

Constitution & By-Laws

A General Guide to the Operation of Community Baptist Church

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ARTICLE I NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION

This assembly shall be known as the Community Baptist Church (CBC).

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

Statement of Purpose: "Our passion is to know Christ and make Him known through worship, fellowship, discipleship and ministry."

To know Christ is to develop a personal relationship with Him. To make Him known is to bring others into a personal relationship with Him. Genuine Christians helping others to become genuine Christians! How? By helping folks grow through the stages of life development — worship (attendance at public worship services), fellowship (membership), discipleship (developing maturity) and ministry (being a loving channel for Divine resources to meet human needs).

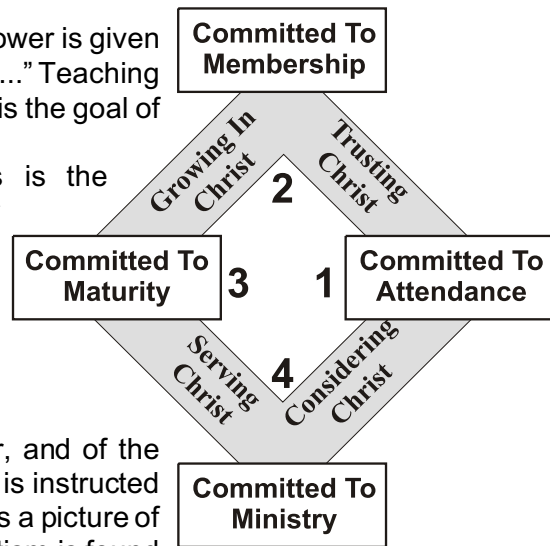
Therefore, CBC shall have as its purpose the commission that our Lord Jesus Christ gave to His church preceding His ascension as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Acts 1:8-11. A summary of this commission as recorded by Matthew is as follows (with paraphrase of KJV).

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth...**disciple the nations**...” Teaching and molding people to become the followers of Jesus is the goal of the church. How is this discipling to take place?

1. “...**go** ye therefore...” Going after souls is the responsibility of every church and of every member of that church. To lose the evangelistic zeal and fervor in home and foreign missionary work is to fail to fulfill the purpose which God had in establishing this, His assembly of born again believers.

2. “...**baptizing** them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost...” Every believer is instructed by our Lord Jesus Christ to be baptized which is a picture of our salvation. The mode and authority for baptism is found in the Articles of Faith.

3. “...**teaching** them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” The primary purpose of the church service is the teaching and preaching of God's Holy Word. This ministry must be fulfilled to insure the growth of every child of God.



The Community Baptist Church has not been organized and will not function for the purpose of gain for any member or members. All profits of the organization will be used in the promotion of the purpose listed above.

ARTICLE III TEXTBOOK

The King James Version translation of the Bible shall be our official instructor in “doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness.”

ARTICLE IV AFFILIATION

CBC is an independent Baptist church — independent of any council, convention, denomination or any other form of organic church union. This church is in fellowship and cooperation with other sovereign, autonomous, independent, Baptist churches (a worldwide network of churches), but will not enter into any union or association with those that make their actions binding upon the local church.

ARTICLE V CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Qualifications for Membership

- a. Salvation
- b. Baptism (immersion in a New Testament church after salvation)
- c. Christian Lifestyle
 Note: It is not expected that people be “perfect” or without problems before they join. CBC is more of a hospital than a showcase window. However, the church does not condone an immoral, and/or unchristian lifestyle in any of it’s members (I Corinthians 5). See “Church Discipline” for more details.
- d. Accepting the views of faith and practice of this church as stated in the *Articles of Faith* and the *Constitution & By-Laws*.

Section 2. Admission into Membership

- a. By Baptism. Any person receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, may, upon baptism, be received into the membership.

- b. By Letter. Candidate who requests membership who has previously been a member of another New Testament church is to be received by transfer of membership. A letter of recommendation and dismissal from the previous church should be received before the candidate's membership is final.
- c. By Testimony. Candidate who has previously been saved and scripturally baptized but does not have a letter of recommendation may be received on the basis of his testimony of salvation and baptism if there is an acceptable reason as to why he does not have a letter from his previous church.
- d. By Restoration. Any member who has lost his membership and has shown fruit of repentance, may be restored to membership upon the recommendation of the pastor and the majority vote of the church.

