

**Greenwell Springs Baptist Church, Inc.  
Constitution**

# **Constitution of Greenwell Springs Baptist Church**

## **Preamble**

By the authority of Almighty God and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the church at Central, Louisiana (Greenwell Springs) is called for the worship of God and the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We, as members of Greenwell Springs Baptist Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognize the need to constitute ourselves to conform to God's Word in this and future ages so that we prepare for greater things in the spreading of the Gospel.

We do hereby organize ourselves according to the Louisiana Non-Profit Corporation Act and adopt this Constitution and Bylaws as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to the name of Jesus, as revealed by the Holy Bible and set forth in the standards of the Southern Baptist Convention, presently on the books, as of August 15, 2007.

### **I. Name**

Greenwell Springs Baptist Church

### **II. Purpose and Vision**

The Church exists by and through the Grace of God, for His Glory and the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This shall be the guiding force and ultimate purpose in all that we do.

### **III. Articles of Faith**

The Church believes that the Bible is the Holy Spirit inspired Word of God and is the only authority by which all articles, doctrine and practices are established and followed. We do, therefore, adopt the Articles of Faith found as of August 15, 2007, in the most recent publication of the Baptist Faith and Message.

### **IV. Character of our Church**

A. The government of the Church lies within the body of believers in Christ who compose it. It has the right to govern itself according to the guidance of the Holy Scripture (Ephesians 4:13). It is free from the control of any other body or organization, but does recognize and strive to maintain cooperation and harmony with those churches aligned with and in concert with the Southern Baptist Convention in the Baptist Faith and Message.

- B. The Church accepts the scriptures of the Holy Bible as the sole authority in matters of faith and practice.

**V. Management of Corporate Affairs**

- A. The Church is not a public institution and the property is not for public use. The Holy Spirit of God shall guide the affairs of Greenwell Springs Baptist Church.
- B. The Senior Pastor is authorized to administer final judgment on matters concerning the organization as a whole, as sanctioned and supported by the Holy Word of God, as the Shepherd of the flock at Greenwell Springs Baptist Church. The only exceptions are matters pertaining to the salary of the Senior Pastor and the selection of his replacement.
- C. The Senior Pastor will seek the council and guidance of the Council of Elders as the need arises (Acts 15:6,22). In the following matters the Senior Pastor may act only after seeking and gaining the 3/4 majority approval of the Council of Elders and the membership of the church:
  - (1) The acquisition, disposition, long term rental or lease of church property;
  - (2) The adoption of the annual church budget; and/or
  - (3) The calling and hiring of additional ministerial staff.
- D. After consultation with and the approval of the Council of Elders, the Senior Pastor may appoint someone to act on his behalf in the corporate matters of Greenwell Springs Baptist Church.

**VI. Senior Pastor**

**A. Duties** It shall be the Senior Pastor's duty to preach the Gospel, teach the scriptures, share his vision for the congregation, equip the saints for the work of ministry in order to evangelize the lost, care for the sick and bereaved and in various other ways guide and advance the spiritual welfare of the Church. He is to arrange for a suitable substitute for himself in the pulpit or relegate the authority to a staff or ministry team leader. He shall be the Chairman of the Council of Elders.

**B. Change of Relationship** It shall be the privilege of either the Church or Senior Pastor to dissolve the relationship, by giving one (1) month notice or less where both parties agree. The dismissal of the Senior Pastor shall be by vote of 1/2 of the congregation in attendance by secret ballot at an announced

meeting of the Church for that purpose. Such meeting will be announced at least two (2) weeks in advance, from the pulpit, and a required quorum of 10% of the membership must be present. Such a meeting can be called by the vote of 1/2 of the Council of Elders, or by a signed petition of 30% of the Church membership.

**C. Election of a Senior Pastor** The Council of Elders shall have the authority to call a new Senior Pastor.

1. A search team of 5 members will be chosen by the Council of Elders and approved by a majority of the membership present. The selection of the Search Committee will be conducted in a morning service, following a two (2) week notice of intent, from the pulpit.
2. The Senior Pastor shall be elected by secret ballot at a special called meeting of the Church. Previous notice shall be given, from the pulpit, at least two weeks prior to the visit in view of a call, with the election and confirmation being held at the conclusion of the sermon.
3. A quorum of at least 10% of the membership must be present at the meeting for the calling of the Senior Pastor.
4. The call of a new Senior Pastor will require at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of approval by the active members who are present at the time of the vote.

