

# By-Laws of Shiloh Hills Fellowship

## **I. NAME**

The name of this church shall be Shiloh Hills Fellowship. It is affiliated with the General Baptist Conference and the Columbia Baptist Conference.

## **II. STATEMENT OF FAITH**

### **ARTICLE ONE: SCRIPTURE**

The Bible is the infallible word of God, the supreme rule for faith and practice.

The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament came from the very mouth of God and are without error in the originals. Scripture is therefore the unique and supreme guide for all it affirms, including both belief and behavior.

The teachings of the Bible are sufficient for salvation and sanctification. While there are questions of meaning and application over which we may agree to disagree, there is nothing for which we are responsible to God in terms of our salvation and sanctification that is not expressed in Scripture, either in precept or principle.

From these convictions flow the following articles of faith.

### **ARTICLE TWO: GOD**

There is one God, infinitely perfect, without change, creator of all yet not created, distinct from His creation yet everywhere present, perfectly balanced in all His attributes, omniscient over all time, wholly sovereign. He alone is the sole object of worship.

God exists eternally in three persons—Father, Son, Holy Spirit—equal in essence and divine perfection, all three uncreated, executing distinct but harmonious offices.

### **ARTICLE THREE: GOD THE FATHER**

Forthcoming ....

### **ARTICLE FOUR: GOD THE SON**

God the Son is fully God and fully human, without confusion or mixture, the unique and only Son. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, died on the cross as the sacrifice for our sins, was physically raised from the dead as prophesied, ascended into heaven, and now sits at the right hand of God the Father, interceding for the saints as the sole mediator. He will return physically and visibly to earth. To Him every knee shall bow.

#### ARTICLE FIVE: GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

God the Spirit is sent to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He fully indwells every true believer as a guarantee of his inheritance, guides and empowers them, interceding in accordance with the will of God.

#### ARTICLE SIX: ANTHROPOLOGY (DOCTRINE OF MAN)

Adam and Eve were both created in the image of God, Adam from the dust of the ground and Eve from his side. They disobeyed God and died, spiritually and physically. Therefore, all people are objects of wrath, sinners by nature and by choice. They are dead in their sins and incapable of pleasing God. Without the direct intervention of God, they will live separated from God, die in their sins, and receive the condemnation that their sin deserves.

#### ARTICLE SEVEN: SOTERIOLOGY (DOCTRINE OF SALVATION)

Salvation from sin and access to God is available only through the work of Christ on the cross, given by God's grace, mercy, and love, received solely by faith. In conversion, the believer is drawn by God to Himself, redeemed from his sins, declared wholly righteous, born again, made alive in Christ as a new creature, reconciled to God, becomes a child of God, and is filled with the fullness of the Holy Spirit through whom he is empowered for a life of obedience.

#### ARTICLE EIGHT: SANCTIFICATION (DOCTRINE OF HOLINESS)

God's will for every believer is his sanctification. It is the necessary and certain fruit of salvation, yet not meritorious; it is God alone who saves. Through the work of the Spirit, saints are called and enabled to live lives of holiness, "in" but not "of" the world, fully dedicated disciples of Jesus Christ, persevering to the end. Disciples are declared to be sanctified through the work of Christ and are also called to become sanctified in the experiences of life. One of the many results of sanctification is the desire to share the gospel with sinners; evangelism grows out of an awareness of what Christ has done for you.

#### ARTICLE NINE: ECCLESIOLOGY (DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH)

The church consists of all true disciples of Jesus Christ. All things exist under the supremacy of Christ, and therefore Christ and Christ alone is the head of the church. The local expression of the church is comprised of disciples gifted for the work of building up the body of Christ. While different local expressions may have different emphases, all are commanded to make disciples, which includes both evangelism and teaching obedience to all that Jesus taught. The church is to be committed to the reading of Scripture, the exhortation to obedience, and teaching of the doctrinal truths of Scripture, as well as to all that is necessary for the edification of the body, including worship, singing, prayer, and service, all to the glory of God.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be valued and observed. They are visible signs representing spiritual truths; they do not accomplish salvation. Baptism is the washing of the believer, signifying that in conversion he has died to his old life

and has been raised with Christ into a newness of life in which the power of sin is broken. The Lord's Supper is the present proclamation of Christ's atoning death, and looks forward to his return.

