

Bass *Chapel*

Missionary Baptist Church

611 Zion Hill Rd.

Rogersville, TN 37857

basschapelbaptist@gmail.com

Bass Chapel Missionary Baptist Church was constituted in 1948 as provided by outside records; however, there is no documentation of Constitution and By-Laws from this era.

The Constitution and By-Laws of Bass Chapel Missionary Baptist Church as approved by the members present and in good standing this Fifth day of June, 2022.

CONSTITUTION

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PREFACE

There are many good reasons why a New Testament Church should have Articles of Faith, a Covenant, and a Constitution. Together they can greatly assist us in the efforts of biblically organizing and conducting the ministries which have been entrusted to us by our Head, Jesus Christ. It must be readily acknowledged, however, that these documents, despite their usefulness and precision, will avail nothing apart from the presence and power of the Spirit of God in a Church. It is with this keen awareness of our absolute dependence upon our great God, that these articles are set forth. These documents are only as useful as they stand on the Word of God. Given the wide range of personal Scriptural interpretation, we believe these summaries and clarifications are most in harmony with sound, consistent Scriptural interpretation.

PREAMBLE

Bass Chapel Missionary Baptist Church is comprised of followers of Jesus Christ who have united under His Lordship in covenant commitment to one another and to our God. We joyfully and wholeheartedly submit to His authority as it is revealed to us in His holy, inerrant, and infallible written Word.

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Having carefully examined the Scriptures regarding the nature and purpose of the church, and the principles whereby it is to be governed, we, the members of Bass Chapel Missionary Baptist Church set forth the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this church shall be “Bass Chapel Missionary Baptist Church.”

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is to glorify the God of the Scriptures in promoting His worship, evangelizing sinners, and edifying saints. To this end we are committed to proclaiming God’s perfect Law and His glorious Gospel of Grace in Jesus Christ throughout the world, and to defending the “faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

ARTICLE III

ARTICLES OF FAITH

The Articles of Faith, Church Constitution, and Church Covenant are accepted by its present members and shall be subscribed to and accepted voluntarily by new members as they offer themselves for membership.

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We do hereby adopt as the fullest expression of our faith the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689. We believe that this historic document is an excellent summary of the fundamental truths of God's Word. We accept it, not as an authoritative rule or code of faith, but as an aid to us in controversy, a confirmation of what we believe, and as a means of growing together in grace. In this Confession the members of our church will have a body of Divinity in small compass and by means of Scriptural proofs will be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in them (1 Peter 3:15).

We do hereby affirm the "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" (1978), the "Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood" (1987), the "Nashville Statement on Human Sexuality" (2017) and the "Dallas Statement on Social Justice and the Gospel" (2019). Copies of these statements are available upon request.

ARTICLE IV

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Jesus Christ is Lord and Head of this church. His will as expressed in the Holy Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, is the sole authority in matters of faith and practice. Bass Chapel Missionary Baptist Church is a congregational church led by elders. We recognize that the authority of Christ is vested in the whole congregation (Galatians 1:8–10; Matthew 18:15–20) and that Christ has prescribed that local congregations be led by godly men who have been duly appointed to lead and oversee the church (Titus 1:5–11; 1 Timothy 1:4–5). The elders carefully give spiritual direction to the church for the joy of each member (2 Corinthians 1:24) and the members

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submissively follow the leadership of and obey the elders in the Lord so that the elders may do their work with joy (Hebrews 13:17).

Deacons serve the church in various capacities at the direction of the elders, focusing predominately on the physical needs of the church.

The church is subject to no other ecclesiastical body, may join other local bodies in association 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. When it is thought desirable to have fellowship, consultation, and cooperation with local churches of like faith and order, this church may join itself to an association of churches. Upon recommendation of the elders, such affiliations may be entered by a vote of the congregation. Withdrawal from associations may be affected by the same procedure.

ARTICLE V

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Requirements for Membership

To be considered for membership in this church, a person must be a disciple of Jesus Christ and give biblical evidence of regeneration. Such a disciple must be baptized by immersion in obedience to Christ following his or her conversion, and commit wholeheartedly to follow Jesus Christ as Lord in accordance with Scripture. Each prospective member must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Second London Baptist Confession of 1689 and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church

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Covenant. While the member must not agree with each point of the comprehensive Second London Baptist Confession of 1689, the member must submit to it as the official summary of biblical doctrine for the church.

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, character of life and such other evidence, as they deem appropriate.

