

# New Plainview Baptist Church

## *Church Constitution*

3770 Old Highway 100 · Tallapoosa, Georgia 30176

---

### **Introduction**

God established a Congregation in 1863 under the name Plainview Baptist Church, for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and since He has sustained and prospered this work to the present day as New Plainview Baptist Church.

Whereas we, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Spirit, have recognized the appropriateness of reconstituting the polity of the Congregation to conform more closely to our understanding of the Scriptural model.

Now therefore, the Congregation does hereby reorganize itself in accord with the Georgia Nonprofit Corporation Code and the 1964 501(c)(3) application of this Church and adopts this Constitution as its articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in our Statement of Faith (which is attached hereto as Exhibit "A"), and in our Church Membership Covenant (which is attached hereto as Exhibit "B"). This Constitution is in lieu of Bylaws and revokes and replaces previously adopted Bylaws.

## **Article One: Purpose & Mission**

### **Section 1. The Purpose & Mission of this Church.**

Clause 1. Purpose: This Church exists for the worship and glory of God.

Clause 2. Mission: This Church seeks to accomplish this purpose by knowing one another, equipping one another, and sending one another out to reach the lost, locally, and globally.

## **Article Two: Membership**

### **Section 1. Eligibility for Membership.**

Clause 1. Members of this Church shall be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who:

- a give evidence of regeneration;
- b have been baptized, as believers in obedience to Christ;
- c hold without mental reservation the doctrines of our Church as expressed in the Church Statement of Faith and in the Church Covenant; and
- d promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant.

### **Section 2. Admission to Membership.**

Clause 1. An applicant shall be received as a member of the Church upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement by a three-quarters vote at any Church in Conference.

### **Section 3. Duties of Members.**

Clause 1. The duties of members are summarized in the Church Covenant.

Clause 2. Regular attendance on the Lord's Day, for all who are able.

### **Section 4. Termination of Membership.**

Clause 1. The Church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death and may do so following his or her voluntary resignation, joining another church, or failure to fulfill the duties of membership.

Clause 2. A member shall be removed from the membership as a matter of church discipline (see Section 5).

### **Section 5. Discipline.**

Clause 1. The Church shall have authority to exercise discipline over its members, which may involve excluding from its membership any member who willingly and persistently lives in violation of biblical moral standards including scandalous conduct by which the reputation of Christ or His Church is dishonored. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:15–17 and those of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:1–5 and 2 Corinthians 2:6–8. The purpose of such discipline is for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined.

Clause 2. If a member submits a voluntary resignation or a request for transfer of membership at a time when that member is the subject of discipline or is facing discipline for scandalous conduct by which the reputation of Christ or His Church is dishonored, the Church shall have the authority to refuse that resignation or transfer. The purpose for such a refusal would be to ensure that the Church has done all it can to fulfill the Biblical goal of church discipline, which is to seek the repentance, reconciliation and spiritual growth of each member of the body. A member who would seek to remove himself from the body to avoid an ongoing or forthcoming disciplinary process may thereby miss the God-given opportunity for Biblical discipline, which is intended for his own soul and for protection of the Church.

Clause 3. A member shall be removed from the membership as a matter of church discipline upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of at least three-quarters vote at any Church in Conference.

## **Article Three: Meetings**

### **Section 1. Regular Meetings.**

The Church shall meet together for public worship each Lord's Day and at other times throughout the week as the Church may determine.

### **Section 2. Church in Conference.**

Clause 1. The Church shall hold Church in Conference meetings at least every quarter. No person who is not a member can vote or hold any elected or appointed position in the Church.

Clause 2. The Elders, whenever they deem it necessary, or within thirty days of receiving a written request signed by ten percent of the voting membership, shall call a special Church in Conference.

Clause 3. No Church in Conference shall be held until the date, time, and place of such meeting has been announced at all Sunday morning services of the Church for at least two weeks prior to the Church in Conference in question. An emergency meeting may be called by the Elders after making an effort to contact church members.

Clause 4. The Chairman of Elders shall preside as the Moderator at every Church in Conference and shall be responsible to maintain order and to recognize the presence of a quorum before considering any matters requiring a vote. In the event the Chairman of Elders is not present at a meeting, those Elders who are present will designate a substitute moderator for that meeting.

Clause 5. Church in Conference meetings shall proceed according to a reasonable order.

Clause 6. Any action required to be taken by the Church in Conference shall require the recognition of the presence of a quorum by the presiding officer. The presence of five percent (5%) of the members shall constitute a quorum and shall be required to do business. Motions shall be adopted upon the agreement of a majority of the members present, except on matters requiring more than a mere majority vote as otherwise provided for in this Constitution.