#### ARTICLE TEN: ESCHATOLOGY (DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS)

Jesus will return—personally, physically, visibly, suddenly—and all disciples living and dead will be bodily caught up to meet Him. At the final judgment, the unrepentant will be raised to the resurrection of judgment and everlasting punishment in hell. Believers, while already having passed from darkness to light, will be raised to the resurrection of life, granted immortality, and will enjoy the everlasting, personal presence of God in His heavenly kingdom. God's plan of creation, redemption, and glorification will be complete.

This is the hope for which we long, which helps to motivate us now toward godly living, and which propels us to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with a lost and dying world.

### III. MISSION STATEMENT

“WORSHIPPING GOD IN FAITH AND LOVE.”

To this end we commit our lives to discipleship, to learning and teaching the full counsel of God, to nurturing obedience to these teachings, and to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with sinners, all for the glory of God.

This includes teaching God's written Word, for knowing the truth; discipleship, for growth in spiritual maturity; ministry, by the body for the edification of the body; outreach, for the making of new disciples.

### IV. GOVERNANCE PHILOSOPHY

Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the Congregation of this Church is the final authority within this local Church. This authority is normally exercised through the election of Elders and Deacons to lead and serve the Church, respectively. The leadership of the Church shall be vested in the Council of Elders who are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word, and shepherding the flock of God. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. Deacons shall assist the Elders by overseeing the temporal affairs of this Church as outlined in Article VII.

#### A. CHAIN OF COMMAND

*Jesus Christ*

Jesus Christ is the head of this Church. His written word enacts the boundaries within which this Church must operate.

### *Council of Elders*

The Council of Elders must seek to discern Christ's leading in all decisions as they direct the affairs of this Church. All decisions and directions must therefore be in harmony with Biblical principles expressed in God's written word.

### *Deacons*

The Deacons shall have broad authority over the temporal affairs of this Church. They shall carry out their service in accordance with the Council of Elder's discernment of Christ's will for this Church, and shall keep the Elders informed of their actions. Under normal circumstances, the Elders shall direct the Deacons through broad objectives, leaving the details of implementation to their collective discernment.

### *Members*

All members (including the Council of Elders) willingly submit themselves individually to the collective authority and leadership of the Council of Elders.

## **B. ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS TO THE CONGREGATION:**

Under normal circumstances, the Council of Elders is the final human authority in this Church. However, for the purpose of accountability, the Council of Elders must submit itself to the collective authority held by a vote of the membership of this Church at a properly called meeting, as provided in these By-Laws. A vote of the membership shall be required to effect the following actions:

1. Elect Elders and Deacons of the Church.
2. Approve annual budgets of the Church, authorize expenditure of the funds of the Church when such expenditure is not covered by the approved budget, and approve any transactions regarding real property. (Note: Reapportionment by the Council of Elders between budget categories and additional expenditures not exceeding 5% of the budget during the budget year do not require an additional vote of the congregation.)
3. Adopt or amend the By-Laws of this Church.
4. Other items that may be brought before the congregation at a business meeting.

The Congregation also reserves the right to override the Elders' decision including, but not limited to the following:

1. Drop members from the Church roll, as provided below.
2. Hear the appeal of a member removed from membership by the Council of Elders, as provided below.
3. Discipline officers by removing them from office after following the steps from the *Policy on Church Discipline.*)

A member has the right to appeal their dismissal by the Council of Elders to the membership at a regularly convened business meeting of the Church. By doing so, the member is granting the Council of Elders the right to publicly state the reason(s) for removal, and the member has the opportunity to explain himself, as set forth in the *Policy on Church Discipline*. The membership can override the Elders' dismissal with a majority vote.