Section 2: Membership Process

Any believer seeking membership at Bass Chapel Missionary Baptist Church should communicate their desire to the elders, receive and work through membership study as set forth by the elders. Each candidate must also meet with one or more elders for a membership interview and agree to attend membership classes as provided by the elders. A time and place shall be set for a meeting with the candidate, who shall attend and be questioned as to his or her basic Christian experience, doctrinal beliefs, and seriousness of intention to support wholeheartedly the total ministry of this church, and to live for Christ in accordance with our church covenant.

The elders may recommend a candidate for membership to the congregation at any members meeting of the church. The candidate may be received into membership upon acceptance of two-thirds of the members present.

Once a candidate is received into membership, he or she relinquishes their membership in other churches. New members are formally

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welcomed into the church upon completion of pre-membership requirements and an affirmative vote. They are also encouraged and given the opportunity to share their testimony with the church family.

Prospective members can be received into membership by:

A. PROFESSION OF FAITH AND BAPTISM — Any person who meets the above stated requirements shall apply for membership to the elders. Candidates will be received upon their baptism by immersion into membership of the church.

B. LETTER — Any person desiring to unite with this church, upon letter of recommendation from another evangelical church of like faith and order, shall present such letter, or a promise thereof, to the elders.

C. STATEMENT OF FAITH — Any person desiring to unite with this church, upon their testimony of conversion and baptism as a believer by immersion, shall apply for membership to the elders.

Section 3: Forms of Membership

A. REGULAR — All who are received into the membership of the church on the above mentioned conditions shall be considered members in good standing until such status is changed by one of the conditions set forth in Article V, Section 4.

B. OTHER — The membership status of invalids, shut-ins, Christian workers, and others whose relationship to the church involves special

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consideration and circumstances, shall be considered by the elders on a case-by-case basis. The elders will then make appropriate recommendations to the church.

Section 4: Termination of Membership

A member may be removed from the membership of Bass Chapel Missionary Baptist Church by:

A. **DISMISSAL** — At the recommendation of the elders and the approval of the congregation, letters of dismissal shall be granted to members who apply for them in writing, provided they are in good standing and not subject to or already under corrective discipline at the time of the application. When such letters have been granted, the relationship to this church shall be considered terminated.

B. **EXCLUSION** — If a member is habitually absent from the stated meetings of this church without just cause, or is unwilling to resolve conflicts or settle differences in a Scriptural manner, or requests severance of membership, he or she may be excluded from the membership at the discretion of the elders, subject to the approval of the congregation.

C. **TRANSFER** — Letters of recommendation shall be granted upon the recommendation of the elders and approval by the congregation to evangelical churches which request them, provided the member in question is in good standing and not subject to or already under discipline at the time of the application. When such letters have been granted, the relationship to this church shall be considered terminated.

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Letters of dismissal shall be forwarded and given only to other evangelical churches (Philemon 2).

D. EXCOMMUNICATION — It is right and in harmony with the Scriptures for the congregation, upon recommendation of the elders, to remove from this fellowship any person who persists in holding false or heretical doctrine; or who obviously and persistently lives inconsistently with his profession; or who lives in violation of the law or public morals; or who walks disorderly; or who persists in disturbing the unity and peace of this church (Matthew 10:15ff; 1 Corinthians 5:1ff; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,11,15; Romans 16:17).

E. DEATH

ARTICLE VI

DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

Scripture instructs Christians to live together in local churches. In order to fulfill Scriptural responsibilities in following Christ according to His will, it is incumbent on every believer to unite with other believers in submission to the lordship of Christ in a local church.

Section 1: Means of Grace

All public and private means of grace, such as honoring the Lord's Day, faithful attendance at the stated meetings of the church, daily systematic reading of the Bible, and private and family worship shall be urged upon our members.

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Section 2: Marriage and Family Life

Marriage is ordained by God and is exclusively a covenant relationship between one man and one woman. Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between one man, one woman, and Himself, Bass Chapel Missionary Baptist Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the pastors and staff of Bass Chapel Missionary Baptist Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of Bass Chapel Missionary Baptist Church shall not host any weddings or marriage celebrations except those that are between one man and one woman. Christians who are married to each other are to relate to each other not only as husband and wife but also as brother and sister in Christ.

Christians who are married to unbelievers should strive to influence their homes for the glory of God by commending the gospel and demonstrating its power in their lives according to apostolic instructions found in 1 Corinthians 7:12–16 and 1 Peter 3:1–7.

