



**CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**New Castle, Delaware**

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**  
**Adopted September 30, 2025**

## THE CANAAN STORY

On December 6, 2002, thirteen Christian brothers and sisters, all of whom were members of the historic Eighth Street Baptist Church in Wilmington, Delaware (Est. 1892), gathered to set into motion a series of events that led to the formation of what is known today as the Canaan Baptist Church of Delaware. The Holy Spirit led them to plant a church under the auspices of American Baptist Churches USA and in association with the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. For guidance, they contacted Rev. Dr. Christopher Alan Bullock, Pastor of the Progressive Baptist Church of Chicago, and former Pastor of Eighth Street Baptist Church, who served as their spiritual advisor throughout the church-planting process. This group of individuals, known as the Core Planters, consisted of Deacon William Allen, Deacon James Bonds, Kermit Brooks (former member), Deacon Donald J. Bowman, Sr. (deceased), Connie Cable (deceased), Iris Craighead, Deacon Earl Green, Jr. (former member), Penrose Hollins (former member), Rev. Michael James, Christopher Joyner (former member), Dianne Michael, Deacon Earnest Purnell (deceased), and Kia Wyatt (former member). They contributed to Canaan's establishment with their gifts, talents, time, and resources, while dedicating themselves to an unprecedented movement that established a haven for a community of believers in need of a church family.

In April 2003, Canaan held its first worship service in the auditorium of Warner Elementary School, with Pastor Bullock serving as the guest preacher. After delivering a powerful message of hope, over 100 souls joined this new Branch of Zion, Canaan Baptist Church. Worship services were held at the Wilmington Drama League and the Ursuline Academy Performing Arts Center to accommodate a growing congregation. Dr. Roy Thompson served as interim pastor until the congregation unanimously elected Rev. Dr. Christopher Alan Bullock as its first pastor in April 2004. The pastoral installation service was held in September 2004, while the Lord continued to add members to the Canaan Church family weekly, and tithes and offerings increased significantly. In 2008, a successful capital campaign secured funding to construct a \$2.5 million sanctuary and ancillary facilities. In 2017, the newly constructed annex, the Hall of Faith, was unveiled following the launch of a second successful fundraising campaign, which raised \$1.5 million.

Under the visionary leadership of Pastor Bullock, Canaan Baptist Church has grown into a vibrant urban congregation that stands as a vanguard of liberation, faith, and empowerment through its Christian witness. For more than 22 years, Canaan has expanded its reach to serve over 1,200 members, remaining steadfast as a healthy Body of Christ in the Baptist tradition. Through ministries formed to meet the needs of its membership and neighboring communities, Canaan sponsors special events that strengthen families, celebrate culture and history, and provide spiritual enrichment with a focus on applying biblical principles, God's commandments, and covenant living. With an emphasis on discipleship, Canaan offers weekly prayer meetings, Wednesday Bible study, and Saturday Christian education programs with age-appropriate curricula to promote spiritual growth and development. On Sundays, Spirit-filled worship—both in person and online—unites the congregation through fervent prayer, high praise, faithful stewardship, and the preaching of God's Word.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, Canaan's mission is to transform lives, proclaim salvation, nurture families, and extend the love of Christ. This commitment is demonstrated not only in worship but also through strong partnerships with schools, civic, and community organizations. Beyond the walls of the sanctuary, Canaan extends its witness through active outreach and evangelism, including community canvassing, monthly food distribution, and public health initiatives. From sanctuary to street, the congregation seeks to embody the spirit of the early *ekklesia*, birthed on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), when the Holy Spirit empowered the church to be Christ's witness "unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Canaan remains rooted in Scripture, steadfast in prayer, and committed to building a community where faith is strengthened, fellowship is deepened, and justice is pursued. With confidence in God's promises, we affirm that "He who began a good work in us will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). To God be the glory for the great things He has done and will do!

**CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.**  
**3011 New Castle Avenue**  
**New Castle, DE 19720**

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS HISTORY**

Created and Adopted – 2003  
Electronically Reproduced – January 2011; Revised – May 2011  
Amended and Adopted – September 30, 2025

**OFFICIAL NOTICE AND DISCLAIMER**

This document constitutes the duly adopted and authorized Constitution and Bylaws of Canaan Baptist Church, as approved by the congregation on September 30, 2025. This Constitution and Bylaws serve as the governing framework for the orderly operation, administration, and ministry of Canaan Baptist Church. It establishes the structure, policies, and procedures necessary to ensure accountability, unity, and effective ministry in accordance with biblical principles, the Church's mission, and applicable civil laws. Nothing contained herein shall supersede the authority of the Holy Scriptures, which remain the final rule of faith and practice for this body of believers. Canaan Baptist Church reserves the right to amend, revise, or update this document as deemed necessary, through proper congregational action and in accordance with the procedures set forth herein. This document is the exclusive property of Canaan Baptist Church and may not be copied, reproduced, or distributed, in whole or in part, without prior written authorization from the Church. Its authenticity is hereby certified by the official seal of Canaan Baptist Church and the signatures of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, as duly approved by the Church body.

**Authorized By: Canaan Baptist Church Constitution and Bylaws Committee**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Christopher Alan Bullock, Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Debbie Bullock, Executive Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deacon Henry Carroll, Membership Ministry

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sis. Stephanie Collins, Chair, Trustee Ministry

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Arvis Strickling-Jones, Minister of Music

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bro. Alan Hicks, Church Administration

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sis. Deb Piner, Church Clerk

**September 30, 2025**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Adoption

Official Seal:

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preserve the integrity and formatting of the official document.

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**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF  
CANAAN BAPTIST CHURCH  
New Castle, Delaware**

**PREAMBLE**

We, the members of Canaan Baptist Church ("Church"), declare and establish this Constitution and Bylaws to preserve and secure our faith's principles and govern the Church body in an orderly and God-honoring manner. This document is designed to protect each member's liberties and uphold this Church's freedom of action in its relationship with other Churches and the broader Christian community.

The purpose of the Constitution and Bylaws is:

1. To establish a fundamental Christian law system that guides the Church's programs, ministries, and operations, which is the "Body of Christ."
2. According to biblical principles, we must set forth the faith, fellowship, and conduct that God expects us to exemplify in our daily lives.

We affirm that God desires us to extend Christ's love, demonstrate a genuine and sincere concern for His people, and practice righteous living as revealed in His Word. In this Spirit, we commit to preserving the unity, integrity, and mission of Canaan Baptist Church for the glory of God and the edification of His Kingdom.

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# THE CONSTITUTION

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## ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE

**Section A: Name.** The official name, *Canaan Baptist Church, Inc.*, is duly incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware. It shall be operated exclusively as a nonprofit organization for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. Within this document, the organization shall hereafter be referred to as “Canaan Baptist Church,” “Canaan,” or “Church.” Should any law become repressive in scope or nature, it is the duty of this Church, grounded in our faith, to democratically oppose such measures in defense of the free exercise of religious beliefs and the right to peaceable assembly as guaranteed by the Constitution.

**Section B: Purpose.** The purpose of *Canaan Baptist Church, Inc.* is to give visible form to the faith and fellowship to which God has called His people, including—but not limited to—the promotion of worship, ministry, and service under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Church is committed to advancing the Kingdom of God through missions, Christian education, the sharing of the Gospel, meeting the needs of others, outreach, and community engagement. All activities of the Church shall be consistent with the Holy Scriptures and the teachings of Jesus Christ, to the glory of God and the edification of His people (Matthew 25:35-40; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:42-47; Micah 6:8; and Romans 12:1-2).

## ARTICLE II: CORE VALUES, MISSION, AND VISION

**Section A: Core Values.** The Core Values of Canaan Baptist Church are as follows: Congregational Intimacy (1 Corinthians 13:13), Salvation for the Lost (John 3:16), Applied Christianity (James 2:14-20), and Impact the Human Condition (Luke 4:18-19).

**Section B: Mission.** The mission of Canaan Baptist Church, based on Acts 2:42-47, is to be an urban Baptist Church that serves as a vanguard of liberation, faith, and empowerment through our Christian witness. Canaan's mission is to do ministry for the Master through the five-fold Ministries of 1) Discipleship, 2) Fellowship, 3) Service, 4) Worship, and 5) Evangelism.

**Section C: Vision.** The Great Commission, as recorded in Matthew 28:19-20, serves as the foundation and inspiration for Canaan Baptist Church's vision. Canaan envisions a multi-generational family of believers who are united in faith, growing in discipleship, and serving together in love. Guided by this vision, the Church seeks to glorify God and advance His Kingdom on earth through worship, witness, and works of service, embodying the spirit of the early *ekklesia*, birthed on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

## ARTICLE III: DOCTRINE

**Section A: Doctrinal Foundation.** The Canaan Baptist Church affirms the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. The Bible is the revealed and trustworthy witness to God's redemptive work in history, serving as the foundation for the Church's teaching, worship, and daily living. Additionally, the *Church Covenant* and *Articles of Faith* offer a clear and consistent framework for doctrine, governance, and community life. These documents help ensure that the Church's beliefs and practices remain rooted in Scripture, guided by the Holy Spirit, and consistent with historic Baptist denominational principles. By adopting these standards within this Constitution, the Church commits to preserving biblical truth, spiritual integrity, and unity for future generations.

**Section B: Church Covenant.** Canaan Baptist Church has adopted a Covenant that affirms its relationship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, made possible through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The Covenant serves as both a spiritual and practical expression of each member's intent to live under the Lordship of Jesus Christ—within the life of the Church and in daily living—and to uphold a commitment to Christian discipleship, fellowship, stewardship, and service. Rooted in Holy Scripture and the historic Baptist tradition, the Covenant outlines the responsibilities of Church members to God, one another, and the wider community. The Church Covenant is periodically reviewed and revised by the Pastor and Deacons and presented to the Church body for adoption. The full text of the Church Covenant is included in Appendix B.