## **V. MEMBERSHIP**

### **A. QUALIFICATIONS**

Persons seeking membership must meet the following qualifications:

1. Public confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, and striving to live in a manner consistent with the clear teaching of Scripture.
2. Baptized as a believer by immersion.
3. Attend a membership class that covers the Statement of Faith, Mission Statement, and these By-Laws, and affirms his or her agreement by signing the Membership Covenant. In unusual cases, the Elder Council can agree to replace this class with a one-on-one meeting with two or more Elders, but the new member will still sign the Membership Covenant.

### **B. ACCEPTANCE**

Qualified candidates are received into membership when presented before the Body at a regular Church service. The candidate is required to give verbal assent as to their meeting of the qualifications.

### **C. REMOVAL**

The Council of Elders may call for the removal of any member who meets the following criteria:

1. Any member who upon examination is found to be living in a manner inconsistent with the Qualifications for membership.
2. Having received Church discipline according to the *Policy on Church Discipline*.

Having determined the disqualification of the member based on the above criteria, the Council of Elders shall remove the member from the membership rolls. The members may appeal the removal to the entire membership at a Church business meeting, subject to the *Policy on Church Discipline*.

3. Any member who has been absent for a period of 6 months without giving satisfactory reason for absence. Before removal, the Council of Elders must first try to contact the member, determine the reasons for their absence and attempt to restore them to fellowship.

These names shall be posted for two weeks during which time the member may meet with the Elder Council to petition continuance of membership. If continuance is denied, the member has the right to appeal to the membership of the Church as indicated in Article IV.

#### D. PRIVILEGES

A member of the church is entitled to the following privileges:

1. The right to vote in all congregational meetings when 17 years of age or older.
2. The right to serve in elective offices (for which they prove qualified) of the Church.
3. Serve as chairman of a committee if they should be elected.

## VI. THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS

### A. OFFICE OF ELDER

The office of Elder is both an office and a spiritual calling. It is an office of honor, respect, and authority, and is to be filled by qualified men gifted for the task.

Elders are not merely representatives of the people: they are spiritually qualified shepherds who protect, lead, care, and teach the people. They are the official shepherds of the church.

Elders are to *lead* the church, not *rule* the church. Christ is the head of the church.

### B. QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDER

1. Elders have shown themselves to be above reproach in their marriage (if married) and in their personal, professional, and public life. If the man is single, he must have shown himself to be chaste in his relations with all women.
2. Elders have shown themselves to be committed to Scripture, able to explain the truth and refute error, and are committed to using this giftedness within the Church in one form or another.
3. Elders have proven their managerial ability in their own family. If an elder is single, his managerial ability must be evident in some other context of working with people.

4. Elders are to have been professing Christians for a minimum of five years.
5. Elders are to have been members of Cornerstone Fellowship for a minimum of two years.
6. A member of the Council of Elders cannot also serve as a Deacon.

**C. NUMBER, COMPOSITION, AND TERM**

The number of members of the Council of Elders shall be a minimum of five (5) and may vary from time to time up to twelve (12) by resolution of the Council without amendment of these bylaws. The goal is to have sufficient members to adequately care for the Church, but not too many as to make the Council unwieldy.

The composition and term of the Council of Elders shall be as follows:

1. At their first meeting of the year, the Council of Elders shall elect elders as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council. They shall serve as Legal President and Legal Secretary respectively for all corporate matters. They shall hold office for a term of one year and may not serve consecutive terms. Election must be held by secret ballot.
2. A Council Secretary shall also be elected for a term of one year. He shall be responsible for all the minutes and correspondence of the Council. He may be re-elected for any number of successive terms.
3. In each pastor's job description, there shall be a statement indicating whether he is to serve continuously as a member of the Council of Elders.
4. A majority of the Council of Elders must not be pastoral staff.
5. Each Elder shall serve the Church for a three (3) year term with terms to be staggered in a pattern of equitable groupings. Other than pastors indicated above, an Elder can serve for two consecutive terms. After taking one year off, he is again eligible to be elected.
6. Because eldering is not only an office but also a spiritual calling, we recognize that elders are elders for life (unless they no longer meet the qualifications). When they are not part of the Council of Elders, they can exercise no rights beyond that of any other member of the church. However, it is expected that they will still be involved in the life of the church and its people, and we honor that commitment.