Section 3. Procedure for Admission

- a. Members Received by Baptism
 - 1. Each candidate may respond to a public invitation to request baptism or arrange for baptism with pastor.
 - 2. CBC will vote to receive the candidate before their baptism. i.e. "...we receive _____ into membership upon their baptism...".
 - 3. Complete a "Membership Application" (available in the literature rack) and return to the church office.
- b. Members Received by Letter or Testimony
 - 1. Attend *C.L.A.S.S. 101 — Discovering Church Membership*.
 - 2. Complete a "Membership Application" (available in the literature rack) and return it to the church office. Pastor will arrange a service to receive the candidate into membership.
 - 3. Candidate will be received by church vote during a church service.

Section 4. Termination of Membership

- a. By Letter. A member in good standing wishing to unite with another sister church of like doctrine and practice will have a letter of recommendation and dismissal sent directly to that church. This is called a "transfer of membership". A member leaving to join another church of a different faith will be granted a letter of dismissal. We do not recommend or transfer members to another doctrine.
- b. By Discipline. See Article VI.
- c. By Death. Names of deceased members shall be transferred to "Previous Members" in church records.

Note: Names of members who have lost contact with the church (i.e. joining another church, moved from area, etc.) shall be moved to "Previous Members" in church records. Such people will need to be reinstated by congregational vote before exercising the rights and privileges of membership (i.e. voting).

Section 5. Standing of Members

A member who faithfully abides by the *Articles of Faith* and the *Constitution & By-Laws* is considered a member in good standing. A member who does not attend or contribute, and who for any reason does not communicate with the church for a period of six (6) months, shall be considered as a prospect for church discipline. An effort shall be made to renew the interest of the member. Such an individual shall not have the privilege of voice or vote in any church business meeting. He must attend on four (4) consecutive Sundays before being considered a member in good standing once again.

Section 6. Duties of Members

It is the duty of members to endeavor to fulfill the church membership covenant printed below:

Community Baptist Membership Covenant

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior, having been baptized, and being in agreement with Community Baptist Church's statements, strategy and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with this church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

1. I Will Protect the Unity of My Church

- ✓ by acting in love towards other members
- ✓ by resisting gossip
- ✓ by following the leaders

(Romans 14:19) "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

(Romans 15:5) "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:"

(1 Peter 1:22) "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:"

(Ephesians 4:29) "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

(Hebrews 13:17) "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

2. I Will Share the Responsibility of My Church

- ✓ by praying for its growth
- ✓ by inviting others to attend
- ✓ by warmly welcoming those who visit

(1 Thessalonians 1:2) "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;"

(Luke 14:23) "And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

(Romans 15:7) "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."

3. I Will Serve the Ministry of My Church

- ✓ by discovering my gifts and talents
- ✓ by being equipped to serve by my pastors
- ✓ by developing a servant's heart

(1 Peter 4:10) "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

(Philippians 2:3-5) "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. {4}Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. {5}Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"

4. I Will Support the Testimony of My Church

- ✓ by attending faithfully
- ✓ by living a godly life
- ✓ by giving regularly

(Hebrews 10:25) "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

(Philippians 1:27) "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ..."

(Malachi 3:10) "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

(1 Corinthians 16:2) "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

ARTICLE VI CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Discipline is that procedure including Christian teaching, training, admonition and rebuke (both private and public) with the view to helping the individual grow in grace, mature in the faith, break off from worldliness and live wholly for the Lord. At such time that a member shall refuse to receive such help it will be necessary for the church to exclude him from the membership. Any such discipline will be conducted in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-17; II Thessalonians 3:14-15 and Galatians 6:1-10 and will be restorative in nature rather than punitive.

Section 1. Private Sins

Resolving conflicts between individuals, and in dealing with sins not generally know, the wronged party shall follow Matthew 18:15-17. A person bringing a matter into public or before the church before following this scripture shall be subject to rebuke.