**Section C: Articles of Faith.** Canaan Baptist Church has adopted the Articles of Faith as its official statement of belief, through which members affirm their commitment to live under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in both Church life and daily living. The Articles, rooted in Scripture—including 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Romans 10:9-10, and Matthew 28:19-20—provide a foundation for teaching, discipleship, and fellowship, reflecting the Church's conviction that the Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. These Articles are based upon historic Baptist confessions and outline the essential doctrines of Christian faith, including the authority of Scripture, salvation by grace through faith, believer's baptism, the observance of the Lord's Supper, and the call to righteous Christian living. Canaan affirms the Eighteen Articles of Faith adopted by the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., which were initially drawn from the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1742). These Articles form the doctrinal foundation of this congregation and guide its faith, worship, and witness in accordance with Holy Scripture. The Articles of Faith reflect the enduring legacy of Baptist churches that have served as centers of faith, hope, and justice, particularly within African American communities. The full text of the Articles of Faith is included in Appendix C of this document for reference and study.

#### ARTICLE IV: POLITY

**Section A: Sovereignty.** Canaan Baptist Church is a sovereign and democratic body operating under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. As an independent and self-governing congregation, the Church retains full authority over its discipline, governance, and spiritual direction.

#### Section B: Governance

1. Governance of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose its membership. The authority to govern the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church is given by Christ and rests with the membership of the congregation.
2. This Church's officers, staff, boards, ministries, and committees are subject to the Church's governing guidelines and/or will. They shall be governed in their actions by such decisions as this Church may make, from time to time, in its regularly scheduled or specially called Church meetings. Neither the Pastor, the Deacons, nor any other officer or member has the authority to change the governance of this Church.

#### Section C. Denominational Affiliations

1. In carrying out the wider ministry for which Christ has made His Church responsible, Canaan adheres to membership in and affiliation with the American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware (ABCOPAD), the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), United Baptist Convention

of Delaware, Inc. (UBCD), and the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBCUSA). This Church shall remain a constituent body of its Baptist denominational and associational affiliations. This Church shall not withdraw from any such body except by means of a duly adopted amendment to this Constitution. Any proposed amendment for withdrawal must be introduced upon a petition signed by not less than two-thirds (2/3) of all active members of the Church in good standing. No such amendment or action of withdrawal shall be valid or effective until a minimum period of one hundred (100) years has elapsed from the date of this Constitution, and only after formal consultation by the Pastor, the Deacon Ministry, and the Trustee Ministry of this Church with the Executive Minister (or duly authorized designee) of ABCOPAD.

2. This Church shall cooperate with the larger Christian fellowship through local, regional, national, and international councils of Churches and with other informal agencies of cooperative Christianity.
3. While this Church may affiliate with local, state, regional, or national Christian organizations, such affiliations shall not subject the Church to the authority, governance, or control of any external ecclesiastical body.
4. While this Church may affiliate with other Christian organizations and participate in ecumenical and interfaith services, events, and activities, such affiliations shall not compromise its autonomy or independence.
5. All members shall pledge to recognize, respect, and uphold the Church's independence, grounded in its biblical foundation and Baptist heritage.

#### **Section D: Structure**

1. Through Christ Jesus and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this Church looks to God the Father to send and support a Pastor who will provide pastoral care, lead the Church's ministries and operations, and foster spiritual growth, as in Romans 10:14-17.
2. The Church is likened to a sheepfold, with the Pastor serving as the under-shepherd under the authority of the Great Shepherd of the Sheep (John 10:1-18). The Pastor shall be responsible first to Christ, who has sent him or her to the Church, and second to the congregation, which has issued the call to lead. As the chief executive and spiritual officer, the Pastor shall provide leadership for the Church's vision, program, ministries, and overall spiritual life.
3. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Pastor, ministry leaders, and membership shall establish goals and objectives, as well as strategic plans, for developing and implementing the Church's programs, ensuring spiritual growth, faithful stewardship, and the fulfillment of the Church's mission to glorify God and serve others.
4. The Church, under the leadership of the Pastor, shall establish ministries, boards, and committees necessary to fulfill the Church's mission and goals. Chairpersons or leaders of these ministries, boards, and committees shall be appointed by the Pastor or elected, and all appointments shall be subject to the approval of the Church body. The Pastor shall have the authority to appoint the Executive Pastor, Chairpersons of the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees, the Dean/Director of Christian Education, and the Minister of Music and Sacred Arts.

5. In the administration and implementation of the Church's approved programs, pastoral leadership shall be exercised under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in alignment with the Church's mission. The Pastor shall provide overall spiritual and administrative oversight, ensuring that ministries operate in unity and effectiveness. To support this work, ongoing leadership training and development shall be established and required for ministry leaders, boards, and committees, equipping them to fulfill their responsibilities in collaboration with the Pastor and serve the congregation.

#### **Section E: Protection of Name, Governance, Denominational Affiliation, and Structure**

1. Canaan Baptist Church is firmly committed to preserving its legacy, foundation, and history as a cornerstone of faith in surrounding communities. To safeguard the integrity of the Church, no changes shall be made to its governance, organizational structure, name, or Baptist denominational affiliation. Furthermore, no pastor, member, ministry, or group within the Church shall initiate or campaign for such changes.
2. The Pastor has no authority to unilaterally change the nature of the governing structures, as outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws of Canaan Baptist Church.
3. As a condition of employment and/or membership, the Pastor and each member, respectively, shall not propose, initiate, advocate, or campaign for changes to the Church's governance, organizational structure, name, or denominational affiliation within the first one hundred (100) years of their membership tenure at Canaan Baptist Church. This clause is designed to protect the enduring heritage, theological foundation, and unity of Canaan Baptist Church for future generations.
4. Any violation of the provisions outlined in this Section shall be deemed contrary to the Church's Core Values, Mission, and Vision on which it was established and subject to review by Church officers and ministry leaders and applicable disciplinary actions, up to and including termination of employment and/or membership.

### **ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Section A: General**

1. Membership is open to born-again believers who have been baptized by immersion, particularly those transferring from another denomination, upon evidence of salvation and a public profession of faith within the fellowship of the Church.
2. Adherence to the Church Covenant signifies "a promise to do," reflecting the duties of a Christian Church member toward God and fellow believers. Alongside this Covenant, the 18 Articles of Faith in the Baptist tradition—a collection of statements outlining the fundamental beliefs of Baptists—serve as the foundation for Church membership in the Baptist tradition.
3. The Church membership, as a body, retains the exclusive right to self-government in all phases of the Church's spiritual and temporal life, ensuring accountability to its members and faithfulness to its mission under the leadership of Christ.

**Section B: Candidacy.** Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership in this Church. All such candidates shall be presented to the Church at any regular Church service or to the Pastor or Deacons' Ministry for membership in any of the following ways:

1. By profession of faith and for baptism by immersion.
2. By the promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist Church.
3. By personal statement of Christian experience, satisfactory to the Church, the person comes from another Baptist Church and was baptized by immersion as a believer, trusting in the grace of God alone for salvation. Acceptance of a candidate for membership shall be contingent upon recommendation by the Pastor or designee.
4. By restoration or rededication upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion when membership has lapsed, terminated, lost, or no letter is otherwise obtainable.
5. Under watch-care. A Christian person who joins the fellowship of the Church temporarily or conditionally while maintaining membership at his/her home Church or chooses not to become a full member. A member under watch-care may participate in worship and Church activities and be fully integrated into the Church's life and love, while contributing to its mission and objectives. A watch-care member does not have voting rights or hold offices involving doctrinal or policy-making responsibilities.

### **Section C: Right Hand of Fellowship and Reception of Members**

1. A candidate for membership shall complete the New Members Orientation class, which shall be designed to provide instruction in the doctrines, covenant, and responsibilities of the Christian faith and the ministry of Canaan Baptist Church. Upon completing the necessary steps for membership, including baptism (if applicable) and affirmation of the Church Covenant, a new member shall be formally received into the fellowship of the Church through the Right Hand of Fellowship. This ceremonial act shall signify the member's full acceptance into the Church family and shall confer all rights, privileges, and responsibilities afforded to any other member, including participation in ministry, voting in Church meetings, and contributing to the fulfillment of the Church's mission and vision.
2. During an official Church meeting or worship service, the following procedure shall be observed:
  - a. *Motion for Membership:* A motion shall be made by the Chair/Vice Chair of the Deacons' Ministry, officer, ministry leader, or designee, affirming that a candidate has completed the new membership classes, has been baptized (if applicable), and recommending that he/she be granted all rights and privileges of full membership. A second motion of the same shall follow this motion.
  - b. *Call for the Question:* The Pastor shall call to ask the question to approve the candidate for membership. If no questions are raised by the Church members present, the Pastor shall call for a vote of approval. If a question is raised, the Pastor shall respond accordingly.
  - c. *Vote for Approval:* The Pastor shall ask, "All in favor, signify by saying 'I.'" Upon response from the Church members present, the Pastor shall ask, "Any opposed?"

- i. If no opposition is voiced, then the motion is carried, and the candidate shall be declared a full-fledged member of the Church.
- ii. If there is opposition to any candidate, the reason for such opposition shall be submitted in writing and presented to the Pastor, who shall review the matter and present a recommendation to the Church within thirty (30) days.
- d. *Right Hand of Fellowship:* the Pastor and Officers shall joyfully extend the Right Hand of Fellowship on behalf of the Church, formally welcoming the new members into the community of faith, marking the beginning of their active membership and partnership in the life and mission of the Church in the Baptist tradition.

**Section D: Membership Rights and Privileges.** Upon receipt of the Right Hand of Fellowship, a member shall be granted the following Church membership rights and privileges:

1. Rights:

- a. Vote on Church matters, including leadership appointments, major decisions, and financial matters, as outlined in the Church bylaws.
- b. Participate in Church business meetings and voice concerns or suggestions regarding the Church's direction.
- c. Receive spiritual guidance, discipleship, and biblical teaching that nurtures personal and communal faith.
- d. Be considered for leadership roles after four (4) consecutive years of good-standing membership and faithful and committed service.
- e. Request Church ordinances, including infant and child dedication, baptism, communion, weddings, and funerals, in accordance with Church policies.
- f. Voice concerns or grievances in a manner consistent with Christian principles, as outlined in Matthew 18 and the Church Covenant; the steps for processing a grievance shall be as follows:

*Step 1 – Reconciliation:* The member shall contact the person with whom they have an issue to attempt to resolve the matter.