**D. ELECTION OF ELDERS**

Prior to the Annual Meeting of members, the Council of Elders shall meet and begin preparation of a list of nominees whom they believe are qualified for office and called to be Elders. Members of the congregation are encouraged to submit names to the Council of Elders for consideration as Elders.

The Council of Elders shall interview all recommended persons who seem to meet all qualifications of eldership. After the interview, any two members of the

Council who have reservations as to the qualifications of the candidate may remove the candidate's name after discussion with the Council. A vote shall then be taken as to the calling of the Lord on this person to be an Elder; a two-thirds vote of affirmation from the Council is needed for the nominee to be placed on the ballot, which shall then be brought before the Congregation.

Two months before the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, a list of potential Elders will be sent to each member of the congregation asking them to respond to the Elders with any concerns about their qualifications for eldership or their fitness for leadership. Members of the congregation should contact an Elder with their concerns at least four weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. If the concerns appear to be justified, the Elders are encouraged to meet with the candidate to confirm the concerns. If necessary, the Elders can drop the name from the list. A final list of candidates will be posted two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.

The Council of Elders may submit more candidates than there are openings available.

At the Annual Meeting, a physical ballot must be cast for Elders. This ballot will have a line for each man whose name has been presented for the office of Elder. Elected Elders shall begin serving the Council on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the coming year.

#### **E. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Council of Elders shall be ultimately responsible for the spiritual, business, and legal matters of the Church.

The Council of Elders are responsible for establishing the vision and direction of the church, giving consideration to the vision of the preaching pastor. They shall review this vision and direction each year.

It belongs to the office of Elder, both individually and jointly, to watch diligently over the flock committed to their charge, that no corruption of doctrine or of morals enters therein. They must exercise government and discipline, and take oversight not only of the spiritual interests of the particular church, but also the Church generally when required. They should visit the people at their homes, especially the sick. They should instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourner, nourish and guard the children of the Church. They should set a worthy example to the flock by their zeal to evangelize the unconverted and make disciples. They should pray with and for the people, being careful and diligent in seeking the fruit of the preached Word among the flock. All those duties, which all Christians are bound to discharge by the law of love, are especially incumbent upon them by divine vocation, and are to be discharged as official duties. Elders should, moreover, cultivate zealously their own aptness to teach the Scriptures.

As different members have different gifts, some may be given greater responsibility in certain areas. It remains to the entire Council of Elders to ensure that all responsibilities of the office are taken care of.

Other specific functions and responsibilities of the Council of Elders shall consist of, but are not be limited to, the following:

1. Supervision of Committees and Ministries;
2. Determining the number of Deacons and supervising Deacons;
3. Being involved in the membership class, and reporting on any changes in the status of members.
4. Removing, suspending, or reinstating members and Elders subject to due process procedures under these By-Laws and the *Policy on Church Discipline*;
5. The Chairman of the Council of Elders (or the Vice Chairman in his absence) shall moderate at congregational meetings.

They may appoint committees to oversee ministries under their care.

#### F. MEETINGS

1. Annual Meeting: An annual meeting of the Council of Elders shall be held the month prior to the annual meeting of the congregation for the discussion of such business as may come before the meeting.
2. Regular Meetings: The Council of Elders shall meet at least once monthly.
3. Quorum: A majority of the Council of Elders shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business at any meeting. An Elder may submit an absentee vote in writing for any issue in which he has been involved in the discussion.
4. Manner of Acting: The act of a majority of the Council members present at a duly convened meeting shall be considered the act of the Church, unless a specific ratio is indicated elsewhere in these By-Laws or if a vote of the congregation is required.
5. Informal Action by Elders: Any action required by law to be taken at a meeting of the members of the Council of Elders, may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, shall be signed by all of the members entitled to vote with respect to the subject matter thereof.