Unmarried Christian adults should live faithfully to Jesus Christ in all of their relationships and use the opportunities their singleness affords them for the advancement of the gospel and the prosperity of the church according to the apostolic instructions found in 1 Corinthians 7.

The church expects its members to follow the Scriptures in home government. God has required that godliness in the home have a high priority in every life. The home holds a central attention in God's Law

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and is the object of frequent exhortation in the New Testament. Husbands are expected to rule their homes with gentleness but firmness. They are to love their wives sacrificially with a Christ-like love and are to give leadership to the spiritual vitality of the home. Wives must be subject to and respectful of their husbands as to the Lord. Parents should train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4) by holy example, catechizing, consistent education, and firm, loving discipline (including the careful, measured, biblical use of the rod of correction—Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 23:13–14; 29:15). Children must reverently honor and obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1–3). These primary responsibilities, prayerfully executed, will honor the name of Christ in the community and strengthen the cause of Christ in generations to come.

Section 3: Missions and Witnessing

It is the duty of every Christian and of every church of Christ to seek to extend the Gospel to the ends of the earth and to make disciples who will, in turn, make disciples (Matthew 28:18–20). Evangelistic and missionary efforts are the natural consequence of regeneration (Psalm 51:10–14). “Preach the Gospel” is a frequently repeated command of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to witness by word, deed and lifestyle. Personal efforts to make disciples for Christ are expected of every member. Beyond this, we are committed to cooperative efforts for sending the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Section 4: Principles of Giving

It is clearly taught in Scripture that Christians are to support the work of the Lord by systematic, proportionate and sacrificial offerings made

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through the local church. This is set forth in both positive command and favorable example (Malachi 3:8–11; 1 Corinthians 16:1–2; 2 Corinthians 8 and 2 Corinthians 9). Hence we pledge ourselves to contribute regularly, faithfully and sacrificially to the support of this church in recognition that all that we have has come to us from God and He is worthy of being worshipped with gifts and offerings (Psalm 96:8).

We give because we have been given much in Jesus Christ. “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Section 5: Christian Liberty

We shall require of each other in our daily responsibilities and relationships loyal obedience to all those moral precepts established in the Word of God (Hebrews 10:24, 25). However, where God has not prohibited certain practices in His Word, the Christian has liberty to participate in them with discretion and care. The following principles must always guide the Christian’s exercise of liberty:

A. FEAR OF GOD — As the servant of Christ, all actions must be motivated by love to God, and all objects must be used for His glory. The term “liberty” is often used as a cloak of malicious self-indulgence, which is sin (1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Timothy 4:4,5; 1 Peter 2:15,16).

B. LOVE OF BRETHREN — Though no man may dictate to the Christian’s conscience, the welfare of fellow saints must always

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deeply affect his decisions. In a spirit of serving the brethren, he must do that which he judges will edify them and prevent their stumbling (Galatians 5:13; 1 Corinthians 10:23; 1 Corinthians 8:9).

C. COMPASSION FOR THE UNCONVERTED — Use of liberty must always be regulated by its effect upon sinners, and that behavior chosen which is likely to win some (1 Corinthians 9:19–22).

D. WATCHFULNESS OVER THE SOUL — Though free in conscience to use all of God's creation, carefulness in practice is demanded because of remaining lusts. Where the Christian judges himself weak through lust, he must abstain in order to persevere in the faith (1 Corinthians 9:23–27).

Section 6: Support of Church Officers

It is the duty of every member to respect the appointed officers of the church. Church members should recognize that the elders and deacons who serve among them do so by the authority of God's Word and for the spiritual welfare of the whole body. Therefore every member should encourage and pray for the elders and deacons in their respective ministries.

Specifically, members should be ready to assist the deacons in protecting the unity of the church and caring for the practical needs of the membership and community at large. This includes a willingness to use personal gifts and resources in caring for others. It also includes helping the deacons be aware of needs in the church and

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community, and cooperating with them in practical ways to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities (Acts 6:1–7).

It is the duty of every member to recognize that God gives to His church men to serve as spiritual leaders who give oversight to local congregations. These elders of the church are to be “esteemed very highly in love because of their work” (1 Thessalonians 5:12–13). Members are to submit to and follow them because they keep watch over the souls of the congregation as those who must give an account to God for their ministry (Hebrews 13:17a). Every member is admonished by God’s Word to encourage the elders to fulfill their duties “with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Hebrews 13:17b).