Section 2. Public Sins

- a. Matters of formal accusation shall be:
 1. Private sins that have been privately, but unsuccessfully, dealt with (Section 1 above).
 2. Public sins (sins known by the church or the general public).
 3. Holding and/or propagating false doctrine.
- b. Charges must be made in writing, signed and presented to the pastor. Pastor(s) and deacons will review and plan how to deal with the specific situation. Pastor(s) and deacons shall have the sole responsibility of determining whether the situation warrants public action. If the charges are against a pastor or deacon he will not be part of this determination. If necessary, the accused shall receive at least one week's notice with the charges stated, to appear at a designated meeting for a hearing. If the accused member fails to appear, the church may proceed. The accused may call to his aid another church member to speak for him.
- c. A member formally accused is automatically released from any office or position, cannot speak at business meetings except at the hearing, and is deprived of his right to vote.
- d. At the close of the hearing, the congregation shall vote, by ballot, to determine if the accused is guilty. If the accused is found to be guilty he must be excluded even if he repents. After his repentance is proven to be genuine he may again apply for membership.
- e. Contact with an excluded member should be for the purpose of restoration, not fellowship.
- f. An excluded member can be received back into membership only after repentance and public confession of the sin(s).

Note Regarding Human Sexuality: We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; I Corinthians 5:1; 6:9; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4). CBC will not condone such behavior in it's members. Such lifestyle choices will be disciplined. Such discipline will include, where there is not repentance and forsaking of such behavior, being removed from church membership.

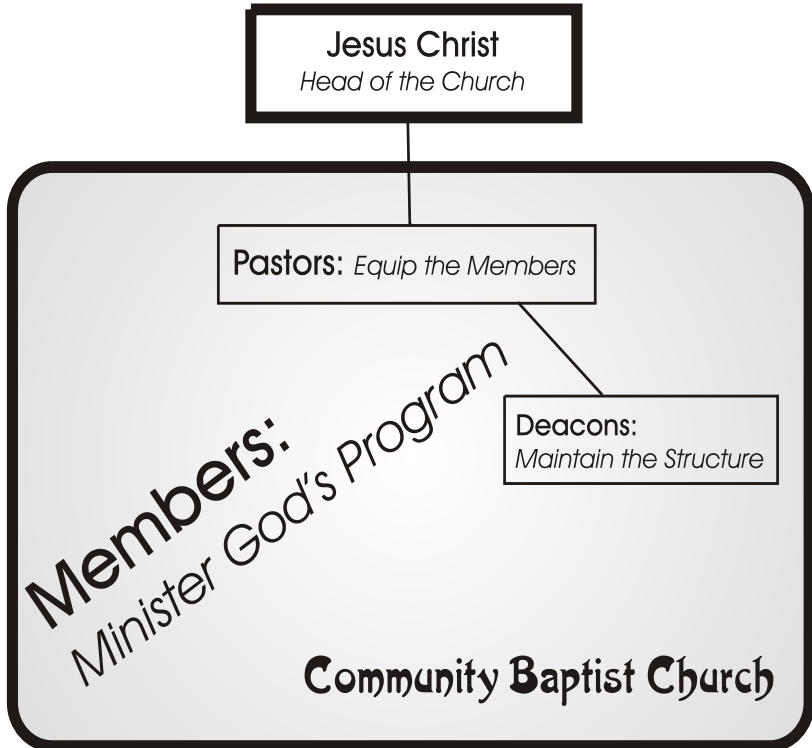
ARTICLE VII CHURCH OFFICERS

The organizational structure of God's church is simple:

- Jesus is the Head, the sole authority in His church (Col. 1:18),
- Members are the ministers who carry out His work (Eph. 4:11-13),
- Pastors and deacons are the officers enabling the church to function effectively (Phil. 1:1).

Section 1. Pastor(s)

The leadership of this church, all departments being subject thereto, resides in the scriptural office of the Bishop, who is appointed by the Holy Spirit as the overseer of the flock. The three terms bishop, elder, and pastor all refer to the ministry of one and the same person. The office is designated by the term bishop (overseer); the spiritual maturity of the man is designated by the term elder; and the responsibilities of the man is designated by the term pastor (shepherd).