#### G. RESIGNATION AND/OR DISMISSAL

Any member of the Council of Elders may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chairman of the Council. Such resignation, which may or may not be made contingent on formal acceptance, shall take effect on the date of receipt or at any later time specified therein.

Should an Elder exhibit an attitude or personal conduct not consistent with the requirements of the office, the process outlined in the *Policy on Church Discipline* shall be followed. If this does not result in a satisfactory change, he shall be

removed from the Council of Elders. Removal can be done by a three-fourths recommendation of the remaining Elders.

If an Elder is dismissed, his name shall be published at the Church for two weeks. During this time the Elder may protest the dismissal and request that it be brought before the Church as indicated in the *Policy on Church Discipline*.

#### H. VACANCIES

Any vacancy occurring in the Council of Elders by reason of any increase in the number of Council members or resignation or termination of a Council member shall be filled by the Council of Elders as soon as possible.

#### I. COMPENSATION

No members of the Council of Elders shall receive any stated salary for their service, except by specific contractual agreement (i.e., paid staff).

### VII. DEACONS AND DEACONNESSES

#### A. DESCRIPTION

Similar to the office of Elder, this office, though of less ecclesiastical authority, is likewise an office of dignity and usefulness. The men and/or women who fill it hold a spiritual position within the Church dedicated to service of its members.

#### B. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Deacons is to carry out the vision given by the Elders. They are responsible for the administration and day-to-day oversight of the various ministries of the church that are not directly administrated by the Elders. They may appoint committees to oversee ministries under their care.

#### C. RELATIONSHIP

The Deacon Chairman shall attend Elder meetings as the liaison between the Council of Elders and the Deacon Board to receive direction and assignments from the Council of Elders and to report on the actions and plans of the Deacon Board. If the Deacon chairman is unable to attend an Elder meeting, he may appoint another deacon to take his place. The Deacon Chairman must be a man.

#### D. QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications for a Deacon are the same as for Elders, with the exception of the teaching requirement and the allowance of women performing the deacon role.

#### E. MEETINGS

The Deacon Board shall meet regularly.

## F. ELECTION, TERMS AND REMOVAL

The Council of Elders shall determine the number of Deacons, as well as select from the members of the Deacon Board the Chairman, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer. Deacons are elected by the congregation and shall serve a term of three (3) years, approximately 1/3 of which are elected each year at the Annual Meeting. A Deacon can serve for two consecutive terms. After taking one year off, he is again eligible to be elected

Prior to the Annual Meeting of members, the Council of Elders shall meet and begin preparation of a list of nominees whom they believe are qualified for office and called to be Deacons. Members of the congregation are encouraged to submit names to the Council of Elders for consideration as Deacons. The Elders will determine if the candidates meet the qualifications and are called to serve as Deacons.

Two months before the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, a list of potential Deacons will be sent to each member of the congregation asking them to respond to the Elders with any concerns about their qualifications for their position. Members of the congregation should contact an Elder with their concerns at least four weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. If the concerns appear to be justified, the Elders are encouraged to meet with the candidate to confirm the concerns. If necessary, the Elders can drop the name from the list.

A final list of candidates will be posted two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.

At the Annual Meeting, at least one candidate for each office shall be submitted to the congregation for a vote. At the Annual Meeting, a physical ballot must be cast for Deacons. This ballot will have a line for each person whose name has been presented for the office of Deacon. Candidates shall be elected at the Annual Meeting by a two-thirds majority vote.

Elected Deacons shall begin serving on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the coming year.

Vacancies in the Deacon Board may be filled by the Council of Elders until the next Deacon Board election.