## **VII. Elders, Ministerial Staff, Deacons and Ministry Advisory Team**

(Note: The Senior Pastor and Council of Elders shall not hire immediate family members or relatives for staff positions, without a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of the membership)

### **A. Council of Elders**

- (1) The Council of Elders shall be the legal body of the church and function as its board of directors.
- (2) The Council of Elders, in concert with the Senior Pastor, shall implement the overall spiritual oversight of the Church. They shall be available to assist the Senior Pastor and serve the congregation in any of the multiple tasks which comprise spiritual oversight and ministry of the Church; (I Tim 5:17; Titus 1:5)
- (3) The Senior Pastor shall be the chairman of the Council of Elders.
- (4) A Vice Chairman will be elected from among the Elders to officiate in the absence of the Senior

Pastor; a Recording Secretary shall be chosen by the Elders and approved by the Senior Pastor.

- (5) There shall be eight (8) Elders, with two new Elders elected every other year, replacing the most tenured members. Elders shall be chosen by the Senior Pastor and shall not be members of the Ministerial Staff. Those chosen shall be approved by a majority vote of the Church in an announced meeting. The announcement of the meeting will take place at least two weeks prior to the meeting and be announced in each Sunday service. (Acts 1:21-26;6:1-7;Acts 20:17)
- (6) The Elders shall make recommendations for starting salaries and annual increases for the Ministerial Staff. The recommendations will be made at the time of hire and placed in the annual budget for vote by the membership.
- (7) Should there be a need to replace one of the Elders, the replacement will serve the remainder of that term only.
- (8) Elders shall be men and meet the qualifications found in I Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9.

**B. Ministerial Staff** – A staff of sufficient size to minister to all people within the membership of Greenwell Springs Baptist Church shall be determined and maintained by the Senior Pastor and Council of Elders. The continued ministry of members of this staff shall be determined by the Senior Pastor and Council of Elders. All members of the Ministerial Staff shall be men.

**i. Selection of a Staff Member**

- (1) The Senior Pastor and Council of Elders may recommend a man to fill an open staff position. The recommendation will be decided by a vote of the membership. Such a vote will be announced from the pulpit two weeks prior to the election. At that time a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of approval by the membership in attendance is required. There will be a quorum of at least 10% of the membership present.

- (2) Should the Church fail to confirm the recommendation, a Search Team will be formed, according to the following procedure:
- a. A search team of 5 members will be chosen by the Council of Elders and approved by a majority vote of the membership present. The selection of the Search Committee will be conducted in the morning service, following a two (2) week notice of intent, from the pulpit.
  - b. The staff member shall be elected by secret ballot at a special called meeting of the Church. Previous notice shall be given, from the pulpit, at least two weeks prior to the visit in view of a call.
  - c. A quorum of at least 10% of the membership must be present at the meeting for the calling of the staff member.
  - d. The call of a new staff member will require at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of approval by the active members who are present at the time of the vote.
- (3) The Ministerial Staff shall consist of an Executive Pastor, Sr. Adult/Outreach Pastor, Worship Pastor, Children's Pastor, Student Pastor and Singles' Pastor. Any additional staff will be added, as needed, at the request of the Council of Elders and the Senior Pastor. The Ministerial Staff may consult with an Elder or member of the Advisory Team, a matter he feels cannot be discussed with the Senior or Executive Pastors.
- The duties of each position shall include those assigned by the Senior Pastor, and in addition, but not limited to the following:
- (4) The Executive Pastor shall serve as Administrator and report directly to the Senior Pastor.
- a. He shall have oversight over the Associate Pastors.
  - b. He shall intercede on behalf of the Senior Pastor in the ministry needs of the membership, as directed by the Senior Pastor and with the cooperation of the Associate Pastors, Council of Elders and Deacons.
  - c. He shall assemble the budget needs of each Pastor for the next year and present them to the Council of Elders for approval and inclusion into the budget.
- (5) The Senior Adult/Outreach Pastor shall
- a. Serve as leader of the senior adult ministries and activities.

- b.** Organize, lead and participate in the outreach and visitation programs.
  - c.** Assure that all shut-ins are properly ministered to and served.
  - d.** Prepare the budget recommendation for the Senior Adult and Outreach Ministries and presentation to the Executive Pastor.
  
- (6)** The Worship Pastor shall be responsible for;
  - a.** Organizing and leading the adult choir, the orchestra and all related praise and worship participants.
  - b.** All sound and video equipment related to worship.
  - c.** The praise and worship in each service of our church.
  - d.** Planning and leading any special music or choir programs in the church.
  - e.** Preparing the budget recommendation necessary for the Praise and Worship Ministry and presentation to the Executive Pastor.
  
- (7)** The Children's Pastor shall be responsible for;
  - a.** The children's ministries and all programs related to the outreach and ministry to children in our church and community.
  - b.** Establishing lesson plans for children's programs and preparing the chosen teachers for the task.
  - c.** Leading Children's Church or appointing the appropriate person to do so.
  - d.** Preparing the budget recommendation necessary for the Children's Ministries and presentation to the Executive Pastor.
  
