present. Voting by proxy is prohibited. Absentee ballots shall be provided upon request by Elder approval.
6. All congregational votes shall be passed by a simple majority unless stated otherwise in these Bylaws.
7. The acceptance of members and associate members shall be passed by a two-thirds majority.
8. The election of Deacons shall be passed by a three-fourths majority.
9. The election of Elders shall be passed by a three-fourths majority.
10. The amendment of these Bylaws shall be passed by a three-fourths majority.
11. Business meetings of the members of the Church shall be conducted according to parliamentary procedure.

Article III: Officers

Section A: Elders/Pastors

The designation, purpose, and terms of the Church's Elders shall be as follows:

1. The Elders of the Church shall be those male members of the Church who are gifted by God and called by the congregation to lead the Church spiritually and organizationally, in accordance with the qualifications listed in the New Testament, especially 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4.
2. An Elder's purpose is to (a) teach and/or preach the Word of God to the Church, (b) provide directional oversight for the Church, and (c) spiritually shepherd the members of the Church.
3. The Elders of the Church shall serve as officers of the Corporation.
4. The Biblical terms "elder" (*presbuteros*), "overseer" (*episkopos*), and "pastor" (*poimen*) refer to three functions of the one office of Elder. Thus, no one shall be given the title "elder," "overseer," or "pastor" who is not a duly elected Elder of the Church.
5. The Church shall have no maximum number of Elders and shall seek to call a plurality of qualified Elders whenever possible (Acts 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; Titus 1:5; James 5:14).
6. An Elder may either be a paid staff member or a volunteer, with preference for financial compensation given to those Elders who regularly preach and teach (1 Timothy 5:17).
7. There shall be two positions within the Elder Board selected among the Elders by unanimous vote:
 - a. Chairman – The Chairman of the Elder Board shall function as the administrative head and shall (1) collect and organize agenda items for Elder and members' meetings, and (2) preside over all Elder and members' meetings.
 - b. Recorder – The Recorder of the Elder Board shall function as the administrative assistant to the Chairman and shall be responsible for (1) collecting minutes from the Elder's meetings, and (2) keeping and organizing Elder's meeting minutes to be called upon when needed.
8. The regular preaching of the Word to the gathered Church shall be delivered primarily by the Elders. Thus, no one shall preach on a regular basis who is not an Elder of the Church, except in the case of an interim preacher or interim pastor.

9. The Church shall seek an interim preacher or interim pastor only in the case of a lack of qualified and available members to serve as Elders. In such a case, the Church shall seek an interim preacher or interim pastor who aligns to the greatest degree available with the qualifications of an Elder and affirms to the greatest degree available the Church's Statements of Faith.
10. The Elders, being informed by the staff, and Deacons shall create and propose an annual budget to the congregation.
11. Elders shall train and nominate new candidates for Eldership as needed (Titus 1:5). Candidates for Eldership will be appointed by a three-fourths congregational vote.
12. Neither past divorce, current remarriage, current celibacy, or unbelieving children shall automatically disqualify an otherwise-qualified candidate for Eldership. Rather, the current Elders will examine the candidate's life for strong evidence of faithfulness in all current relationships, including but not limited to family, employment, and church membership.
13. The Elders shall meet regularly to pray, discuss, and discern matters relating to the shepherding, stewardship, doctrine, and oversight of the Church, as determined by the Elders.
14. The Elders of the Church may appoint and affirm various ministries, teams, staff members, and initiatives as needed, delegating limited authority to perform a specific ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16).
15. The Elders shall collectively delegate authority over limited areas of ministry to an individual Elder as needed, who shall have the responsibility of reporting to his fellow Elders at each meeting of Elders.
16. Elders shall have full authority to hire, fire, oversee, manage, and set the wages or salary of all paid staff members, in accordance with the congregationally approved annual budget.
17. The Elders shall determine the qualifications and requirements of all staff positions, including church membership requirements and faith commitments, as appropriate for the nature, scope, and length of the position.
18. Elders shall not have set term limits but must be reaffirmed by a three-fourths congregational vote every year.
19. An Elder may resign from his office at any time. All such resignations must be given to the Elders in writing, signed by the resigning party.
20. A quorum of Elders shall consist of two-thirds of the current Elders.
21. Decisions of the Elders requiring a vote shall pass by a simple majority, unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws.
22. The termination of an Elder from his office may be brought to a congregational vote by a vote of the Elders, excluding the party in question. Paid Elders, upon termination from office, will be compensated with a severance package equal to at least one month's pay.

Section B: Deacons

The designation, purpose, and terms of the Church's Deacons shall be as follows:

1. The Deacons of the Church shall be those male members of the Church who are gifted by God, nominated by the Elders, and appointed by a three-fourths congregational vote to

serve the Church in its particular ministries, in accordance with the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, and in the spirit of service expressed in Acts 6:1-7.