- a. Qualifications — “This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

— I Timothy 3:1-7

The pastor must be in agreement with the *Articles of Faith* and the *Constitution & By-Laws*.

- b. Duties and Responsibilities — The pastor is to lead the church in all matters and is responsible for the preaching and teaching of all services. He must see that all phases of the ministry are cared for.
1. The pastor shall be responsible for the doctrine taught in the church.
 2. The pastor shall represent the church in all matters.
 3. The pastor shall be an automatic member of every function, meeting and committee of the church. He shall be the overseer (chairman) of every committee.
 4. The pastor shall be the moderator at every business meeting.
 5. The pastor's oversight of God's church is a solemn responsibility to provide influence, leadership and an example. His is not an authority, which resides in Jesus Christ alone, but the influence and example of leadership; it flows from responsibility. It is his solemn obligation and responsibility to follow Christ and accordingly lead the church.

6. The pastor shall have the freedom to select his pastoral staff, secretarial support, and other church staff as needed; to determine their hours, responsibilities and salaries (within the bounds of the budget).
- c. **Appointing a Pastor**
1. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to call a man and send him out (Acts 13:4). Therefore much prayer and seeking of His will must precede the calling of a pastor.
 2. The deacons shall serve as the pulpit committee. The first responsibility is to see that the pulpit is filled in all services by preachers of like faith and practice.
 3. The pulpit committee shall prayerfully select the candidate and present his name to the church who then votes on whether or not to invite that man to candidate. After a man is invited to candidate he shall preach in a regular service.
 4. The church membership shall be informed one week in advance that a vote to call a pastor is to be taken at a special business meeting.
 5. The church shall vote on each candidate as soon as is convenient after that candidate has preached providing the vote is not on the day the candidate preached.
 6. As soon as is convenient, after a candidate has accepted the call, he shall join the church and assume his responsibilities as pastor.
 7. The pastor shall be appointed for an indefinite period of time.
 8. We recognize that in the N.T. some churches seemed to have one pastor while others seemed to have more than one. As the ministry grows, plurality of pastors shall share the office of oversight and accordingly multiply the effectiveness of the office of bishop in overseeing and ministering to CBC. Necessity for and timing of the appointment of more than one pastor shall come from the leadership of the existing pastor. The interrelationship of the pastors shall grow out of their spiritual gifts, length of service to CBC and experience in the ministry.
- d. **Dismissing a Pastor** — Action by the church to terminate the responsibilities of its pastor must be taken only after much prayer and for the most serious reasons such as immoral conduct or heresy. Such action may be initiated only within the pastors and/or deacons and must be in handwriting. A special business meeting must be called one week in advance to vote for the pastor's dismissal. A special quorum must show up and an eighty percent (80%) majority is necessary to remove the pastor from office. The specific procedure must take into account "Article VI Church Discipline."

Section 2. Deacons

The office of deacon arose out of a need to serve the church in ways that enable the pastor(s) to keep their focus on ministering the Word of God to people.

- a. **Qualifications** — "Likewise deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." — I Timothy 3:18-13

A deacon must be a member of this church for a period of one year before office and he must be in agreement with the *Articles of Faith and Constitution & By-Laws*.

- b. **Duties and Responsibilities** — The deacons are ministering servants of the church whose purpose is to free the time of the pastor that he may fulfill his responsibilities.
 - 1. Each deacon shall be ordained to his office to fulfill a specific need (Acts 6). Examples of appropriate needs are: financial administrator, building maintenance, records (church & officer business meetings), ordinances and widows needs. As new needs arise the pastor shall lead the church to appoint additional deacons to those needs.
 - 2. They shall meet with the pastor(s) regularly to lend their counsel. This meeting shall be the “Officers Meeting.”
 - 3. They shall be willing and available to serve their church as needed.
 - 4. They shall serve as the pulpit committee.