- (8)** The Student Pastor shall be responsible for;
  - a.** Developing an effective outreach and evangelistic program for students of our community.
  - b.** Being a team builder to enhance the student ministries of our church.
  - c.** Developing a Wednesday night worship, oversight of the Sunday School program, weekly Bible studies, summer camps and Student Missions.
  - d.** Developing a Student Ministry Budget and presentation to the Executive Pastor.
  
- (9)** The Singles Pastor shall be responsible for;

- a. All Singles Ministries, the weekly worship and study group meetings, Singles Sunday School programs, retreats and other special programs aimed at the Student and Single Ministries.
- b. Preparing the budget recommendation necessary for the Singles Ministries and presentation to the Executive Pastor

**C. Deacons**

- (1) Deacons are to be the leading servants of the Church, members in good standing, supporting the Elders, Senior Pastor, fellow Deacons and Staff, caring for the needs of the members and the community and promoting unity in the Church. Acts 6:1-6.
- (2) Deacon candidates shall be selected by the Pastor and Council of Elders, according to Acts 6:3 and I Tim 3:8-13.
- (3) Deacons shall be presented for election at a special called meeting of the Church. Confirmation shall be by  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of those present at the meeting.
- (4) Deacon Officers, Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary, shall be chosen by the Deacon Body and serve for one year.
- (5) Deacons should refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages, cursing, gambling or any other activity that could destroy their witness.
- (6) Deacons should be men of integrity, with proven spiritual maturity that is beyond reproach. They should have sound doctrinal conviction.
- (7) Deacons should demonstrate spiritual qualifications according to I Tim 3:10, being found blameless prior to being elected to the office.
- (8) Deacons should be the Priests of their homes, with a firm commitment to the sanctity of the marriage and rearing of children according to God's Word. I Tim 3:12
- (9) Deacons should be in control of their tongue, speaking out for righteous causes, slow to anger, with all honesty. I Tim 3:8.
- (10) Deacons should be temperate in living, doing all for the glory of God. I Cor 10:3

- (11) Deacons should be tithers. Heb 7:9
- (12) Deacons should be evangelistic and missionary in spirit, interested in the salvation of souls at home and abroad.
- (13) Deacons should refrain from destructive criticism and willing to settle all difficulties in a quiet and Christian manner – be peace makers.
- (14) Deacons should be active members for at least 12 months prior to being elected.

#### **D. Ministry Advisory Team**

- i. It is recognized that God has bestowed certain members with various gifts and experiences in the realm of business from which the Church can and should draw upon. For this reason a Ministry Advisory Team is created to advise the Senior Pastor and the Council of Elders on matters pertaining to the general ministry operations of the Church.
- ii. The Senior Pastor and Council of Elders are authorized to administer final judgment on all matters concerning the organization as a whole, however, any guidance on business issues will be requested from the Ministry Advisory Team when the situation warrants it.
- iii. The Advisory Team shall be comprised of the Chair Person from each active Ministry Team and a Recording Secretary, selected by the Advisory Team.
- iv. The term of office shall be equal to the chairman term of office for the respective Ministry Team.
- v. A team member may resign at any time and may also be removed at any time by a majority vote of the Council of Elders.
- vi. Any vacancies will be filled by appointment of the NMT and approved by the Senior Pastor and a majority vote of the Council of Elders to fulfill that term.
- vii. In general it shall be the responsibility of the Advisory Team to see that the property is adequately insured, hold all deeds to church property, care for and maintenance of church property, oversight in the use of the property and attend to all business matters related to the above.
- viii. Church property shall include land, buildings, easements, and fixed assets. This includes computers, copy machines, sound equipment, vehicles, etc. which have \$100 or more value.
  - (1) Meetings
    - a. The Ministry Advisory Team shall meet as and when necessary to conduct its business. At a minimum, the Ministry Advisory Team will meet quarterly.

- b. The meetings will be called at the request of the Senior Pastor, the Council of Elders or their authorized designee.
- c. Business discussed at the meetings shall be confidential and shared on a need to know basis with any other ministries or members. No information will be disseminated without the consent of the Senior Pastor or the Council of Elders.

(2) Authority

The Ministry Advisory Team's authority is limited to that which is defined and documented within the Bylaws and given by the Council of Elders.

### **VIII. Church Membership**

- A. Greenwell Springs Baptist Church is open to all people regardless of race, gender, or national origin. The church shall be composed of persons united through faith in Jesus Christ, committed to growing in faith, servant hood, and living a Christian lifestyle.
  - i. Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in one of the following ways:
    - (1) By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this Church.
    - (2) By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Southern Baptist Church.
    - (3) By restoration upon statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Sister Church when no letter is obtainable.
  - ii. All who serve on the Ministry Advisory Team, Council of Elders and Deacons shall be members of Greenwell Springs Baptist Church for at least one year and in good standing with support of staff, attendance and tithing.
  - iii. Should there be any dissent as to any candidate for membership, such dissent shall be referred to the Council of Elders for investigation and a final decision.
- B. Discipline
  - i. It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled

member. The Senior Pastor, the Ministerial Staff and Council of Elders shall be available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by concern for redemption rather than punishment.