### **Section 3. Actions Taken in Church in Conference.**

The Church, duly assembled at a Church in Conference, shall be responsible:

- a to elect officers;
- b to receive individuals into Church membership;
- c to recognize the termination of membership due to death, transfer of membership, or voluntary resignation;
- d to edit or amend the Statement of Faith or Church Covenant;
- e to exercise Church discipline;
- f to approve, once in every year, a Church budget;
- g to hear reports from the Elders and, from time to time, various Deacons and ministry teams;
- h to take any other action they deem necessary or desirable.

### **Section 4. Alternative Voting for Members in Special Circumstances.**

When matters involving the election of Elders and Deacons and the approval of the annual Church budget are to come before the Church in Conference for a vote, any member of the Church who is serving under the Commission of this Church on the mission field or who is known to be a home bound member or who is away on active duty in military service shall be notified in writing of the proposed election or vote and shall be eligible to vote by correspondence on the question. Writing or correspondence shall include e-mail for those who regularly receive information from the Church in that manner but shall mean by regular mail for those known not to have e-mail. It shall be the responsibility of the member to provide the Church with a current address or e-mail.

## **Article Four: Government**

### **Section 1. Biblical Offices.**

The biblical offices in the Church shall be Elders and Deacons, but final earthly authority is vested in the assembled Congregation.

## **Section 2. Elders.**

Clause 1. Oversight of the ministry and resources of the Church shall be vested in a Council of Elders, which shall be comprised of not fewer than three men (when available) who are members of the Church and who satisfy the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9.

Clause 2. Elders shall be selected as follows: The Council of Elders shall at any regular Church in Conference present to the Church a list of nominees to the office of Elder. For a period of at least one month, the Church shall consider whether such nominees are qualified for the office. If any member believes one or more of the nominees to be unqualified, that member shall express such concern to the Elders, who may on the basis of that advice remove names from the list of nominees. No name shall be added to the list of nominees, which was not included on the initial list. When a period of one month has elapsed, the Elders shall at the next regular Church in Conference present a final list of nominees to the Church, who shall vote yea or nay by written and anonymous ballot on each of the nominees separately. The Moderator and Treasurer (or in their absence two or more members designated by the Elders) shall count the votes, and any nominee receiving approval by three-fourths shall, in due haste, be publicly recognized as an Elder and set apart as such.

Clause 3. In accordance with 1 Timothy 2:12 women shall not serve as Elders.

Clause 4. A majority of the Council of Elders shall be laymen, that is, Church members not in the regular pay of the Church.

Clause 5. With the exception of the Elders serving on staff, Elders shall be reaffirmed by vote of the Church triennially, and having served two consecutive three-year terms, shall not be eligible for re-election for one year. Elders serving on staff shall not be subject to a reaffirmation vote, or to any term limit. When the first class of Elders is elected following the adoption of this Constitution, those Elders shall serve initial terms of one, two or three years, as determined by the Elders at their first meeting following that first election of Elders.

Clause 6. No Elder shall hold the office of Deacon during his tenure as an Elder.

Clause 7. The Council of Elders shall choose its Chairman and Vice Chairman. The Chairman of Elders shall be chosen by the Council of Elders from among the lay elders, that is those not in the regular pay of the Church. The Council of Elders shall serve in lieu of a board of directors and the Chairman of Elders shall serve as the chief officer of the Church for legal purposes. In addition to such other duties as may be set forth in this Constitution or otherwise be delegated by the Council of Elders, the Vice Chairman shall serve as Chairman in the event of the incapacity or absence of the Chairman.

Clause 8. The Elders shall, in keeping with the principles set forth in the Scriptures, especially Acts 6:1–6; 1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9; James 5:14; and 1 Peter 5:1–4, undertake the responsibility of shepherding God's flock by devoting themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. They shall have the following particular authority:

- a to plan and oversee corporate worship services;
- b to oversee the ordinances of the Church, which ordinances are Baptism and the Lord's Supper;
- c to examine and instruct prospective members;
- d to oversee the process of Church discipline;
- e to examine and recommend candidates for all offices and positions;
- f to oversee the work of the Deacons and all other agents of the Church; and

g to set direction and take any other action which shall be necessary and proper for faithfully overseeing and shepherding the Church.

Clause 9. An Elder shall be removed from office by a three-fourths vote at any Church in Conference. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:15–17 and those of the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 5:17–21.

### **Section 3. Deacons.**

Clause 1. Service needs to the Church shall be provided by Deacons, the number of which shall vary as the Church has need, and who shall satisfy the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8–13.

Clause 2. Each diaconate position shall serve the needs of the Church, and shall be created or dissolved upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of three-fourths at any Church in Conference.