*Step 2.* If reconciliation is not achieved, the members shall present the issue or concern to the Deacon Board for prayerful consideration and resolution. Should the Deacon Board be unable to secure reconciliation, the matter shall be referred to the Pastor. If the matter involves the Pastor, the Chair of the Deacon Board shall present the concern to the Joint Board of Deacons and Trustees, and if resolution is still not achieved, the matter shall be brought before the congregation in an official Church meeting for final resolution in accordance with biblical principles and the established governance of the Church.

*Step 3.* If Step 2 does not result in reconciliation, a member may bring the issue before the body at a regularly scheduled Church meeting for resolution.

## 2. Privileges:

- a. Access to pastoral care, including counseling and spiritual guidance.
- b. Visitations from Church leaders, including hospital, home, and during bereavement.
- c. Opportunities to participate in various Church ministries, fellowships, and Christian education programs.
- d. Support in times of crisis through the Church's benevolence and care ministries.
- e. Inclusion in the Church community for encouragement, prayer, and mutual edification.
- f. Receive officiation for life events such as marriages, house blessings, homegoing services, and infant and child dedications. NOTE: Infant and child dedication is a public commitment by parents, supported by godparents and the congregation, to raise the child in the Christian faith. It does not impart salvation but signifies consecration and the hope of a future personal profession of faith in Christ.

**Section E: Membership Duties and Responsibilities.** Members are expected to remain in good standing by fulfilling the following:

1. Worship Participation: Attend and participate faithfully in weekly worship services. If a member is absent for an extended period (90 days) without prior notice, his/her name shall be referred to the Deacon Ministry for appropriate follow-up and pastoral care. No member shall be discouraged from attending worship due to financial hardship (Psalm 150; Hebrews 10:25).
2. Christian Conduct: Live according to the teachings and commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ as found in Scripture and be faithful in all areas of Christian living (Hebrews 11:6; Revelation 2:10).
3. Spiritual Growth: Grow and mature spiritually through regular fellowship, attendance, and participation in weekly worship services, involvement in Christian education (Church School and Bible Study), and using spiritual gifts (Acts 2:44-47; 1 John 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
4. Financial Stewardship: Give regularly and generously through accountable tithes and offerings to support the Church and its ministries (Malachi 3:10 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-7).
5. Church Involvement: Support the Church's vision, accept responsibilities, and actively participate in its work and in at least one ministry. Attend Church meetings and participate in decision-making and voting as outlined in this Constitution (1 Chronicles 23:4; 2 Chronicles 15:7).
6. Mutual Support: Support fellow members through prayer, encouragement, fellowship, financial assistance, and other appropriate means. Pray regularly for the Church, its leaders, and the world (2 Chronicles 7:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).
7. Member Notification of Personal Circumstances: Members shall be responsible for notifying the Church Office in the event of sickness, hospitalization, a death in the family, or other extenuating

circumstances that prevent them from attending worship services, participating in ministry activities, or fulfilling other Church responsibilities. Such notification enables the Church to provide appropriate spiritual care, pastoral support, and assistance through its ministries of compassion and congregational care.

**Section F: Membership Categories.** The Membership Ministry shall determine each Church member's category through an annual review of the membership roll, a census conducted every 5 to 10 years, or as otherwise directed by the Pastor. In accordance with this Constitution, membership categories are used for pastoral care, administrative decisions, and the exercise of membership rights and privileges. Members shall be classified into the following categories:

1. Active Member: An individual who regularly attends and participates in weekly worship—either in person or online—as well as in Christian education, ministry events, and other Church activities. Active Members support the Church's mission through the giving of their time, talents, and accountable financial contributions. They shall be entitled to all rights and privileges of membership, including the right to vote and to hold leadership positions. Only members aged thirteen (13) years or older shall be eligible to vote.
2. Legacy Member: A long-standing member who has played a significant role in the Church's history and continues to support the Church through consistent financial giving, despite limited participation due to health issues, relocation, or other personal circumstances. This designation reflects their enduring commitment to the Church's mission and legacy.
3. Non-Member: Inactive and former members, as well as individuals who have not received the Right Hand of Fellowship, shall be classified as non-members. This designation applies to any individual who has not participated in the life of the Church or contributed financially for twelve (12) consecutive months without notification to the Church Office, or whose membership has been formally terminated due to resignation, exclusion, relocation, prolonged absence, or affiliation with another church. Non-members shall not retain any rights or privileges of Church membership and shall not be eligible to exercise such rights or privileges.
4. Friend: An individual who is not an official member but maintains a meaningful connection to the Church—such as a former member, family member of current members, or a supportive community member. Friends may offer periodic financial contributions and occasionally attend special events, celebrations, or worship services. While they do not hold voting rights or leadership roles, their generosity is acknowledged through contribution statements or other forms of recognition, reflecting the Church's appreciation for their support.

**Section G: Termination of Membership.** The Deacon and Membership Ministries shall contact and engage members whose membership status may be in question, seeking to restore and encourage participation before finalizing the termination of membership. Membership in the Church shall be terminated in the following ways:

1. Death: Membership shall automatically terminate upon the death of a member. The Church shall honor the life and legacy of the deceased through expressions of sympathy, pastoral care to the family, and acknowledgment of their faithful service to the ministry of the Church.

2. Voluntary Resignation or Transfer of Membership: Membership shall be terminated upon a member's written request or upon the member's affiliation with another church, including those of a different denomination. A Letter of Transfer may be issued to another Baptist church upon the member's request. Members who intend to resign are encouraged to notify the Church Office and may also request a Letter of Recommendation or Transfer to their new church home.
3. Exclusion by Action of the Church: Membership may be terminated by a majority vote of the Church to withdraw the Right Hand of Fellowship, following appropriate steps of reconciliation and discipline to the extent possible.
4. Relocation: Membership shall be considered terminated if a member relocates outside the reasonable geographic area of the Church and can no longer actively participate in the life of the Church.
5. Prolonged Absence: Membership may be terminated if a member is absent from active participation in worship, ministry, and fellowship for 12 consecutive months without notification to the Church Office.
6. Non-Support: Membership may be terminated if a member consistently neglects financial stewardship commitments to the Church. Consideration shall be given to members facing financial hardship or other extenuating circumstances, in which case, compassion, counsel, and grace shall guide the Church's response.

**Section H: Restoration and Reinstatement of Membership.** Any person whose membership has been formally terminated may request restoration to the fellowship of the Church, which shall require a recommendation from the Deacon Ministry and approval by a majority vote of the Church congregation. A member whose status has become inactive but whose membership has not been formally terminated may request reinstatement upon resuming regular worship attendance, ministry participation, and financial contributions. Both restoration and reinstatement shall be extended in the spirit of Christian grace, reconciliation, and forgiveness, as reflected in 1 John 1:9, reaffirming the unity of believers within the body of Christ.

## ARTICLE VI: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

**Section A: Basis.** Church discipline is based on the teachings of the New Testament and serves as a spiritual guide, not a punishment (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 13). It helps members grow in faith and live according to God's Word (Psalm 34:22; Acts 2:41; Galatians 6:6; Ephesians 4:32; Hebrews 3:13). Church discipline:

1. Teaches rather than punishes.
2. Demonstrates love, compassion, patience, and forgiveness.
3. Helps believers grow spiritually and strengthens Christian values.
4. Encourages obedience to God and the practice of self-control and
5. Supports the Church's mission to save souls and live out the Church Covenant.

**Section B: Purpose.** The purpose of Church discipline is to:

1. Lovingly restore those who have strayed.
2. Protect the worship and mission of the Church.
3. Honor Christ in all things (2 Corinthians 4:5; Matthew 18:18).
4. Prevent sin and encourage holy living (Titus 2:11-16).

## Section C: Types of Offenses

1. Public offense is classified as false doctrine, disregard of authority, contention and strife, immoral conduct, disorderly walk, arrogant conduct, covetousness, and persistence in following secular law (Mathew 22:17, Romans 13:1-4, Genesis 9:6). Secular law does not relate to or have any concerns with religion, such as community or state.
2. Private offenses relate to personal relationships (Matthew 18:15).

## Section D: Necessity

1. Church discipline is necessary because it exists to glorify God by obeying His instructions for maintaining proper governance and order within the body of Christ.
2. The Church holds both the responsibility and authority to address the conduct and discipline of its members and employees in accordance with Scripture.
3. Membership requires adherence to the Church's Constitution and Covenant, grounded in biblical standards (Matthew 18:18-20).
4. All violations of biblical conduct require an appropriate disciplinary response, as "the Lord disciplines those He loves" (Hebrews 12:6-7).
5. If the conduct of a member or employee causes offense or scandal and reconciliation efforts have failed, the Church may suspend that member from the rights and privileges of membership through due process and by vote at a duly called meeting.

## Section E: Types of Discipline

1. Preventive Discipline: Provides guidance for Christian living, grounded in God's Holy Word (Matthew 5:1-12). It encourages strong Christian leadership, the practice of brotherly love (John 13:34), and obedience to God's Word. Preventive discipline supports spiritual growth through self-control, as evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).
2. Corrective Discipline: Helps believers discern truth and distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable Christian conduct (John 8:32; 2 Timothy 2:15). It is not punitive or judgmental but aims to lead members toward repentance and spiritual renewal. Corrective measures are taken in a spirit of love and accountability, with the goal of reconciliation.

## Section F: Termination of Employment

1. If termination of employment becomes necessary, it shall be conducted in a prayerful, fair, and consistent manner, in alignment with the Church's mission, values, and established personnel policies.
2. Termination may occur under the following circumstances:
  - a. By mutual agreement between the employee and the Church
  - b. Due to unsatisfactory performance or acts of misconduct, or
  - c. Due to operational necessity, including but not limited to reorganization, budgetary constraints, or the elimination of a position.

3. A recommendation for termination may be initiated by the employee's direct supervisor and submitted to the Pastor or designee for review.
4. The Pastor or designee shall have the final authority to approve or deny any recommendation for termination.
5. Upon approval, the employee shall receive a written notice of termination from the supervisor, which shall include the reason(s) for termination and the effective date.

## ARTICLE VII: DISSOLUTION

In the event of the liquidation, dissolution, or winding-up of the affairs of the Church, no member, ministry leader, trustee, officer, or employee of the Church or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporate assets. However, the assets shall be distributed exclusively to the American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware, one of the national program boards of the American Baptist Churches USA, the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., or a combination of these organizations.

## ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

**Section A: Review and Amendment of the Constitution and Bylaws.** As the Church continues to grow and minister in an ever-changing society, it may become necessary to amend the Constitution and Bylaws to reflect contemporary practices, evolving systems, congregational needs, and the effectiveness of leadership. Therefore, the Constitution and Bylaws shall be reviewed at least once every five (5) years or more frequently as deemed necessary by Church leadership. Any proposed amendments must be made to preserve the original spirit in which these documents were written and adopted, maintaining the Church's meaningful traditions, historical significance, and denominational affiliations.

**Section B: Proposal of Amendments.** This Constitution, except for Articles IV and VII and subsequent Bylaws, may be amended, altered, revised, or repealed in whole or in part. Any proposed amendment must be submitted in writing to the Pastor, Joint Board Ministry, or Constitution and Bylaws Committee for initial review and recommendation. Proposed changes may be initiated by the Pastor, members of the Joint Board of Deacons and Trustees, Ministry Leaders, a standing committee, or any active member in good standing, with written support from at least ten (10) additional active members in good standing.

**Section C: Notice to Membership.** Notice of any proposed amendment to the Constitution and Bylaws must be given to the congregation at least two (2) Sundays before the meeting at which the amendment will be considered. Such notice shall include the meeting's time, date, and purpose and shall be communicated through regular church announcements and official communication channels. If any change in affiliation is involved, the provisions in Article IV shall apply.

**Section D: Congregational Approval.** The proposed amendment(s) shall be made available to the congregation for review at least 30 days before the scheduled vote during an official Church meeting. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of all members in good standing who are present and voting at a regular or called Church Meeting shall be required to adopt any amendment to the Constitution and Bylaws.

**Section E: Effective Date.** Approved amendments shall take effect immediately unless otherwise specified in the amendment text.

**Section F: Conformity to Scripture and Doctrine.** No amendment that is inconsistent with the Holy Scriptures or the doctrinal beliefs and mission of Canaan Baptist Church shall be adopted (1 Corinthians 14:40).

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## **THE BYLAWS**

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## ARTICLE I: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, LEADERSHIP, AND STAFF

**Section A: Organizational Structure.** The organizational structure of the Church includes, but is not limited to, the Pastor, Executive Pastor, Corporate Officers, Church Officers, Ministers, Ministry Leaders, and Support Staff.

**Section B: Pastor.** The Pastor shall serve as the Church's Chief Executive and Spiritual Officer, responsible for providing visionary leadership, spiritual guidance, and oversight of the Church's ministries, administration, and operations. As the under-shepherd of the congregation, the Pastor shall lead in accordance with the Word of God, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and in alignment with the Church's mission, vision, and covenant.

1. Qualifications: The Pastor must be a spiritually mature, theologically sound, and academically prepared servant-leader who meets the biblical qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, including being trustworthy, faithful in marriage, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome or greedy, and one who manages their household well. The Pastor must also be licensed and ordained as a Baptist minister and shall hold at minimum a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) from an accredited seminary or have completed the Pastor's Advanced Training Program (PATP) through the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. An earned Doctor of Ministry degree or equivalent from an accredited seminary is strongly preferred.
2. Election: The Church body shall choose and call a Pastor whenever a pastoral vacancy occurs, whether planned or unplanned. In such instances, the Church shall establish a Pastoral Search Committee in accordance with the procedures outlined in Article II, Section I. Upon the recommendation of the Pastoral Search Committee, the Pastor shall be elected by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members in good standing who are present and eligible to vote at a duly called Church meeting. (Luke 2:42–48.)
3. Employment: Upon election, the Pastor shall be deemed a dual-status employee of Canaan Baptist Church for tax purposes and shall enter into a formal agreement with the Church outlining the terms and conditions of employment. As a condition of employment, the Pastor shall not propose, initiate, or advocate for any changes to the Church's governance structure, organizational framework, name, or denominational affiliation during the first one hundred (100) years of their tenure at Canaan Baptist Church.
4. The Pastor shall not be designated as a bonded member of the Church.
5. Essential Functions: The Pastor shall serve as the Chief Executive and Spiritual Officer of the Church, providing overall leadership for the Church's vision, mission, programs, ministries, operations, and spiritual growth. As the primary preacher and teacher of the Gospel, the Pastor is responsible for administering the ordinances, leading public worship, offering pastoral care through visitation, and modeling Christ-like living. The Pastor shall oversee all Church functions and ensure compliance with Church policies, Constitution, and Bylaws. As an ex officio member of all Boards, Ministries, Committees, and Auxiliary Organizations—without voting power—the Pastor shall preside over Church business meetings, except when the meeting concerns the Pastor, in which case the Chair of the Deacon Board shall preside.

6. Evaluation and Total Compensation: The Pastor's total compensation shall be determined by the Church, as recommended by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Trustee and Deacon Ministries, and based on a comprehensive evaluation of the Church's spiritual growth, membership size, physical development, and overall financial growth and sustainability. Consideration shall also be given to the Pastor's years of service, leadership effectiveness, and faithfulness in preaching, teaching, pastoral care, administration, outreach, and community engagement. Compensation and benefits shall be consistent with fair market standards for comparable pastoral roles and shall be reviewed annually. Any proposed adjustments shall be approved by a majority vote of members in good standing who are present and eligible to vote at the Annual Church Meeting, and all decisions shall comply with applicable laws and uphold principles of sound financial stewardship.
7. Removal: The Pastor may be removed from office only by voluntary resignation, death, or termination of employment. When addressing concerns that may lead to termination, the Church shall follow a process grounded in Christian principles, fairness, and prayerful discernment. Initially, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Deacon Board shall meet with the Pastor to seek a resolution. If the matter remains unresolved, a second meeting will be held with the Deacons' Ministry Chair and Vice Chair, as well as the Trustees' Ministry Chair and Vice Chair. Should reconciliation efforts fail, the issue shall be brought before the Joint Board Ministry of Deacons and Trustees. If the concerns are still unresolved, the matter shall be presented to the Church body at a regular or specially called business meeting. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of members in good standing present at the meeting shall be required for removal. The Pastor shall be notified in writing of the Church's decision if the motion to terminate is carried. In the event of substantiated misconduct or perversion of doctrine, two-thirds (2/3) of the Deacon Ministry may vote to terminate the Pastor's employment without prior notice. Such action shall be the responsibility of the Deacon Ministry (Luke 6:13).

**Section C: Church Leadership.** In accordance with the Church's governing structure, the Pastor is authorized to organize and appoint individuals to leadership and support roles to advance the Church's Core Values, Mission, Vision, strategic goals, and operational needs. Leaders and staff may be appointed or elected under Article V, as outlined in the Bylaws, and serve at the pleasure of the Pastor.

1. Minimum Qualifications: Each candidate for nomination, appointment, employment, or election, or those currently serving as a Corporate or Church Officer, Minister, Ministry Leader, or Staff member, as outlined in Sections D and E in this Article, must meet the following minimum qualifications:
  - a. *Born-Again Believer in Jesus Christ:* Confess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, having experienced spiritual regeneration and committed themselves to the discipleship and lordship of Christ (John 3:3).
  - b. *Demonstrated Commitment to Ministry:* Exhibit a spirit of servanthood, humility, and diligence in their current ministry involvement, showing themselves faithful in small and significant responsibilities (Romans 12:11 and Colossians 3:23).
  - c. *Financially Supportive:* Faithfully practice biblical stewardship by bringing the tithe and offerings to the Lord through the Church as a sign of obedience, trust, and support for the Church's ministry (Malachi 3:10 and 2 Corinthians 9:7).

- d. *Member in Good Standing for a Minimum of Four (4) Consecutive Years:* Maintain consistent, active membership within the Church for at least four (4) consecutive years, demonstrating faithfulness in worship, giving, spiritual growth and development, and community life (1 Corinthians 4).
- e. *Agreement with the Church's Core Values, Mission, Vision, and Doctrinal beliefs:* Affirm their alignment with the mission, vision, core values, doctrinal beliefs, and strategic direction of the Church and commit to upholding and advancing these principles through faithful and consistent service (Amos 3:3).
- f. *Regular Attendance and Participation in Worship and Christian Education:* Consistently attend and engage in weekly worship and participate in Christian education opportunities such as Church School, Bible study, and leadership training and development (Hebrews 10:25 and 2 Timothy 2:15).
2. Expectations: Ministers, Officers, Ministry Leaders, and Staff are expected to:
- a. Follow and support the visionary leadership of the Pastor.
  - b. Serve in ministry areas that reflect their spiritual gifts, training, and experience; and develop and maintain a succession plan to support the continuity and sustainability of ministry work.
  - c. Faithfully serve in assigned ministries in alignment with the Church's Core Values, Mission, and Vision, and engage in leadership development and mentoring within their ministry area.
  - d. Support the Church financially as a tither and attend and participate in worship services, Church-wide activities, special events, and annual Church and quarterly leadership meetings.
  - e. Collaborate with other ministry leaders to host, co-sponsor, and support Church programs and outreach efforts.
  - f. Complete the annual ministry budget process in coordination with the Trustee Ministry and adhere to administrative procedures, including planning, reporting, spending, purchasing, and communication protocols, to ensure compliance with relevant regulations.
3. Conduct and Ethical Expectations: In addition to the expectations in the above section, all Officers, Ministers, Ministry Leaders, and Staff—whether paid, volunteer, or contractual—shall:
- a. Display conduct at all times in a manner that reflects the Christian values, mission, and witness of Canaan Baptist Church.
  - b. Demonstrate respect, integrity, accountability, and Christian character as a representative of Canaan Baptist Church in all settings – internal and external.
  - c. Maintain appropriate conduct in all forms of communication, including in-person interactions, written correspondence, and digital and social media platforms.