- ii. Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the Senior Pastor and Council of Elders will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matt 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-third vote of the members present is required and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. Such meeting will be announced and a minimum two week advance notice given.
- iii. The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, approval of the Council of Elders and by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

#### **IX. Finances**

The church shall be financed according to the Scriptural method of tithes and offerings of covenant partners and friends of the church (Malachi 3:10; Matt 23:23). The Senior Pastor or Council of Elders may approve additional fund-raising activities. These gifts, when given to the church, divest the donor of all interest in the donated funds and property. The disposition of those funds shall be left to the Senior Pastor and Council of Elders of the church, within the guidelines and framework of this Constitution and Bylaws. Any additions to a designated budget item which is an increase of 10% or greater, must be voted on by the membership. Acts 4:34-37.

An internal audit of the finances will be conducted on a bi-annual basis. The audit team will consist of one Elder, the Executive Pastor, a member of the Ministry Advisory Team and two church members, voted on by the membership, from a list selected by the Council of Elders. If an independent audit should be required, the Senior Pastor and Council of Elders shall be authorized to select the appropriate outside firm.

#### **X. Meetings**

- A. The church shall hold regular meetings for worship, teaching, training and fellowship.
- B. The church shall hold one annual meeting, at which time the material and spiritual conditions of the church shall be discussed and plans projected for the church's progress. At the annual meeting, the affirmation of the Church budget and affirmation of any new Elders shall be conducted. For the annual meeting and any other business meeting of the church, notice shall be given by the Senior Pastor from the pulpit at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting. The members present at the meeting shall

constitute a quorum. In the event of an emergency, so declared by the Council of Elders, when it is not prudent to give the fourteen (14) day notice, a business meeting may be conducted at the next regularly scheduled worship service at which time the members in attendance shall constitute a quorum. The phone tree and/or any other appropriate notification method will be used to inform the membership of the emergency meeting. (Note: The annual meeting shall not be declared an emergency.)

- C. Other meetings of the church as a whole or of authorized groups within the church shall be set according to the needs of the congregation. The Senior Pastor, after consultation with the Council of Elders, shall have the sole discretion to call a meeting. A minimum two (2) weeks notice shall be given to the congregation prior to the Annual Meeting, or amendments to the budget which meet the 10% or greater criteria.
- D. At a minimum, the Council of Elders shall hold quarterly meetings to discuss the business and spiritual condition of the church. It shall be the responsibility of the Secretary of the Council to post all minutes of the meetings on the church website and in the church offices for view of the congregation within a reasonable time period, but no later than two weeks following the quarterly meeting.
- E. No person shall be invited to speak, preach, perform, minister or address the congregation without the consent of the Sr. Pastor or Vice Chairman of Elders.
- F. All meetings of the church shall adhere to the procedures of Robert's Rules of Order, unless otherwise directed by the Senior Pastor or the Council of Elders.

## **XI. Ordinances**

- A. **Baptism** Baptism is an ordinance of Jesus Christ instituted for His churches to be observed by them until the end of the age (Matt 28:18-20). It is an outward testimony of the inward work of grace in the heart of believers and is a sign of the believers' partaking in Christ's death, burial and resurrection; and of being in union with Him (Romans 6:3-5). Only those who profess repentance towards God and faith in and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ are to be baptized (Mark 16:16). True Christian baptism is to be performed in water and in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Baptism by immersion shall be observed as commanded in the Scriptures by all who have repented of their sins and have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls and who

give clear evidence of their salvation. (Matt 28:19; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12).

**B. Lord's Supper** The Lord's Supper is also an ordinance of Jesus Christ, instituted by Him for His Churches so that a remembrance of His sufferings and death may be kept by all of His true and loving disciples, until He shall come again (I Cor 11:17-34). It is a means of grace to strengthen the believer and to show communion between the Church and the triune God and the members with one another. The Lord's Supper will be observed at a minimum quarterly. The Church participates in the Lord's Supper as a body or family, with each covenant Member in fellowship adding to the blessedness of the experience (Mark 14:24; Luke 22:19-22; I Cor 10:16; 11:23-26).

## **XII. Amendments**

The Constitution or Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members present at a meeting called for that purpose. Notice of the meeting shall be given by the Senior Pastor from the pulpit at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting. At the time of giving notice of the meeting, the Senior Pastor shall give a summary of the proposed amendment(s). The members present at the meeting shall constitute a 10% quorum.

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