Clause 3. Deacons shall be selected as follows: The Council of Elders shall at a Church in Conference present to the Church a list identifying a nominee for a diaconate position to be filled. For a period of at least one month, the Church shall consider whether each nominee is qualified for the office of deacon and gifted for the deacon position to which he is nominated. If any member believes one or more of the nominees to be unqualified to be a deacon or not gifted for the deacon position to which he is nominated, that member shall express such concern to the Elders, who may on the basis of that advice remove names from the list of nominees and substitute for deacon positions other names who are already in nomination by the Church. When a period of one month has elapsed, the Elders shall at the next Church in Conference present to the Church a final list of deacon nominees and associated diaconate positions. The Church in Conference shall vote yea or nay by written, anonymous ballot on each of the nominees in turn. The Moderator and Treasurer (or, in their absence, two or more members designated by the Elders) shall count the votes, and any nominee receiving approval by three-fourths shall be a Deacon, and shall in due haste be publicly recognized and set apart as such.

Clause 4. Deacons shall serve for one term of three years and may be reaffirmed by a vote of the Church for one additional three-year term. Deacons who have served two consecutive three-year terms shall then not be eligible to serve as a deacon for a period of one year.

Clause 5. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1–6, Deacons shall support the Elders' ministry of the Word while they work to maintain the unity of the Church, and care for the physical needs of the Church. The Elders shall, from time to time, request the Deacons, individually or as a group, to meet together with the Elders for the purpose of discussing the Deacon ministry of the Church. In addition, the Vice Chairman of Elders shall call and lead a meeting at least once each quarter of all Elders and Deacons, along with all non-Deacon heads of ministry teams, for the purpose of prayer, encouragement and coordination of Deacon and ministry team activities.

Clause 6. The Church will, upon recommendation by the Elders, recognize Deacons to take responsibility for the following ministries:

- a for overseeing the budget and financial affairs of the Church;
- b for attending to matters related to Church personnel;
- c for attending to the mission outreach of the Church;
- d for seeing that the sick, the sorrowing, the aged, and the infirm receive spiritual and physical comfort;

- e for receiving, holding, and disbursing a fund for benevolence, and for reporting from time to time on the use of such funds to both the Elders and the Church;
- f for attending to the accommodations for corporate worship, including greeting;
- g for attending to the elements of the Lord's Supper;
- h for attending to baptisms; and
- i for attending to details pertaining to sound and media.

In addition, the Elders may identify and recommend to the Church the recognition of deacons to serve in other diaconate ministries as the Church may have need.

Clause 7. A Deacon may temporarily be removed from office by a decision of the Elders, which removal shall then become effective for the remainder of the Deacon's term upon the subsequent agreement of the Church at any Church in Conference.

#### **Section 4. Pastor.**

Clause 1. Primary responsibility for preaching and teaching the Scriptures in public meetings of the Church may be vested in the Pastor, who shall be an Elder.

Clause 2. The Pastor shall be selected as follows. The Elders shall form a Pastor Search Committee whenever a vacancy occurs. That committee shall present their recommendation to the Elders. The Elders at any Church in Conference shall present to the Church the name of one nominee to the position of Pastor. For a period of at least one month, the Church shall consider the nominee's gifts in preaching and teaching, and his commitment to minister personally to the members of this Church. If any member believes the nominee to be unqualified, that member shall express his concern to the Elders. When a period of one month has elapsed, the Elders shall at a Church in Conference, present the nominee for Pastor to the Church, who shall, by written and anonymous ballot, vote yea or nay on his selection as such. The Moderator and Treasurer (or, in their absence those members designated by the Elders present) shall count the votes, and if the nominee receives the approval of at least three-quarters of the members present and voting, he shall be a member of the Church, an Elder, and the Pastor, and the Church shall in due haste publicly recognize him as such.

Clause 3. The Pastor shall preach regularly on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office. He may also delegate these and other responsibilities as needed.

Clause 4. In the absence or incapacity of the Pastor, the Elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

#### **Section 5. Staff.**

The Elders may hire additional staff to assist with pastoral and administrative ministry.

## **Article Five: Administration**

#### **Section 1. Clerk.**

Clause 1. The Clerk, who shall be considered an officer of the Church, shall record the minutes of all regular and special Church in Conference meetings and give reports as requested by the Elders, particular Deacons, or the Church. In compliance with O.C.G.A. 14-3-840(e), the Clerk shall serve in lieu of the legal office of secretary.

Clause 2. The Clerk shall be selected to a renewable term of one year upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of a three-fourths vote at any Church in Conference.

Clause 3. The Clerk may be removed from office by a decision of the Elders, or by a three-quarters vote at any Church in Conference.

## **Section 2. Treasurer.**

Clause 1. The Treasurer, who shall be considered an officer of the Church, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the Church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as designated by the Church. 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 any officer, employee, or agent of the Church. The Treasurer shall render to the Elders, whenever they may require it, an account of all financial transactions and of the financial condition of the Church. The Treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the Church to the Congregation.