Church members are called to follow the example of the elders as far as warranted by the Word (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17; Hebrews 13:7), to stand by them, in all their trials and afflictions, defending them in all good causes, as far as in them lies (2 Timothy 1:15, 4:16), and to avoid exposing their weaknesses, remembering that the prosperity of the Gospel depends much on their good report. Furthermore, no member is to receive an accusation against an elder unless it is supported by evidence that can be validated by two or more witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19).

Section 7: Controversy

Any matter involving controversy within this church, within the officers, or between the congregation and the officers, if it threatens to cause dissension and injury to the welfare of the church, must be called to the attention of the elders as soon as possible by any member of the

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congregation aware of the situation. If the elders fail to resolve the difficulty so as to allay dissension, any such matter may be taken to a Council of Appeal as prescribed in Article 3 of the By-Laws, or as is detailed in the *Second London Baptist Confession of 1689* (26.15).

ARTICLE VII

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The Christian life is a life of discipleship, which means that it is to be characterized by godly discipline. This includes self-discipline which involves training oneself for godliness (1 Timothy 4:7) as well as the corporate discipline that comes through being united to a local church. Church discipline is both formative and corrective.

Section 1: Formative Discipline

Formative church discipline comes through the teaching of God's Word, the example of Christian living, and the mutual ministry of every member of the body of Christ. It has as its goal the instruction of disciples, the transformation of their lives, and their edification in love (Ephesians 4:11–13; Romans 12:1–16; 1 Corinthians 12:4–27).

Formative discipline has a sanctifying influence. Every member should be satisfied with his/her God-given ministry, and thus we shall all grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 4:7–12). Formative discipline utilizes the gifts and talents of each member, whether young or old, for the edification of all.

As members of this church we recognize our obligation to honor, serve, worship, praise and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ in all that we say and do (1 Corinthians 10:31). Jesus Christ is the head of the

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church and, therefore, its Lord and Lawgiver (Ephesians 1:22; Isaiah 33:22). Those who truly love Him will endeavor to keep His commandments (John 14:15). In His Holy Word our Lord calls believers to perform certain duties toward one another. Some of these duties are:

A. To love one another sincerely in deed and truth (John 13:34, 35; Romans 12:9; 13:8–10; 1 John 3:18).

B. To labor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).

C. To work for the edification and spiritual benefit of the whole body so that we all may grow to spiritual maturity as a holy temple in and for the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:12, 26; Ephesians 4:12, 29; 2:21, 22).

D. To watch over one another for good (Philippians 2:3,4).

E. To pray with and for one another (James 5:16).

F. Not to neglect the assembling of ourselves together, for the celebrating of divine worship, and thereby to promote one another's spiritual benefit (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42).

G. To contend unanimously for the faith and truth once delivered to the saints, in the purity thereof, according to the Holy Scripture (Psalm 93:5; Zechariah 14:2; 1 Corinthians 14:33–40; 11:2).

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The above duties, when faithfully performed by every member, will have a positive, formative effect upon the whole assembly. With the blessing of the Holy Spirit we will all be enabled to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The following section is provided in the event of the failure of formative discipline as set forth above.

Section 2: Corrective Discipline

Corrective discipline is called for when any member is guilty of disorderly or divisive conduct or holding to heretical doctrine which is contrary to the church's standard of life and doctrine as expressed in our covenant or confession which are based on the Word of God. Reasonable efforts shall be made through personal counsel and admonition to resolve difficulties, correct errors, and remove offenses before any further action is taken. Where possible all such communication should be face to face.

When individual and private counsel and admonition have failed, the matter must be brought to the attention of the elders, who will then shepherd the process according to the instructions of God's Word (Matthew 5:23,24; 18:15–18). In extraordinary circumstances, at the discretion of the elders, a matter may be taken directly to the church, according to the apostolic instruction of 1 Corinthians 5 and Titus 3:10–11.

The goal of such discipline should be:

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1. The repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (Hebrews 12:1–11; Matthew 18:15–17; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1);
2. The instruction in righteousness and welfare of other Christians, as an example to them (1 Corinthians 5:11; 1 Timothy 5:20; Hebrews 10:24–25);
3. The purity of the church as a whole (1 Corinthians 5:6–7; Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 21:2);
4. The good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (Matthew 5:13–16; John 13:35; Acts 5:10-14); and
5. And supremely the glory of God which is manifested when His holy character is reflected to the watching world (Deuteronomy 5:11; John 15:8; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:12).