- d. Uphold high ethical standards and avoid any behavior or speech that is offensive, divisive, or inconsistent with the teachings of Scripture.
  - e. Promote unity, spiritual growth, and a positive Christian witness on behalf of the Church.
  - f. Understand that their actions reflect on the Church and that their conduct is subject to review, possible corrective action, or removal.
  - g. Acknowledge and sign the Church's Ethics Statement and Code of Conduct as a condition of serving in any leadership capacity within Canaan Baptist Church.
4. **Removal:** Officers, Ministers, Ministry Leaders, and Staff Members may be removed for conduct unbecoming, failure to fulfill assigned duties, or any action deemed inconsistent with the Church's mission, vision, and values. If at any time an Officer, Minister, Ministry Leader, or Staff Member does not meet the qualifications and expectations outlined above, the Pastor or designee may engage in a prayerful, confidential conversation to offer guidance and encouragement prior to removal. These discussions are intended to support the individual's spiritual growth, promote accountability, and uphold the health and unity of the ministry and the Church family.

**Section D: Corporate Officers.** The following are Corporate Officers of the Church, who are vested with fiduciary and administrative authority to act on behalf of the Church in matters of legal, financial, and operational significance, subject to the Church's Constitution, Bylaws, and all applicable federal and state laws:

1. **Trustee:** Trustees shall operate under the leadership of the Pastor in the Trustee Board/Ministry and are responsible for ensuring that all financial and organizational initiatives align with the Word of God, the will of Christ, and the unified vision and goals of the Church. As each Church ministry serves distinct purposes that require financial support, Trustees shall provide consistent direction, oversight, and coordination to align ministry efforts with Church-wide priorities and budgetary objectives.
  - a. **Qualifications:** A trustee must be a trustworthy, committed, active, and tithing member of the Church in good standing, demonstrating integrity, confidentiality, and ethical financial practices. Each Trustee shall possess experience in financial management, accounting, budgeting, and related fields, as well as strong analytical, organizational, issue-resolution, and critical-thinking skills. Familiarity with church governance, financial software, and nonprofit financial regulations is preferred, as is the ability to communicate and collaborate effectively with Church leadership and congregants. All Trustees must undergo a comprehensive background check, which includes financial and criminal history screenings, to ensure trustworthiness and alignment with the Church's financial stewardship policies.
  - b. **Appointment or Election:** Trustees shall be appointed by the Pastor and must be active and tithing Church members in good standing, with at least four (4) consecutive years of active membership, along with relevant background and/or experience in a related field. Each Trustee shall serve a term of three (3) years, commencing upon appointment or election and continuing until a successor is duly appointed, unless removed earlier in accordance with Article I, Section C-4. Trustees may be reappointed by the Pastor, as deemed necessary, based on the ongoing needs of the Church and the Trustee's continued service in good standing. Trustees may be elected to fill a

vacancy at any official Church meeting if notice of intent to fill such a vacancy has been given at least two (2) Sundays before the meeting.

- c. *Essential Functions:* Each member of the Trustee Ministry serves as a steward of the Church's financial resources, ensuring responsible management, transparency, and integrity in all financial matters. This role includes overseeing budgets, managing expenses and procurement processes, maintaining financial records, ensuring compliance with legal and tax requirements, and safeguarding Church assets. The Trustee Ministry Chair/Vice Chair shall oversee the Trustees and work closely with Church leadership to support financial planning, promote accountability, and uphold the Church's mission through faithful stewardship of tithes, offerings, and other resources.
  - i. *Annual Budgetary Process:* The goals and responsibilities of the Trustee Ministry are reflected in the annual budgetary process. Each Ministry Leader shall submit an annual budget request to the Trustee Ministry, along with a written report outlining the ministry's work, outcomes, and recommendations for the upcoming year. After reviewing all submissions, the Trustee Ministry shall prepare and present the congregation's proposed Church budget for approval at a Church meeting. Any subsequent changes to the approved budget must be presented to the Church for a vote at a Church meeting. This process ensures fiscal responsibility, transparency, and alignment with the Church's mission.
  - ii. *Finance Committee and Internal Review:* To ensure continued accountability and sound stewardship between external audits, the Church shall establish a Finance Committee responsible for conducting internal financial reviews when an external audit is not performed. This Committee shall provide additional financial oversight to maintain integrity, transparency, and trust in Church operations. The Finance Committee shall comprise one-third (1/3) members from the Trustee Board and two-thirds (2/3) members from the congregation.
  - iii. *Property and Facilities Management:* The property, buildings, grounds, and facilities of the church shall be maintained as an expression of faithful stewardship over God's house. The Trustee Ministry, in coordination with the Pastor or designee, shall oversee the maintenance, safety, security, and use of all Church facilities.
- 2. *Treasurer:* The Treasurer ensures proper handling of funds with care, accuracy, and confidentiality, maintains accurate records, complies with audit procedures, and adheres to all church financial policies. Before appointment or election, the Church Treasurer shall undergo a background check, including criminal and credit history verification, to ensure financial integrity and protect the Church's assets. All screenings shall comply with applicable laws and require the individual's written consent.
  - a. *Qualifications:* The Treasurer shall be trustworthy, have a background in fiscal management, and possess relevant skills, knowledge, and significant experience in finance management and accounting. The individual appointed or elected must demonstrate a working knowledge of key financial processes, including dual control, the secure handling of funds, recordkeeping, and financial reporting.
  - b. *Appointment or Election:* The Church Treasurer shall be appointed by the Pastor and must be a Church member in good standing, with at least four (4) consecutive years of active membership, along with relevant background and/or experience in finance, accounting, or a related field. The Treasurer shall serve a term of three (3) years, commencing upon appointment or election and

continuing until a successor is duly appointed unless earlier removed in accordance with Article I, Section C-4. The Treasurer may be reappointed by the Pastor, as deemed necessary, based on the ongoing needs of the Church and the Treasurer's continued service in good standing. Vacancies in the office of Treasurer may be filled by election at any official Church meeting, if notice of intent to fill such vacancy has been given at least two (2) Sundays before the meeting.

- c. *Essential Functions:* The Treasurer shall manage all Church funds and financial records, including the safe and night deposit boxes, and ensure that all deposits and disbursements are made in the name of *Canaan Baptist Church*. The Treasurer shall collaborate with the Trustee Board/Ministry Chair/Vice Chair, and members to maintain accurate records of all Church property, including deeds, securities, and other financial documents. The Treasurer shall ensure that all funds designated for specific purposes are kept in separate accounts and used solely for their intended purposes. The Treasurer shall initiate an independent external audit at least once every two (2) years. The Treasurer shall provide quarterly financial reports to the Church and present a detailed, audited report reflecting the Church's financial condition at the annual Church meeting. Additional financial reports shall be prepared and made available, as necessary. No funds shall be disbursed for general operations or debt reduction without prior approval from the Pastor, Trustee Ministry, or a vote of the Church body.

**Section E: Church Officers.** Church Officers are spiritually appointed or elected individuals who provide leadership, support ministry, and help govern the life of the Church. They are also responsible for spiritual guidance, ministry coordination, and good stewardship of Church resources.

1. Deacon Board/Ministry: The Deacon Ministry supports the congregation by assisting the Pastor in fulfilling the Church's mission, overseeing the Membership and Benevolence Ministries, and serving as spiritual leaders of the Church.
  - a. *Qualifications:* A Deacon must be known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, worthy of respect, sincere, not given to excessive drinking, and not pursuing dishonest gain. The Deacon shall assist the Pastor in accomplishing the Church's mission, hold firmly to the profound truths of the faith with a clear conscience, be tested and proven, and, if married, be the husband of one wife or the wife of one husband, reflecting fidelity and integrity in personal life. These qualifications are rooted in Scripture and essential for those who serve in the sacred office of Deacon (Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12).
  - b. *Selection Process:* Any member recommended to the Deacon Ministry must meet the biblical qualifications outlined above and in 1 Timothy 3:8-12 and complete a formal selection process based on Acts 6:1-4. The Pastor and current Deacons shall collectively observe the membership, make recommendations, and, through congregational vote, approve or not approve candidates. A candidate must be recommended jointly by the Pastor and the Deacon Ministry and receive final approval from the Church. The election of Deacons shall occur at the Church's annual meeting, as determined by the Pastor. Deacons—adult men and women—shall serve for terms determined by the Church and may not be approved until they have completed the Officers' Trainee Class as prescribed. Upon successful completion of training and in proportion to the congregation's size, the Pastor shall ordain the newly elected Deacons.
  - c. *Essential Functions:* Deacons help maintain order in worship services, lead prayers and Scripture readings, assist with the invitation to discipleship, welcome new members, and participate in

communion, baptism, and the right hand of fellowship. Deacons care for the sick, shut-in, and needy families through visits, calls, and referrals to the Benevolence Ministry. They take an active role in the life of all ministries. The Chairperson leads Deacon meetings, with the Vice-Chairperson serving in his/her absence. Deacons identify new members for the Membership Committee and, along with the Pastor, present candidates to the Church.

- d. *Removal:* A Deacon may be removed from service for failure to uphold a Christian lifestyle or upon the substantiation of a formal charge filed by a member of the Church. Such charges shall be reviewed through a due process or Church discipline procedure as outlined in Article VI, conducted by the Pastor or designee. Due process shall include timely notice of the charge and an opportunity for the Deacon to be heard before any final decision is made.
2. Financial Secretary: The Financial Secretary maintains the Church's financial records and ensures accurate reporting, including but not limited to issuing payments with proper authorization, maintaining accurate bank account records, and recording all receipts and disbursements.
    - a. *Qualifications:* The Financial Secretary shall be trustworthy and possess general accounting skills and/or experience in fiscal management. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Trustee Ministry may serve as the Financial Secretary/Assistant Finance Secretary, respectively.
    - b. *Appointment or Election:* The Financial Secretary shall be appointed by the Pastor and must be a Church member in good standing, with at least four (4) consecutive years of active membership, along with relevant background and/or experience in finance, recordkeeping, or a related field. The Financial Secretary shall serve a term of three (3) years, commencing upon appointment or election and continuing until a successor is duly appointed unless earlier removed in accordance with Article I, Section C-4. The Financial Secretary may be reappointed by the Pastor, as deemed necessary, based on the ongoing needs of the Church and their continued service in good standing. The vacancy in this position may be filled by election at any official Church meeting, provided that the notice of intent to fill such vacancy has been given at least two (2) Sundays before the meeting.
    - c. *Essential Functions:* The Financial Secretary reviews all approved invoices and requisitions, prepares monthly activity reports for the Pastor and Trustees, and provides quarterly and annual financial reports for Church meetings. They also track Church investments and memorial gifts, attend all Trustee Board meetings, and utilize technology systems for financial data management. The Financial Secretary deposits weekly collections in the Church's designated bank and provides deposit statements to the Treasurer. In the absence of the Financial Secretary, the Assistant Financial Secretary or designee shall assume these duties.
  3. Church Clerk/Assistant Church Clerk: The Church Clerk shall maintain official and accurate records of all Church business:
    - a. *Qualifications:* The Church Clerk shall possess strong written and verbal communication skills and the ability to maintain official Church records accurately. Familiarity with basic administrative tools, including word processing and electronic recordkeeping systems, is preferred. The Clerk must be detail-oriented, trustworthy, maintain confidentiality, and work respectfully and collaboratively with the Pastor, Church officers, and members.