- c. **Appointing a Deacon**
 - 1. Pastor shall bring the church to an awareness of the need for a deacon to meet a specific need.
 - 2. A deacon candidate shall be nominated by the church and appointed by church vote.
 - 3. A deacon is ordained to the ministry of that office at a special service for an indefinite period of time. Their length of service will depend upon their commitment to serve the Lord, church and pastor.
 - 4. An ordained deacon may “step out” of his position to allow another man the opportunity for personal growth which this service develops.

Additional Considerations re: Officers

Divorce — We do not intend to add to the pain experienced by those who have suffered through divorce. Many are godly people who have been seriously wronged. We believe that God hates divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication (during the betrothal of the couple). Divorced and divorced and remarried persons may hold positions of leadership and service throughout the church and are greatly used of God for Christian service. However, due to God’s limitations, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon. Malachi 2:14-17; Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 7:1-3; I Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6

Trustees — In addition to the church officers as delineated in the Scriptures, CBC shall have trustees for legal purposes as follows: three men shall serve as trustees of CBC (a Virginia unincorporated religious association) and have authority to purchase on behalf of the congregation, receive title on behalf of the congregation, encumber property by way of mortgage, loan or other form of financing, and other such legal responsibilities. The trustees shall have no authority except as given to them by the congregation via congregational decision and vote. Trustees shall not be considered “officers” in the same sense as the pastor(s) and deacons.

ARTICLE VIII CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The church is an organism, a body with an authoritative head — Jesus Christ. The government is therefore a theocracy. Thus, the church is not “legislative” (legislating its rules and policies) but rather “administrative” (carrying out Christ’s rules and policies). How does the church identify Christ’s mind on a given issue? With the Bible as the source of principles, the church membership seeks God’s will. That will is then identified by congregational vote. We trust that the decision made by the majority vote is expressive of God’s will. With this in mind the following expresses the format for congregational determination of God’s will.

Section 1. Determining Body

The determining body of this church (group responsible for determining God's will) shall be the membership present at any business meeting.

Section 2. Business Meeting

Business meetings are of two types:

- a. Those initiated by the pastor and deacons. These meetings may be held at any regular church service as they are needed.
- b. Those initiated by other members. A written request for a business meeting along with the desired motion to be made shall be delivered to the pastor. After the motion has been discussed by the pastor and deacons it may then be acted on by the church in a business meeting. The business meeting shall be held approximately two weeks from the date of delivery to the pastor.

Section 3. Voters

Any member of the church who is in good standing and is 18 years of age or older may vote.

Section 4. Quorum

In determining a quorum "church" shall represent the members in good standing (see Article V. Section 5) who are currently residing in the general vicinity of the church. Therefore, members who are not active and college students residing out of the area shall not be considered in determining if a quorum is present.

- a. Ordinary quorum. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the church shall constitute an ordinary quorum for any regular business meetings of the church. Seventy-five percent (75%) shall be considered a majority.
- b. Special quorum. One-half of the church shall be present to constitute a special quorum in cases of specially important matters, i.e. buying or selling property, building a building, calling a pastor, terminating the pastoral relationship, amending the constitution. Eighty percent (80%) shall be considered a majority.

Voting is intended to reflect a conviction that God is directing the church in a matter. Unanimous or nearly-unanimous majorities (90-100%) will reflect a clear statement from the church body that God has directed us. Majority percentages falling below ninety percent (90%) indicate that there may be confusion regarding our direction from God or that the timing of the decision may not be right. In this case the pastor may request that the church take additional time to seek God's will and then re-vote.

Section 5. Division

In the event of the division of the church membership, all the church property(s) and assets shall belong to those who abide by the *Articles of Faith* and the *Constitution & By-Laws*.

Section 6. Dissolution

In the event that the church dissolves, assets will be liquidated (except those assets which are deemed to be more appropriately given to charitable organizations chosen by pastor(s) and/or deacons to receive assets), all debts paid and the balance distributed to Baptist ministries which are recognized charitable organizations in the United States of America. The choice of which charitable organizations are to receive the assets shall be made by the pastor(s) and/or deacons.

Section 7. Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended by an eighty percent (80%) vote of a special quorum.