The following are elements of corrective discipline:

A. **SUSPENSION** — If a member has publicly sinned, but shows hopeful signs of repentance, including submission to the admonitions of church officers, then severe discipline, such as excommunication, would be improper. Nevertheless, serious offenses may not be overlooked altogether, lest God's enemies multiply their blasphemies, lest other saints be emboldened to sin, and lest the offender is harmed by a failure to test his own soul and appreciate the gravity of his offense. Therefore, at the discretion of the elders, less severe terms

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may be imposed upon a member—such as public rebuke, or suspension of membership. The latter consists of a temporary suspension of the rights to attend the Lord’s Table, to serve publicly in the church or vote in congregational meetings. Those who submit to such discipline are to be wholly forgiven and received as brethren. All such actions shall be reported to the congregation.

B. EXCLUSION — If a member is habitually absent from the stated meetings of this church without just cause, or is unwilling to resolve conflicts or settle differences in a Scriptural manner, or requests severance of membership, he or she may be excluded from the membership at the recommendation of the elders and vote of the congregation.

C. EXCOMMUNICATION – The most serious step a church can take in corrective discipline is to remove a member because of unrepentant sin. In extraordinary situations when a member has sinned publicly, scandalously or divisively and without biblical repentance (2 Corinthians 7:8–12), the elders may call upon the church to excommunicate that member immediately (1 Corinthians 5:4–5; Titus 3:10–11). In other situations that call for corrective discipline, when restoration is not secured by the processes required in Matthew 18:15–18, further steps must be taken to correct offenders. Written charges shall be given to the accused offender if he requests a hearing with the elders. The elders shall meet with the accused, unless the person refuses to appear. After a fair and impartial hearing of all the witnesses accessible, and all facts ascertainable, the elders must form a judgment. If they believe the accused to be guilty and

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deserving of severe biblical discipline, they shall make a recommendation that the offender be excommunicated at a duly called congregational meeting. The congregation shall have the right to excommunicate a member by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting. The vote will be taken by a show of hands or by standing. Excommunication always has as its end the glory of God, the purity of the body of Christ and the restoration of the offending party.

D. RESTORATION — It is the joyful duty of the church to forgive and restore to membership those persons who give satisfactory evidence of being repentant (2 Corinthians 2:6–8; 7:11). The elders shall meet with and seek the restoration of those who have been excluded or suspended when they (the elders) have judged that the aims of the discipline have been accomplished. Such action is to be reported to the church. Upon recommendation of the elders the congregation shall have the right to restore an excommunicated person by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called congregational meeting.

ARTICLE VIII

CHURCH OFFICERS

Section 1: General Statement

Jesus Christ alone is the head of His church. However, as head, He has ordained that individual churches should be blessed with the spiritual rule and ministry of special office bearers. Therefore, it is the duty of the church to seek to discover from among members in good

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standing those men to whom Christ the Lord has imparted the necessary gifts for office bearing. The Lord's appointment is recognized by not only the inward conviction of the individual involved, but also by the approval of the church observing the possession of those gifts and graces required, and by Scriptural definition of the office.

While it is always the desire of the congregation to come to one mind regarding those who should be appointed to serve as office bearers in the church, no less than 75% of all votes cast shall be required for the election of an officer. (See "Elections" — Article 2 of By-Laws.)

Elders are ordained by Christ to lead in the administration of local churches (Philippians 1:1; Acts 6:1–7; 14:23). Deacons are appointed to care for the temporal needs of the congregation.

Section 2: Eldership

The elders shall be comprised of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure. 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 elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock. This includes maintaining an accurate church role. The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal.

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The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church committees, 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, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our essential convictions. The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions 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 supervision and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member. In addition the elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment and dismissal of all non-pastoral staff members. In view of the fact that the responsibilities of the eldership are numerous and great, Scripture makes provision for the financial support of elders. 1 Timothy 5:17 encourages the support of “elders who rule well” (oversight) but “especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.” Thus a congregation may support more than one elder in the various duties of

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that office but should place priority on the teaching function. Those serving in the teaching function, the senior pastor, should, as far as possible, be adequately maintained in material necessities, so as to be disentangled from the cares of an additional vocation. The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings.

Section 3: The Senior Pastor

The senior pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall be defined as per Article 3, Section 3 of By-Laws. He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated. If at any time the senior pastor shall make application to be released from his office, or if the congregation shall choose by a two-thirds majority vote to dismiss him, the relationship between the senior pastor and church may be terminated by the congregation in ninety days from the date of notice of intention, or in a shorter period of time, if it is mutually agreed upon.