- b. *Election or Appointment:* The Church Clerk shall be appointed by the Pastor and must be a Church member in good standing, with at least four (4) consecutive years of active membership, along with relevant background and/or experience in administration, recordkeeping, or a related field. The Church Clerk shall serve a term of three (3) years, commencing upon appointment or election and continuing until a successor is duly appointed, unless removed earlier in accordance with Article I, Section C-4. The Church Clerk may be reappointed by the Pastor, as deemed necessary, based on the ongoing needs of the Church and the Clerk's continued service in good standing. Vacancies in the office of Church Clerk may be filled by election at any official Church meeting, if notice of intent to fill such vacancy has been given at least two (2) Sundays before the meeting.
- c. *Essential Functions:* The Church Clerk shall maintain official Church records, including minutes of regular and special meetings, baptisms, infant and child dedications, marriage ceremonies, funerals, and other official Church events; issue letters of recommendation or dismissal approved by the Church; and manage official Church correspondence. The Clerk shall give notice of meetings as required by the Constitution, assist with denominational reports, and serve as secretary to the Ministry Leadership Team. This officer shall keep a record of the proceedings of official meetings, which shall be read and approved at subsequent meetings. Upon the election of a new Clerk, all records and documents shall be transferred promptly. In the Church Clerk's absence, the Assistant Church Clerk, Office Manager, or designee by the Pastor may fulfill these duties.
4. Membership Secretary/Assistant Membership Secretary: The Membership Secretary/Assistant Membership Secretary maintains accurate membership records, including admissions, dismissions, baptisms, and updates in coordination with the Church Clerk and Membership Ministry.
- a. *Qualifications:* The Membership Secretary shall be a spiritually mature and trustworthy member of the Church, committed to maintaining confidentiality and demonstrating integrity in all responsibilities. The individual must be detail-oriented, organized, and capable of accurate data entry, recordkeeping, and generating reports; proficient in church management systems and document processing software; and possess the ability to communicate effectively and work collaboratively with Church leadership and members to support the care, growth, and overall life of the congregation.
- b. *Appointment or Election:* The Membership Secretary shall be appointed by the Pastor and must be a Church member in good standing, with at least four (4) consecutive years of active membership, along with relevant background and/or experience in data management, administration, or a related field. The Membership Secretary shall serve a term of three (3) years, commencing upon appointment or election and continuing until a successor is duly appointed unless earlier removed in accordance with Article I, Section C-4. The Membership Secretary may be reappointed by the Pastor, as deemed necessary, based on the ongoing needs of the Church and the Secretary's continued service in good standing. Vacancies in the office of the Membership Secretary may be filled by election at any official Church meeting, if notice of intent to fill such vacancy has been given at least two (2) Sundays before the meeting. In the absence of the Membership Secretary, the Assistant Membership Secretary or a pastoral appointee may serve in this role on an interim or ongoing basis, as determined by the Pastor.

## ARTICLE II: FOUNDATIONAL MINISTRIES AND STANDING COMMITTEES

**Section A: Joint Board Ministry.** The Joint Board Ministry shall comprise members from the Deacon Ministry and the Trustee Ministry. The Joint Board shall serve as a collaborative body that partners with the Pastor to support the administration and implementation of Church programs, services, and activities in alignment with the Church's mission and vision. While the Joint Board shall not possess independent policy-making authority, it shall participate in reviewing, interpreting, and implementing the Church's policies and practices. The Joint Board shall also be responsible for previewing and discussing key matters of Church business before their presentation to the congregation for a vote, thereby ensuring thoughtful preparation, unity, and transparency in Church governance. In all its duties, the Joint Board shall work to uphold and enforce the Constitution and Bylaws of the Church.

**Section B: Membership Ministry.** The Membership Ministry shall maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all Church members, including names, addresses, and membership status and categories. The Membership Ministry shall keep an accurate record of all tithes and offerings contributed by members and distribute pledge cards and offering envelopes accordingly. The Membership Ministry shall prepare and send annual contribution statements to members and submit a year-end giving report to the Finance Committee. The Membership Ministry shall also ensure that all financial records related to member giving are managed with confidentiality and integrity.

**Section C: Benevolence Ministry.** The Benevolence Ministry shall express Christian compassion by assisting individuals and families who are experiencing a crisis or an emergency financial need. Rooted in the principles of love, mercy, and service, this ministry shall operate confidentially, prayerfully, and with discretion under the oversight of the Deacon Ministry and in coordination with the Pastor. All support provided shall be rendered in alignment with the mission of Canaan Baptist Church and guided by established policies and available resources. The Benevolence Ministry shall extend care and hope in a manner that upholds the dignity of each individual and reflects the Church's commitment to holistic ministry.

**Section D: Christian Education.** The Christian Education Ministry shall equip believers for spiritual growth, biblical understanding, and faithful discipleship toward Christlikeness. Under the direction of the Dean or Director of Christian Education, this ministry shall provide structured Bible-based teaching for all age groups—from preschool through adulthood. Each class, course, or program shall be designed to deepen the knowledge of Scripture and promote the practical application of biblical principles in daily life. The Christian Education Ministry shall serve as a foundational component of the Church's mission to make disciples, strengthen faith, and nurture spiritual maturity within the body of Christ.

**Section E: Music and Sacred Arts Ministry.** The Music and Sacred Arts Ministry shall lead the congregation in worship through music, dance, drama, and other artistic expressions that glorify God and strengthen the spiritual life of the Church. Under the direction of the Minister of Music and Sacred Arts, this ministry shall support all worship services and special events through biblically sound, culturally relevant, and Spirit-led presentations. Through choirs, musicians, and sacred arts groups, the ministry shall inspire praise, deepen faith, and promote unity within the body of Christ. The Minister of Music shall ensure adequate audio, visual, and production coverage for all worship services, funerals, weddings, and special programs, and that all musical instruments and audio equipment are in proper working order. The Minister of Music and Sacred Arts shall collaborate with worship leaders and ministry partners to ensure excellence, harmony, and spiritual integrity in every aspect of sacred worship.

**Section F: Auxiliary Ministries.** The following auxiliary ministries are established to fulfill the Church's mission and vision. A description of each is in Appendix D:

Canaan Business Network	Greeters	Philippians
Canaan for Life – Cancer	Grief Share	Regena Manley Missionary
Charles Kirksey Prison Outreach	Health	Security
Community Engagement	Higher Ground Scholarship	Singles
Communications and Marketing	Historian	Sisters of Canaan Women
Culinary	International Cultural	Social Justice
Earl Gardner Transportation	Marriage	Overcomers
Emma Bordley Hospitality	Men	Thomas Risher Veterans
Ernest and Yolanda Purnell Seniors	Mothers	Ushers
Evangelism	Next G Youth and Young Adults	

**Section G: Constitution and Bylaws Committee.** The Constitution and Bylaws Committee is a standing committee of the Church, established to ensure that the Church's governing documents remain biblically sound, legally compliant, and aligned with the Church's mission, vision, and operational needs. The Committee shall periodically review the Constitution and Bylaws and recommend amendments for adoption, as necessary.

1. **Membership:** The Constitution and Bylaws Committee shall consist of at least five (5) active members in good standing, including one (1) Deacon, one (1) Trustee, and one (1) member from the congregation at large or by Pastoral appointment. The Pastor or a pastoral designee shall serve as a non-voting ex officio member. Members of the Committee may elect to seek outside legal or professional assistance, with the approval of the Pastor or Church Leadership, to ensure consistency with biblical principles and denominational standards, as well as compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws governing nonprofit religious organizations.
2. **Appointment and Term:** Members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Pastor and approved by a majority vote of members present and in good standing at a duly called Church business meeting. Members shall serve a term of three (3) years and may be reappointed.
3. **Essential Functions:** Serve as the official body overseeing and reviewing the Church's Constitution and Bylaws; conduct a comprehensive review of the Constitution and Bylaws at least every three (3) years or as needed; receive and consider written recommendations for amendments from Church members; propose updates that reflect the Church's current spiritual, legal, operational, and organizational needs; and assist Church leadership in interpreting the Constitution and Bylaws when necessary.
4. **Meetings:** The Committee shall meet as needed and maintain accurate records of all meetings and recommendations. A majority of members must be present to constitute a quorum for conducting business.
5. **Proposed Amendments:** The Committee shall present proposed amendments to the Pastor, Joint Board, Ministry Leaders, and the congregation for preliminary review. All proposed amendments must follow the process for adoption and implementation as outlined in Article VIII of this Constitution.

**Section H: Nominating Committee.** The Nominating Committee aims to ensure a fair, prayerful, and orderly process for identifying, evaluating, and presenting qualified candidates for elected and appointed leadership positions within the Church. The Committee shall uphold the spiritual and organizational integrity of the Church by ensuring that all nominees meet the biblical, ethical, and functional qualifications outlined in the Church's Constitution and Bylaws. When necessary, the Pastor shall convene the Nominating Committee. In the event of a pastoral search, the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Deacon and Trustee Ministries shall convene the Nominating Committee to initiate the process in accordance with Article II, Section I: Pastoral Search Committee of the Bylaws.