2. The purpose of a Deacon is to serve in coordinating the tangible and logistical needs of one of the Church's particular ministries, including but not limited to ministries of benevolence, care, stewardship, education, outreach, etc., at the discretion of the Elders.
3. A Deacon shall report to the Elders, who have the responsibility of overseeing and equipping Deacons for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-14). This oversight includes regular prayer, encouragement, training, mentorship, review, communication, and the supplying of clear expectations.
4. A Deacon shall be tasked with only those ministry responsibilities appropriate for his abilities, dispositions, and life circumstances, as discerned by the Elders in accord with the Church's statements of faith.
5. A Deacon may be either a paid staff member or a volunteer, depending on the need of the Church's particular ministries and its financial situation, as discerned by the Elders.
6. Neither past divorce, current remarriage, current celibacy, or unbelieving children shall automatically disqualify an otherwise-qualified Deacon. Rather, the Elders will examine the candidate's life for strong evidence of faithfulness in all current relationships, including family, employment, and church membership.
7. As individual servants and coordinators, rather than overseers, the various Deacons of the Church shall not conduct business meetings as a board.
8. Deacons shall not have set term limits but must be reaffirmed by a three-fourths congregational vote every year.
9. A Deacon may resign from his office at any time. All such resignations must be given to the Elders in writing, signed by the resigning party.
10. The removal of a Deacon from office shall be subject to the Elders. Paid Deacons, upon removal from office, will be compensated with a severance package equal to at least two weeks' pay.

Section C: Treasurer

The designation, purpose, and terms of the Church's Treasurer shall be as follows:

1. The Treasurer of the church may be comprised of either an Elder or Deacon.
2. The Treasurer of the Church shall have the authority of making purchases, paying bills, signing paychecks, and paying reimbursements on behalf of the Church, and is therefore the authorized signer of the Church's bank accounts.
3. The primary intention of a Treasurer of the Church is not to decide which purchases and payments to make but to provide accountability in the spirit of 1 Corinthians 16:1-4.
4. The Treasurer shall have the additional responsibility of maintaining or providing for the maintenance of the Church's financial records, including but not limited to contribution statements, tax forms, and annual financial review.
5. The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Elders with a unanimous vote.
6. The Treasurer shall give monthly updates to the Elders on Bethel's financial results. Annually, the Treasurer will review the Church's internal controls (including, but not limited to, the safeguarding of assets and proper separation of duties) and accounting

policies (including, but not limited to, Treasurer check-writing limits and controls, and approval thresholds).

7. The Treasurer will oversee a biannual third party (non-Elder/non-Treasurer) assessment of financial processes and activities.
8. The Treasurer may resign from his office at any time by notifying the Elders in writing.

Section D: Clerks

The designation, purpose, and terms of the Church's Clerk(s) shall be as follows:

1. The Clerk(s) of the Church shall have the responsibility of maintaining the minutes of all members' meetings and an updated membership roll.
2. A Clerk of the Church must be a member of the Church.
3. A Clerk may be either a paid staff member or a volunteer, depending on the need of the Church's particular ministries and its financial situation, as discerned by the Elders.
4. There shall be a minimum of one Clerk and no maximum number of Clerks.
5. Clerks shall be appointed by the Elders.
6. Clerks may meet together as they deem necessary but are not required to have a regular meeting.
7. Clerks shall not have set term limits.
8. A Clerk may resign from his or her office at any time by notifying the Elders in writing.
9. The removal of a Clerk shall be subject to the Elders. Paid Clerks, upon removal from their position, will be compensated with a severance package equal to at least two weeks' pay.

Article IV: Corporate Responsibility

Section A: Records and Reports

The Church will maintain the following records and reports:

1. Adequate and correct financial records
2. Contribution statements for financial contributors
3. Reports of annual review of all church financial books, records, and proceedings
4. Minutes of the proceedings of its members
5. An internal membership roll, giving their names, addresses, and other relevant contact information

Section B: Calendar

The fiscal year and terms of officers shall begin on the first day of January each year and end on the last day of December each year.

Section C: Exempt Purposes

The property of this Corporation is irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes, and no part of the net income or assets of this organization shall ever inure to the benefit of a Director, officer, or member of the corporation, or to the benefit of any private individual.

Section D: Transfer of Assets

Upon the winding up and dissolution of the Corporation, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of this Corporation, the remaining assets shall become the Trust of the North American Mission Board Replant Network for the purpose of planting or replanting gospel-preaching churches.

Section E: Amendments to the Bylaws

New Bylaws may be adopted or these Bylaws may be amended or repealed—except Article IV, Section C—by the affirmative vote of a three-fourths majority of the votes represented at a duly held meeting of the members.

Appendix 1: Church Covenant

Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other (Is 55:3; Jer 32:8; Eph 1:6; Heb 4:14).

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:3)

We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require (Lev 19:17-18; Matt 18:15-17; Acts 2:42-47).

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others (Heb 10:25; Eph 6:18; 1 Thess 5:16-18; Jam 5:13-18).

We will endeavor to bring up such as may at any time be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends (Eph 6:4; Phil 2:12-18; 1 Tim 4:14; 1 Pet 3:15).

We will rejoice at each others' happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows (Gal 6:2).

We will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life (Rom 8:4; 13:14; Gal 5:16; Eph 2:3; 1 Pet 2:11).

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations (Matt 28:18-20; Phil 1:5-7).

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word (Heb 10:25).

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.