Section 4: Associate Pastors

The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of associate. An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2,

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above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall be defined as per Article 3, Section 4 of By-Laws. He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders. If at any time the associate pastor shall make application to be released from his office, or if the congregation shall choose by a two-thirds majority vote to dismiss him, the relationship between the associate pastor and church may be terminated by the congregation in ninety days from the date of notice of intention, or in a shorter period of time, if it is mutually agreed upon.

Section 5: Pastoral Assistants

The elders may hire additional staff to assist with pastoral ministry, designated as pastoral assistants. These shall not be recognized as pastors by virtue of their servings as pastoral assistants, though they may be recognized as elders should they be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation, in accordance with Article 9, Section 2. The elders shall define the responsibilities of the pastoral assistant(s). They shall serve at the will of the elders for an initial term up to two years, though that term may be extended with the approval of the elders.

Section 6: Deacons

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The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 and Acts 6:1–7. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. They shall be elected to one term lasting for a maximum of four years. Afterward they may be reaffirmed by the congregation for another 4-year term. After this second 4-year term, they may only be elected to another term after one year off, unless extenuating circumstances require continuation. Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, preserve unity, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration. The deacons are responsible for the disbursement of funds received by the church for benevolent needs. The deacons shall assist the church in maintaining a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only. The deacons, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees.

ARTICLE IX

ORDINATIONS

Section 1: Ministers of the Gospel

It is our hope that Spirit-filled men will be called out from among us to proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God. The church will commission such men by giving a license to those whose ministries will be limited in scope or time, or by ordination to the ministry.

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When there is a prospective candidate for ordination to the ministry, the elders shall guide that person in his studies and preparation. They shall then call a council to examine the qualifications of the candidate. It shall look into the soundness of his conversion, the godliness of his walk, the soundness of his doctrine, the degree of his gifts, the extent of his training, and the blessing of God upon his labors for Christ.

If the council heartily recommends that the candidate be ordained, the church may give the recommended commission by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at a congregational meeting.

The elders, under the principles set forth in Article VII, shall have the power to exercise discipline, even to the revocation of this church's ordination or license.

Section 2: Installation of Elders

In a regular worship service of the church, the Pastor shall question newly elected elders as follows:

A. Do you believe the Scriptures as written in the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and do you accept them as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, promising to live wholly under their authority?

B. Have you personally adopted and will you cheerfully submit to and defend the Confession (*1689 London Baptist*), Constitution and By-Laws of

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this church, promising to carry out your responsibilities in accordance with these guiding documents?

C. Do you accept the Office of Elder readily, and do you promise to perform its duties of caring for the flock of God in the fear of His Name?

Then the hands of the existing elders shall be placed on the heads of the new elders and prayer offered in their behalf. Following this, the people shall be exhorted to esteem and obey those whom God has placed over them.

Section 3: Installation of Deacons

In a regular worship of the church, the Pastor shall question newly elected deacons as follows:

A. Do you believe the Scriptures as written in the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and do you accept them as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, promising to live wholly under their authority?

B. Have you personally adopted and will you cheerfully submit to and defend the Confession (*1689 London Baptist*), Constitution and By-Laws of this church, promising to carry out your responsibilities in accordance with these guiding documents?

C. Do you accept the Office of Deacon and do you promise to care for the poor and needy, to manage the business of this church in the fear

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of God, and to work for the unity of this church in full cooperation with the elders?

Then the hands of the officers shall be placed on the heads of the new deacons and prayer offered in their behalf. Following this, the people shall be exhorted to esteem and obey those whom God has placed over them.

ARTICLE X

FINANCES

The work of this church is financially dependent upon the voluntary gifts of God's people. The elders, in conjunction with the finance committee, shall be responsible for the orderly administration of the annual budget and all financial disbursements and receipts. Before the members meeting in November, the elders shall work in conjunction with the finance committee to prepare a budget that will finance the mission and ministries of the church. When this budget is approved by a vote of the congregation, it shall be considered the basis for the current liabilities. No adjustments are to be made to the budget that exceed 2% of the annual budget without the consent of the congregation.

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

ARTICLE XI

AMENDMENTS

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Amendments to the Constitution may be adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a congregational meeting, provided that such amendments have been distributed by the officers in written form at least two weeks prior to the congregational meeting.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I

MEETINGS

Section 1: Notice of Meetings

Notice of all congregational meetings shall be given at regular worship services on the Sunday immediately prior to the meeting. In an emergency, a meeting may be called on shorter notice by making an effort to notify each member of the time, place and purpose of the congregational meeting.