1. Qualifications: Members of the Nominating Committee shall be spiritually mature, active members of the Church in good standing. Members must demonstrate integrity, sound judgment, and the ability to maintain confidentiality; and be familiar with the Church's mission, leadership roles, and governing documents.
2. Appointment or Selection: The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least seven (7) members. Committee members shall be appointed by the Pastor or nominated during a duly called Church meeting and elected by a majority vote of members present and in good standing. The Committee shall serve a term of two (2) years or as otherwise directed by the Pastor. Members who are unable to serve or have been removed may be replaced by a pastoral appointment or selection during a regular or duly called Church meeting. Members of the Nominating Committee shall not be eligible for nomination for any Church office during their term of service.
3. Essential Functions: Through collaboration with Church leadership and engagement with the congregation, the Nominating Committee supports the ongoing health, effectiveness, and growth of Church governance and ministry leadership. The Nominating Committee shall solicit nominations from members in good standing for unoccupied elected and appointed leadership positions. The Committee shall review the qualifications of all nominees to ensure they meet the spiritual, character, and leadership standards outlined in the Church Constitution and Bylaws. The Committee shall verify each nominee's eligibility and willingness to serve and present a slate of qualified candidates to the Church for a vote or affirmation. When deemed necessary by the Joint Board Ministry, the Committee shall oversee the election process. In the case of a pastoral or officer election, the Committee shall work in consultation with the Pastor or designated Church leadership to ensure a fair, prayerful, and timely process. The Committee shall also work collaboratively with Church leadership to address ongoing leadership needs and transitions.

**Section I: Pastoral Search Committee.** In the event of a pastoral vacancy—planned or unplanned—a Pastoral Search Committee consisting of nine (9) members shall be formed. No more than four (4) members shall be selected from among the Joint Boards of the Church that shall compose this Committee. When possible, the Committee should include at least two (2) Deacons, two (2) Trustees, one (1) minister, and two (2) members of the congregation, all with at least four consecutive years of membership in good standing. The Search Committee shall operate under the authority and direction of the Church membership and shall remain accountable to the Church throughout the search process.

1. Appointment and Disqualification: The Church shall appoint members of the Committee upon recommendation of the Pastor, Leadership Team, or as otherwise provided in the Church's governance procedures. All members must be in good standing and actively involved in the ministry, spiritually mature, and committed to the unity and mission of the Church. Any member who becomes inactive, demonstrates conduct inconsistent with biblical standards, or breaches confidentiality may be disqualified by a majority vote of the Committee, subject to final approval by the Church.

2. Alternates and Tie Votes: The Church may appoint up to two (2) alternate members to the Search Committee to serve in the event a seated member resigns or is disqualified. Alternates must meet the same qualifications as full members and be prepared to participate when needed. In the event of a tie vote within the Committee regarding the final candidate selection, the matter shall be referred to the Church body for further discussion and resolution by a majority vote at a duly called Church meeting.
3. Essential Functions: The Pastoral Search Committee shall utilize all reliable and appropriate resources, including recruitment strategies, background checks, and investigative processes, to identify and evaluate qualified candidates for the position. The Committee shall secure the names of at least three (3) prospective pastors and obtain complete information on their qualifications and backgrounds.
  - a. While all candidates shall be reviewed, the Committee shall visit and interview at least three (3) candidates in their current ministry settings. These visits may occur with or without notice. After completing these visits, the Committee shall assess and narrow the pool to the most qualified candidate(s), who shall then be invited to meet with the membership, teach a Bible study class, and preach at Canaan Baptist Church. Written notice of the preaching dates shall be distributed to the membership on the two (2) Sundays immediately preceding the candidate's visit.
  - b. Once all candidates have been heard, the Committee shall arrange an official Election Meeting. Having been properly notified, the Church membership shall vote in accordance with the Constitution. The Committee shall operate under biblical principles, seek the will of God, honor the charge given by the Church body, and keep the membership informed throughout the process.

### **ARTICLE III: PULPIT COVERAGE AND MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALING**

**Section A: Pulpit Coverage.** The Pastor shall be responsible for developing pulpit leadership and providing support. When the Pastor is absent, he/she shall inform the Chairperson of the Deacon and Trustee Boards and provide a minister in his/her absence.

#### **Section B: Associate Ministers**

1. Qualifications: An Associate Minister shall be licensed and/or ordained in the Baptist tradition and shall be a member in good standing of Canaan Baptist Church to serve in a ministerial capacity.
2. Essential Functions: Under the direction of the Pastor, Associate Ministers shall assist in proclaiming the Gospel, teaching the Word, providing pastoral care, leading worship, conducting funeral services, and administering the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They shall actively support and help advance the Church's vision, mission, and doctrinal beliefs, and participate in worship services, ministry programs, and leadership initiatives led by the Holy Spirit. Assignments may include leading Bible Study, preaching during worship or special services, officiating ceremonies (as delegated), and providing spiritual care to members. At the Pastor's discretion, Associate Ministers may also serve as liaisons to specific ministries or functions of the Church.
3. Spiritual Growth: Associate Ministers shall engage in ongoing theological or seminary education, spiritual growth and development, and ministerial training. Their service shall reflect their divine calling, spiritual gifts, and the Church's evolving needs, as stated in Ephesians 4:11-12.

4. Licensure: Any member considered a minister must first be presented to and approved by the Church at a regularly scheduled Church meeting. Upon the careful and prayerful consent and recommendation of the Pastor, any member who meets scriptural qualifications and, by zeal and aptitude, gives evidence that God has called him or her to preach the Gospel shall be granted the privilege to preach before the Church. Upon completion of the trial/initial sermon, the majority of the members present during an official Church meeting or worship service must agree that the candidate shall be granted a ministerial license to practice the gift of preaching.
- a. A ministerial license shall be valid for one (1) year and subject to review by the Pastor for extension, which may be granted indefinitely at the Pastor's discretion. During the licensure period, the licensed minister shall actively pursue and make satisfactory progress toward completing an approved program of study at an accredited seminary or Bible college in preparation for the ministry.
  - b. The Pastor reserves the right to revoke the ministerial license at any time if the licensed minister fails to demonstrate satisfactory progress in study, neglects ministerial responsibilities, or engages in conduct unbecoming of the ministry. In the event of revocation, the licensed minister may submit a written appeal to the Pastor within thirty (30) days for reconsideration, after which the Pastor, in consultation with the Board of Deacons, shall render a final decision.
  - c. Any minister licensed by the Pastor and confirmed by the Church who subsequently resigns his or her membership—voluntarily or involuntarily—shall have their license rendered invalid.
5. Ordination: Upon careful and prayerful consent and recommendation of the Pastor, and after fulfilling the above ministerial requirements, including completing an approved program of study, a minister who has maintained good standing status may apply for ordination to the Church through the Pastor and the Deacons Ministry. The application must include the title and the position or job placement that requires ordination.
- a. Applicants may be ordained for the following purposes: Pastor, Assistant or Executive Pastor, Chaplain, Counselor, or other ministerial positions that require ministerial ordination.
  - b. Associate Churches shall be represented on the Ordination Council, which will examine the candidate and recommend to the Church whether it should proceed with the candidate's ordination.
  - c. A majority vote of the Church during an official Church meeting is required for ordination. The Pastor or designee of the Church will chair the Ordination Council and plan and implement the ordination service.
6. Ministerial Credentials upon Membership: Any minister seeking to unite with Canaan Baptist Church shall, upon joining, present appropriate ministerial credentials for review and retention in official Church files. These credentials shall include, but are not limited to, the ministerial license, certificate of ordination, academic transcript from an accredited theological education institution (if applicable), and a letter of recommendation or commendation from the minister's previous Pastor or ecclesiastical authority. These documents shall be submitted to the Pastor or designee for review before considering ministerial engagement in the Church.

## ARTICLE IV: ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT STAFF

**Section A: Office Management.** The administrative staff, paid or volunteer, shall provide professional and efficient administrative support for the Church's daily operations, including financial management, membership relations, special events, meetings, ministries, and the overall mission. Under the supervision of the Pastor and/or designee, the staff shall consist of members in good standing, approved by the Church, whose responsibilities include managing communications, scheduling facility use, maintaining accurate records and official documents, overseeing the master calendar, and supporting ministry leaders, officers, and committees. They shall safeguard confidentiality, securely manage sensitive information, and ensure the proper operation of office equipment, software, and administrative systems. Regular office hours, established by the Pastor or designee in accordance with the Church's needs, shall be maintained and communicated to the congregation through official channels.

**Section B: Technical Support.** Technical Support Staff—paid or volunteer—shall support the audiovisual, digital, and technology needs of the Church to help deliver worship services, ministry events, communications, and special programs. Staff shall serve under the supervision of the Pastor or a designated ministry leader. Duties include managing audio/sound, microphones, lighting, live streaming, video recording, presentations, and other technical equipment used during Church activities. Staff shall also assist with setup, operation, troubleshooting, and maintenance of media and technology systems. Technical Support Staff shall be professional, dependable, and respectful while serving, maintain the confidentiality of sensitive content, and manage all equipment with care.

**Section C: Building and Grounds Maintenance.** Church Sextons or other personnel may serve in a paid or volunteer capacity and are responsible for cleaning, event setup and breakdown, and maintaining the Church building facilities and grounds. Sextons shall work under the supervision of the Pastor or designee and in cooperation with the Trustee Board/Ministry. Duties include routine cleaning, setting up for worship services and events, assisting with maintenance, reporting issues, and helping with funerals or special events. Sextons shall also ensure that supplies and equipment are safely stored and that the Church remains clean, safe, and ready for use. All Sextons and other personnel shall be dependable, respectful, and committed to caring for the Church's physical space in a way that honors its purpose and mission.

## ARTICLE V: VOTING AND CONGREGATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

**Section A: Elective Authority.** All officer positions described in Article I shall be filled by election or pastoral appointment and shall not be subject to appointment by any other officer of the Church.

**Section B: Nomination Procedures.** Nominations for elected offices shall be submitted by the Nominating Committee or from the floor by members in good standing, provided those nominations are made in writing and submitted in accordance with the published deadline. All nominees must meet the qualifications outlined in the Bylaws of this Church and shall be contacted in advance to confirm their willingness to serve if elected.

**Section C: Voting by Ballot.** Voting on Church matters—including the election of officers, approval of budgets, employee compensation, constitutional and Bylaws amendments, and other matters requiring congregational action—may be conducted by written ballot to ensure confidentiality, fairness, and integrity of the process.