A Deacon may resign by giving written notice to the Chairman of the Deacon Board. Such resignations are contingent upon formal acceptance by the Council of Elders.

Should a Deacon exhibit an attitude or personal conduct not consistent with the Scriptural requirements of the office, the process outlined in the *Policy on Church Discipline* shall be followed. If this does not result in a satisfactory change he or she shall be removed from the Deacon Board. Removal can be done by a three-fourths recommendation of the Council of Elders.

If a Deacon is dismissed, his name shall be published at the Church for two weeks. During this time the Deacon may protest the dismissal and request that it be brought before the Church as indicated in the *Policy on Church Discipline*.

**G. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Deacons and Deaconesses are responsible for the administration and day-to-day oversight of the various ministries of the church that are not directly administrated by the Elders, including but not limited to the following:

1. Facilities
2. Deacon's fund
3. Fellowship
4. Shared responsibility of visitation
5. Greeting
6. Preparation for the ordinances
7. Special events

Deaconesses are especially responsible for service to women.

**VIII. COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

**A. DESCRIPTION & PURPOSE**

The Council of Elders and Deacon Board shall have power to appoint committees for the purpose of conducting certain aspects of the church's business not otherwise delegated. All committees serve at the pleasure of the Council of Elder or Deacon Board, except for the Missions, Christian Education and Finance Committees. These are standing committees and cannot be dissolved, although members may be removed.

Members of standing committees must be a member of the Congregation, or must be a believer approved by the Council of Elders.

The Council of Elders and the Deacon Board have the authority to create committees and positions to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility. They have the authority to dissolve any committee or position that they have created. They also have the authority to appoint members of the church to serve as members of such committees and to act as its agents in such positions. The chairman of each committee, who is responsible for the overall operation of the committee, shall be appointed by the Elders or Deacons.

**B. STANDING COMMITTEES**

*Christian Education*

The Christian Education committee shall organize and supervise a comprehensive program of nurture and education in the principles and practices of the Christian faith for the children, youth, and adults of the church in line with the *Statement of Faith* and *Mission Statement* of the church. The committee is responsible to the Council of Elders and must report to them regularly.

### *Missions committee*

The Missions committee shall have charge over the missionary funds and missionary program of the church. The committee is responsible to the Council of Elders and must report to them regularly.

### *Finance committee*

The Finance committee shall include the Financial Secretary and Treasurer, and other members as designated by the Deacon Board, subject to approval by the Elder Council. The Financial Secretary and Treasurer will both be members of the church. The Financial Secretary is responsible for monies coming into the church, and the Treasurer for expenditures. The Financial Secretary and Treasurer cannot be the same person, nor can they be married to each other.

The committee is responsible for the following:

1. Teams for counting the offering.
2. Management of all property, real and personal, held in the name of the church, its operation, improvement, protection, etc.
3. They shall hold, manage, and invest at its discretion all funds of the church for which no other provision is made in this Constitution.
4. They shall create the annual budget for the church, subject to approval by the Elder Council and Deacon Board.
5. They shall employ a competent auditor to annually examine its records and the accounts of the church; the audit report shall be presented to the Elder Council and Deacon Board, and be available for review by any member of the congregation.
6. They shall not exceed budget authority, except as authorized by the Elder or Deacon Board, or by the congregation in a business meeting.

The committee is responsible to the Deacon Board and must report to them regularly.

A separate checking account may be obtained for the Deacons' Benevolence Fund.

No funds may be solicited from members of the Church without the approval of the Council of Elders, nor may any phone list or directory of the Congregation be used as a means for solicitation.

## C. QUALIFICATIONS

The chairman of any committee must be a member in good standing.

Members of the committees may be any person deemed to be qualified by the Elders or Deacons who has actively demonstrated a willingness to work toward the goals of the church. Unless specifically required by the Elders for a specific committee, committee members do not need to be members of the Church.