Section 2: Number of Meetings

Congregational meetings shall be held at least every 3 months for the reception of reports and the transaction of such other business as may properly be brought before the meeting. The adoption of a budget shall take place at the members meeting in October or November.

Section 3: Method of Calling Meetings

It shall be the right and responsibility of the elders to call all congregational meetings. A written request to call a special congregational meeting, stating clearly its purpose, signed by 20% of the members of the church in good and regular standing and presented to the elders, shall require the elders to call such a meeting. When special congregational meetings are called, there must be

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notice given to the congregation as to the purpose. The elders shall meet at the call of their Chairman, or at the request of any three of their members; the deacons shall meet in the same manner.

Section 4: Responsibility for Meetings

The elders shall arrange the details of all congregational meetings and see that all possible preparation for their successful conduct is made. All meetings of Bass Chapel Missionary Baptist Church shall follow the principles outlined in *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*. There are to be no private recordings or broadcasts of congregational meetings—members will have access to hear any recordings upon request. The chair of each meeting shall see that minutes are recorded and delivered to the clerk.

Section 5: Quorum for Transaction of Business

The voting members present at any constitutionally called congregational meeting shall be considered a quorum for the transaction of business. All church officers shall be voted upon by written ballot. A quorum for elders and deacons meetings shall be 60% of their total number.

Section 6: Voting Age

Any member of the church eighteen years of age or over, in good and regular standing, shall have the right to vote on any question properly brought before the congregation.

ARTICLE II

ELECTIONS

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Section 1: Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles: Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process; Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders; All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members; 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 or deacons shall be presented by the elders at the previous members' meeting (providing that previous meeting occurred at least four 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 who cannot in good conscience affirm 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 men receiving no less than 75% of all votes cast for the office of elder or deacon; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

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Section 3: Calling of the Senior Pastor

In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential senior pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the *Second London Baptist Confession* and the Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as senior pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

Section 4: Calling of Associate Pastors

In the calling of any man to the position of associate pastor, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential associate pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the *Second London Baptist Confession* and the Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as associate pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

ARTICLE III

COUNCIL OF APPEAL

A Council of Appeal may be formed in two ways:

1. The elders may call upon the church to establish such a council.
2. The church may call for the establishment of such a council by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a duly called congregational meeting.

The Council shall consist of the elders and/or deacons and an equal number of other members in good standing to be chosen by the congregation. The congregation shall also appoint a chairman from those on the Council to preside at its meetings.

A quorum for a Council of Appeal shall be at least two of the officers, the same number of laymen, and the chairman. If a member of the Council is unable to attend a meeting after the judicial process has begun, he may thereafter sit and hear the case but will be disqualified to vote on the final issue of the case.

The resolution of any matter shall require a two-thirds vote of a Council of Appeal. When a final decision of the Council of Appeal is announced to the congregation, that decision is final and the case is ended. The church should receive this decision in humility and prayer.

ARTICLE IV

CLERK AND TREASURER

Section 1: Duties of the Church Clerk

The Clerk shall keep a record of all business transacted at the various meetings of the church, keep an accurate record of the membership, and carry on all necessary and related correspondence for the congregation. The Clerk shall be annually appointed by congregational vote.

Section 2: Duties of the Church Treasurer

The church Treasurer is to be responsible for the keeping of an accurate financial record of all funds identified with the church, reconciling monthly statements, monitoring and safeguarding church accounts, attending to any filings required by the Internal Revenue Service, as well as maintaining records of individual contributions. The Treasurer shall be annually appointed by congregational vote. Eligible candidates to the office of Treasurer must consist of either:

1. A member in good standing possessing abilities in financial stewardship and accounting practices, willing to voluntarily serve in this position.
2. A paid Certified Public Accountant to handle or oversee the proper discharge of all the above referenced duties.

The Treasurer shall work with and report to the elders and Finance Committee. An assistant Treasurer may be appointed to assist in these duties. The Treasurer shall ensure that a financial audit is conducted at least every 5 years by a 3 member council of members of the church or by a certified public accountant.

ARTICLE V

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee shall be comprised of certain elders and up to 3 additional members who are appointed annually by the congregation. Their duties include working with the elders to prepare and recommend to the congregation an annual budget. After it has been approved by the congregation, this committee shall work in conjunction with the elders to oversee the administration of the budget.