Clause 2. The Treasurer shall be elected to a renewable term of one year upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of three-quarters vote at a Church in Conference.

Clause 3. No person shall serve more than three consecutive terms as Treasurer.

Clause 4. No person currently serving as an Elder, or paid staff member of the Church, shall be eligible for the office of Treasurer.

Clause 5. The Treasurer shall be removed from office upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of a three-quarters vote at any Church in Conference. In addition, by action of the Elders, the Treasurer and any Assistant Treasurer may be removed immediately for defalcation or dishonesty.

Clause 6. One or more Assistant Treasurers may be recommended by the Elders. Any Assistant Treasurer shall be elected in a similar manner, for similar terms and shall have similar qualifications, as the Treasurer.

Clause 7. After the Elders have approved a budget, the treasurer shall present a copy of the budget to the Church in October, which shall then be considered and voted upon by the Church in November in accordance with the fiscal year starting January 1. The Treasurer will track the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the Church for the Elders and the Congregation with the goal of achieving a balanced budget within each fiscal year. No person or group shall solicit money on behalf of the Church or any of its ministries without the prior written approval of the Council of Elders and the Treasurer.

## **Article Six: Church Policy Manual**

The Council of Elders shall be responsible for creating and adopting a Church Policy Manual which shall set forth Church policies not covered in this Constitution. The Church Policy Manual may not contain any policies or procedures that are in conflict with this Constitution. The Church shall be informed when the Church Policy Manual is adopted or amended by the Elders. The Church Policy Manual shall be kept in the Church office and a copy shall be provided upon request to any member of the Church.

## **Article Seven: Property and Assets**

Clause 1. The Church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and so hold such real, personal, or mixed property as it is authorized by the laws of the State of Georgia, and is deemed necessary or appropriate for the functioning of the Church, and shall have the power to dispose of such property by mortgage, bill of sale, deed, or otherwise. All property shall be held in the name of the Church.

Clause 2. No real property shall be purchased, disposed of, encumbered or leased without approval by a three-fourths vote at a Church in Conference where notice of the conference and the proposed action have been given at all Sunday morning and Sunday evening services for two weeks prior to the conference.

Clause 3. In case of division of the Church by conflict (from which we pray God by His mercy to preserve us), all property and assets of the Church shall belong to those who abide by this Constitution.

Clause 4. In case of dissolution of the Church, the property and all assets shall be sold, either through private or public sale. From the proceeds, firstly all current and long-term obligations of the Church shall be paid. Secondly, all remaining funds shall be distributed to one or more Christian ministries (recognized as an IRS 501(c)(3) organization), as the Church shall determine. The Church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the Church by a three-fourths written ballot vote at a Church in Conference called for that purpose, or when no Church in Conference meeting has been held for three consecutive years, or when less than six members remain.

## **Article Eight: Indemnification**

The Church shall indemnify and hold harmless any and all Elders, Deacons, officers, business administrators, Pastors and staff personnel for any expenses actually or necessarily incurred in conjunction with any action, suit or proceeding against such members as a result of matters arising out of their discharge, in good faith, of their duties to the Church. This indemnification shall include attorney fees and shall occur as the expenses are incurred and in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit or proceeding, on receipt of the members' promise to repay the amount advanced if proved in court that the conduct which is the subject matter of the action involved a deliberate intent by said member to injure the Church's best interests.

## **Article Nine: Ratification**

This Constitution shall be ratified upon the approval of a three-fourths vote at a Church in Conference, and shall take effect upon the recognition of the Bylaw Committee pursuant to a transition plan which shall first be approved by a three-fourths vote at a Church in Conference.



## **Article Ten: Amendments**

### **Section 1. Amendment of Statement of Faith or Church Covenant.**

The Statement of Faith or Church Covenant shall be amended upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of a three-quarters vote at any regular Church in Conference, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at any previous Church in Conference, and shall have been announced at all Sunday morning and Sunday evening services of the Church for at least two weeks immediately prior to final consideration. Any member serving under the commission of this Church on the mission field or who is known to be a homebound member shall be notified in writing of the proposed amendment and shall be eligible to vote by correspondence on this question.

### **Section 2. Amendment of this Constitution.**

This Constitution shall be amended by a three-quarters vote at any regular Church in Conference, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at any previous Church in Conference, and shall have been announced at all Sunday morning services of the Church for at least two weeks immediately prior to final consideration. Any member serving under the commission of this Church on the mission field or who is known to be a home-bound member shall be notified in writing of the amendment and shall be eligible to vote by correspondence on this question.

---

*Adopted by the congregation of New Plainview Baptist Church*