**D. TERMS, ELECTIONS, RESIGNATIONS & REMOVALS**

The term of office for committee members shall expire at the end of the calendar year, unless otherwise specifically designated in the resolution appointing the committee or committee member.

Any member of a committee may resign at any time by giving written notice to the chairman of the committee. Such resignations shall take effect on the date of receipt or at any later time specified therein. Any member of a committee may be removed at any time by resolution adopted by a majority of the Elders or Deacons.

The Council of Elders may dissolve any committee under their responsibility (with the exception of standing committees) or remove any member of such committee after a hearing and vote of three-fourths of the Council of Elders.

The Deacon Board may dissolve any committee under their responsibility (with the exception of standing committees) or remove any member of such committee after a hearing and vote of three-fourths of the Deacon Board.

**IX. GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR COUNCILS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

Petitioning the Lord for His wisdom, blessing, and discernment through thoughtful prayer shall be the first order of business at all meetings. All meetings shall be closed with a prayer of thanksgiving.

Special meetings of any Council, Board or Committee may be called by or at the request of any member of the Council, Board or Committee. At least one week notice must be given of the time and place of a meeting unless each member of the Council, Board or Committee has been contacted and consented to the time and place.

All elections shall require a two-thirds majority unless otherwise specified in these By-Laws.

**X. BUSINESS MEETINGS**

**A. FISCAL YEAR**

January 1 shall be the beginning of the church's fiscal year as well as the beginning of the term for all elders, deacons, and committee members.

**B. QUARTERLY BUSINESS MEETINGS**

Congregational meetings shall be held each quarter to conduct business of the church. The fourth quarter meeting shall include the approval of the budget and the election of officers, and shall be called the Annual Meeting. The first quarter meeting shall include a time for receiving the annual reports of the officers, boards, and committees of the church for the previous year. Notice of the meetings, stating the place and time, shall be posted and announced in at least two Sunday services prior to the day on which the meeting is to occur.

C. SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS

Special business meetings may be called at any time by the Elder Council, the Deacon board, or by written request of a quorum of the active members of the church. Notice of such meeting and the object for which it is called shall be given from the pulpit and posted in the bulletin at least one week in advance of the date of the meeting. Notice may be waived in an emergency provided that each church member is notified of said meeting at least one day prior to such meeting.

D. QUORUM

Twenty percent of the church members in good standing, eligible to vote, shall constitute a quorum. A majority of such members present and voting on any particular matter, in a regularly and properly called meeting, at which a quorum is present, shall be required to decide any questions presented unless these By-Laws specify otherwise. Voting shall be by secret ballot if requested by any church member.

E. VOTING

All active members in good standing may vote in a meeting. Unless otherwise stated in these By-Laws, congregational votes requires only a simple majority of members present. (Active members are those who have attended regular services at least three times in the last six months. Members in good standing are members who have not had their membership suspended as indicated in the *Policy on Church Discipline*.)

F. MINUTES

Minutes of all proceedings of the business meeting shall be taken by the Secretary, or by another member appointed by the congregation.

**XI. ORDINANCES, ORDINATION AND MARRIAGE**

A. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER ARE THE TWO ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH.

1. Believer's Baptism by immersion is taught and practiced as the scriptural mode. Elders shall oversee baptism. They shall provide the instruction about baptism and shall administer baptisms themselves or choose other spiritually respected people to do these ministries.
2. The Lord's Supper is administered regularly. Elders shall oversee Communion themselves or choose other spiritually respected people to perform these ministries.

B. ORDINATION

We recognize the right of the local church to ordain to the ministry of the gospel. Since ordination to the Christian ministry is a most solemn and

significant act, we have set forth principles and steps in the ordination process that should be observed. These are detailed in the *Policy on Ordination*.

**C. MARRIAGE**

Marriages may not be performed in the church or by a minister of the church between a believer and an unbeliever. Premarital counseling must be performed by an individual or individuals approved by the Council of Elders.