ARTICLE VI

CHURCH CORPORATION

In compliance with the laws of the State of Tennessee, this church is considered an unincorporated association.

ARTICLE VII

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the By-Laws may be adopted by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a congregational meeting, provided that such amendments have been distributed by the elders in written form at least two weeks prior to the congregational meeting.

Membership Covenant for Bass Chapel Missionary Baptist Church

Having been brought by the Holy Spirit to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ¹ according to the will of the Father,² and having been baptized in faith in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,³ we do now joyfully and solemnly covenant together. By the gracious aid of God,⁴ we promise and commit:

To trust and obey the Word of God,⁵

Acknowledging its supreme and final authority⁶

Confessing and defending the doctrines of the church⁷

Striving for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort⁸

To promote and protect the unity of the church by⁹

Walking together in Christian love,¹⁰

Speaking in ways that are edifying,¹¹

Seeking reconciliation by humbly repenting and freely offering forgiveness,¹²

Serving and providing care for one another as members of one body in Christ,¹³

Submitting to the leaders who have been granted authority by Christ through the church, recognizing that they must give an account,¹⁴

Working together in accordance with this Covenant, our Church Constitution and Confession, ¹⁵

Watching over one another and receiving admonishment as occasion may require,¹⁶

Participating in and accepting the discipline of the church concerning doctrine and conduct,¹⁷

To take part in the edification of the church by¹⁸

Giving our time and money cheerfully and regularly to the ministries of the church,¹⁹

Serving the church using our spiritual gifts,²⁰

Praying for the church as a whole and for its members,²¹

Participating in the life of the church by actively engaging in worship, fellowship and ministry,

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regularly and faithfully, unless providentially hindered,[22](#)

Giving the church a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin,[23](#)

Observing the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper that Christ has given to the church,[24](#)

Fulfilling family obligations and commitments,[25](#)

Engaging in family worship and private devotion,[26](#)

Raising those under our care in the fear of the Lord,[27](#)

To be faithful kingdom witnesses by[28](#)

Seeking the salvation of others through the proclamation of the gospel throughout the world,[29](#)

Aiding the poor and oppressed,[30](#)

Living with humility, justice, mercy, holiness, and peace in the world,[31](#)

To unite as soon as possible with another church of like faith and commitment to God's Word if we move from this place.[32](#)

Now to Him who is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever.[33](#) Amen.

- [1. Acts 11:18; John 3:1-8; John 6:44.](#)
- [2. Galatians 1:3-4; Ephesians 1:5-6.](#)
- [3. Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38-41.](#)
- [4. Galatians 3:3.](#)
- [5. 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21.](#)
- [6. Ephesians 2:20; Acts 15:15; 28:23.](#)
- [7. Romans 16:17; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 6:3-5](#)
- [8. Ephesians 3:18; Philippians 3:10.](#)
- [9. John 17:20-21; Philippians 2:1-2.](#)
- [10. John 13:34; Ephesians 5:2; 1 John 4:7-8.](#)
- [11. 2 Corinthians 12:20; Ephesians 4:25, 29; 5:4.](#)
- [12. Matthew 5:23; 6:12, 14-15; 18:15-35.](#)
- [13. Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 14:12; Galatians 6:10.](#)
- [14. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17-19; Hebrews 13:17.](#)
- [15. Romans 15:5-6; Ephesians 2:19-22.](#)
- [16. 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:9; Hebrews 3:13.](#)
- [17. Matthew](#)

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18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 John 7-11. **18.** Ephesians 4:15-16. **19.** Acts 2:44-45; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:6-15. **20.** Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7. **21.** 1 Timothy 2:8; James 5:16; Jude 20-21. **22.** Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25. **23.** Matthew 16:18-19; 18:17; 1 Timothy 3:15. **24.** Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. **25.** Exodus 20:12; Matthew 5:31-32; Ephesians 5:22-6:4; Colossians 3:18-20. **26.** Joshua 24:15; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 5:3; 119:147; Matthew 6:6; 14:23. **27.** Proverbs 2:1-5; Ephesians 6:4. **28.** Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20. **29.** Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20. **30.** Matthew 6:19-34; Luke 12:32-34; 16:1-13; James 1:27; 2:14-17; 5:1-6. **31.** Micah 6:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12. **32.** Hebrews 10:23-25. **33.** Jude 24-25.

Adapted from Grace Baptist Church, Cape Coral, FL