**XII. MISSIONS**

**A. COMMITMENT**

In recognition of the fact that the biblical Church, while having local expressions, is the total of all true believers, we commit ourselves to serving the church beyond our local assembly, both to the church in our local area and also to the church around the world.

**B. AMOUNT**

We commit to tithing 10% of our actual income to missions, with the hope that this percentage will increase throughout the years to come.

**XIII. PROPERTY AND RECORDS**

**A. INDEBTEDNESS**

No note or contract exceeding 5% of the total annual budget whereby the credit of the Church is pledged shall be made except by recommendation of the Council of Elders and approval by the Church membership.

The Council of Elders may authorize any officer(s) or agent(s) to enter into any contracts or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Church, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

**B. BOOKS AND RECORDS**

The Church shall keep correct and complete books and records of accounts and shall also keep minutes of the proceedings of its Council, Boards and committees.

Any member of the congregation may inspect all books and records of the Church at any reasonable time. Exceptions to this are records of the Council of Elders specifically designated as Executive Session and any giving records.

Additionally, giving records may only be inspected by those authorized by the Council to create and review them and any auditor authorized to review the giving records. The pastoral staff shall never be authorized to review the giving records.

**C. DIVISION**

In the event that the membership of the Church becomes divided in its beliefs, doctrines, policies, practices, conduct or any other aspects relating to the purposes for which this church was formed, and with the result that the division creates individual groups unable to work together with common effort to accomplish the purposes for which this church was formed, the church property shall belong to those members who abide by this constitution and carry on the ministry of the church. Should there be a dispute on this matter, representatives from the Columbia Baptist Conference shall determine which group is abiding by the By-Laws.

**D. DISSOLUTION**

Dissolution of the church shall only be accomplished by recommendation of the Council of Elders followed by a three-fourths affirmative vote at a congregational meeting.

1. The Special Board shall use its best efforts to sell all assets for the largest realizable return, either through private or public sale.
2. From the proceeds thereof, the Special Board shall:
  - a. First, pay all current long-term obligations of the Church;
  - b. Second, pay all commitments of the Church under the Missionary budget;
  - c. Third, all remaining assets shall be divided equally among the Church Planting Ministry of the Baptist General Conference, the Columbia Baptist Conference, and Camp Bighorn.

**XIV. INDEMNIFICATION**

The Church shall indemnify any member authorized to do the work of the church. (See *Policy on Indemnification*.)

**XV. AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this Constitution may be made only by following all steps below:

1. Amendments may be brought forth by any member in good standing.
2. Amendments must be approved by two-thirds of the Council of Elders prior to being brought before the congregation, or by a petition signed by a quorum of the membership.
3. The proposed amendment(s) must be presented by written motion at a quarterly or special business meeting held at least three months prior to the meeting at which the amendments will be voted on.
4. Amendments may only be voted on at a regularly scheduled quarterly meeting.

5. Notice of the proposed amendment(s) must be given in writing and from the pulpit on at least two Sundays in the interim period between said meetings.
6. Amendment(s) must be passed by a two-thirds majority of those members present and voting at the meeting.

## **XVI. RATIFICATION**

During the first year of operation, the congregation grants to the Elders and Deacons a degree of flexibility in implementing these By-Laws. Any changes of substance will need to go through the amendment process (Article XV) at the end of the first year.

The following provisions are different from those indicated in these By-Laws, and are to be in effect for the first year as well.

- The initial membership of the church is made up of the members of Shiloh Hills Baptist Church and Cornerstone Fellowship.
- The two year membership requirement for Elders shall be suspended until the church has been in existence for two years.
- Current members who are 16 years old have the right to vote.
- The first Annual Meeting shall be the one at which these By-Laws are adopted. At the first Annual Meeting the names of the current Elders will be submitted to the Congregation for their approval. The process for filling the other offices and committees will be begun by the Council of Elders after the first Annual Meeting and must be completed within six months.
- The “Proposed Interim Guidelines” document shall be considered as an addendum to this Article XVI of the By-Laws.