1. At the time of any duly called or official Church meeting where a vote is required, a printed ballot shall be provided to each member present and in good standing. Only members who meet these criteria shall be eligible to vote.
2. Ballots shall indicate the matter/position being voted on, including names of all nominated candidates when applicable, and the number of individuals to be elected per position.
3. If the initial vote does not result in sufficient votes to resolve a matter or fill all vacancies, a second ballot may be issued with only the remaining unresolved candidates or options. This provision shall not apply to the election of Deacons, which follows a separate process.
4. To protect confidentiality and promote honest participation, private ballots shall be used to vote on sensitive matters such as employee salaries, compensation packages, and budget considerations.

**Section D: Voting Eligibility Verification.** Before distributing ballots, the Membership Ministry shall verify voting eligibility by confirming good-standing membership status, active participation, and compliance with this Constitution and Bylaws voting requirements. A secure check-in and distribution process shall be used to ensure fairness.

**Section E: Ballot Counting.** Ballots shall be collected, secured, and counted by a designated Election or Vote Verification Committee composed of impartial members in good standing who are not directly involved in the matter being voted upon. Results shall be reviewed, certified, and formally recorded in the official minutes of the Church.

**Section F: Holdover Officers.** If an election is delayed or postponed, the current officers shall remain in office until a proper election is held and successors are elected.

## ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS

**Section A: Regular Worship Services.** Worship services shall be held on Sundays, the Lord's Day, and other designated times throughout the week as determined by the Church body. These services shall be Christ-centered, Scripture-based, and conducted to glorify God and promote spiritual growth among the congregation.

**Section B: The Lord's Supper.** The Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday of each month as a sacred ordinance of the Church. The observance may include reading and reflecting on the Church Covenant. Additional celebrations of the Lord's Supper may be scheduled at the discretion of the Pastor, the Deacon Board, or by vote of the Church body.

**Section C: Baptism.** Baptism by immersion shall be administered to those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Baptismal services shall be scheduled by the Pastor in consultation with the Deacon Ministry and conducted in accordance with the doctrines and practices of the Baptist faith.

**Section D: Church Actions During Worship.** At any regular worship service, the Church may, without prior special notice, take official action on the following matters:

1. Acceptance of new members into the fellowship
2. Approval of requests for letters of transfer
3. Appointment of delegates to Church or associational meetings
4. Addressing urgent Church crises (e.g., significant facility damage, immediate benevolence needs)

**Section E: Special Worship Services.** Special services may be held throughout the year to support the Church's spiritual life, including but not limited to revivals, Holy Week observances, Watch Night services, prayer meetings, anniversaries, community revivals, and other occasions as determined by the Pastor. These services shall be designed to edify the congregation, promote evangelism, and reaffirm the Church's mission.

#### **Section F: Business**

1. The Pastor, Chairs of the Deacon and Trustee Ministries, or a majority of either Ministry may call and facilitate church meetings.
2. Announcement of Church meetings shall be given at least two (2) Sundays prior to the date of the meeting. No other meetings within the Church shall be scheduled or held at the same time as the Church meeting.
3. The Pastor shall preside at all business meetings. In the absence of the Pastor, or when the subject of the meeting concerns the Pastor, the Chairperson of the Deacon or Trustee Ministry shall preside.
4. The Church's annual meeting shall be held in the first quarter of the new year, at which time the annual reports shall be presented, and other business may be transacted as deemed necessary by the Church leadership and membership.
  - a. Should the agenda not be completed within the time limits of this meeting, the Pastor or designee shall select a convenient date for completing such business.
  - b. Fifteen percent (15%) of the membership in good standing shall constitute a quorum for the transaction and approval of business during a Church meeting.

#### **ARTICLE VII: CHURCH YEAR**

The official Church fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and conclude on December 31 of the same calendar year. Unless otherwise specified in these bylaws, all administrative, financial, and ministry-related activities shall be aligned with this annual calendar, including reports, budgeting, and leadership terms.

#### **ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS**

The Bylaws may be amended by the procedures outlined in Article VIII of the Church Constitution.

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preserve the integrity and formatting of the official document.

## APPENDICES

UNOFFICIAL: DO NOT COPY

## SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

**The Constitution**

Article I	Matthew 25:35-40 Matthew 28:19-20 Acts 2:42-47 Micah 6:8 Romans 12:1–2
Article II	1 Corinthians 13:13 John 3:16 James 2:14-20 Luke 4:18-19 Acts 2:42-47 Matthew 28:19-20
Article III	2 Timothy 3:16-17 Romans 10:9-10 Matthew 28:19-20
Article IV	Romans 10:14-17 John 10:1-18
Article V	Psalms 150 Hebrews 10:25 Hebrews 11:6 Revelation 2:10 Acts 2:44-47 1 John 1:3 2 Timothy 2:15 1 Peter 4:10-11 Malachi 3:10 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 1 Chronicles 23:4 2 Chronicles 15:7 2 Chronicles 7:14 1 Thessalonians 5:17 1 John 1:9
Article VI	Romans 12:1-2 1 Corinthians 13 Psalm 34:22 Acts 2:41 Galatians 6:6 Ephesians 4:32 Hebrews 3:13 2 Corinthians 4:5

Article VIII

**The Bylaws**

Article I

Article III

Church Covenant

Auxiliary Ministries

Pastor

Deacon Ministry

Matthew 18:18

Titus 2:11-16

Mathew 22:17

Romans 13:1-4

Genesis 9:6

Matthew 18:15

Matthew 18:18-20

Hebrews 12:6-7

Matthew 5:1-12

John 13:34

Galatians 5:22

John 8:32

2 Timothy 2:15

1 Corinthians 14:40

1 Timothy 3:1-7

Luke 2:42-48

Luke 6:13

John 3:3

Romans 12:11

Colossians 3:23

Malachi 3:10

2 Corinthians 9:7

1 Corinthians 4

Amos 3:3

Hebrews 10:25

2 Timothy 2:15

Ephesians 4:11-12

Acts 2:42-47

Hebrews 10:23-25

Titus 3:14

Titus 2:1, 3-5

1 Timothy 3:1-7

Acts 6:1-4

1 Timothy 3:8-10, 8-12

Luke 6:13

## THE CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into Covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge and holiness; to give place in our affections, prayers, and services above every organization of human origin; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, toward its expenses for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. In case of a difference of opinion in the Church, we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions, to study diligently the Word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be kind and just to those in our employ, and faithful in the service we promise others; endeavoring in the purity of heart and goodwill towards all men to exemplify and commend our holy faith.

We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmity of others; to participate in each other's joys, and with tender sympathy, bear one another's burdens and sorrows; to cultivate Christian courtesy; to be slow to give or take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, being mindful of the rules of the Savior in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to secure it without delay; and through life, amid evil report, to seek to live to the glory of God, who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other Church where we can carry out the Spirit of this Covenant and the principles of God's Word.

### *References:*

*Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; and Titus 3:14*

*Turner, W.C. (2002). Discipleship for African American Christians: A Journey through the Church Covenant. Judson Press.*

## THE ARTICLES OF FAITH

**I. The Scriptures.** We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us, and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried.

**II. The True God.** We believe the Scriptures teach that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

**III. The Fall of Man.** We believe the Scriptures teach that Man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgressions fell from that holy and happy state, in consequence of which all humankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

**IV. The Way of Salvation.** We believe that the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who by the Appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

**V. Justification.** We believe the Scriptures teach that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

**VI. The Freeness of Salvation.** We believe that the Scriptures teach that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own determined depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

**VII. Regeneration.** We believe that the Scriptures teach that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind that is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

**VIII. Repentance and Faith.** We believe the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are sacred duties and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our prophet, priest and king, and relying on Him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

**IX. God's Purpose of Grace.** We believe the Scriptures teach that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable, that it utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it concerning ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

**X. Sanctification.** We believe the Scriptures teach that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

**XI. Perseverance of the Saints.** We believe the Scriptures teach that such only are genuine believers as endure to the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark that distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

**XII. The Law and Gospel.** We believe the Scriptures teach that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability that the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arise entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the Means of Grace connected with the establishment of the visible Church.

**XIII. A Gospel Church.** We believe the Scriptures teach that a visible Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by Covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its only scriptural officers are Bishops or Pastors, and Deacons whose Qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

**XIV. Baptism and the Lord's Supper.** We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the immersion in the water of a believer in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a Church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the Church, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

**XV. The Christian Sabbath.** We believe the Scriptures teach that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day or Christian Sabbath and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreations, by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public, and by preparation for that rest that remained for the people of God.

**XVI. Civil Government.** We believe the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth.

**XVII. Righteous and Wicked.** We believe the Scriptures teach that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in his esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

**XVIII. The World to Come.** We believe the Scriptures teach that the end of the world is approaching; that on the last day, Christ will descend from heaven and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

*Reference:*

*National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. "Articles of Faith." Nashville, TN: Sunday School Publishing Board, adapted from the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1742).*

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## AUXILIARY MINISTRIES

1. **Arinda Stallings' Mother's Ministry.** Senior Christian women of faith exemplify holiness, discretion, and love and teach younger women good things (Titus 2:1, 3-5).
2. **Canaan Business Network Ministry.** Impacts the Human Condition by developing, establishing, and promoting the Godly enterprise of economic empowerment and solidarity of the Canaan Baptist Church by supporting businesses in the Canaan Baptist Church.
3. **Canaan for Life Cancer Ministry.** Impacts the Human Condition by providing spiritual support, encouragement, and prayer for cancer patients, survivors, and their families.
4. **Charles Kirksey Prison Outreach Ministry.** Provides re-entry services and training to inmates and ex-offenders in the state of Delaware, and programs that support the inmates both during incarceration and their re-entry back into the community.
5. **Culinary Ministry.** Prepares and serves food for church functions and events, including funeral repasts, providing nourishment in support of the congregation's life and ministry.
6. **Community Engagement Ministry.** Coordinates special events that foster connection between the Church and the wider community, which includes oversight of the monthly Bullock Food Pantry distribution, providing food assistance to families in need, and leadership of the annual Donald J. Bowman Angel Tree Ministry, which provides Christmas gifts and toys to children of incarcerated parents as well as ongoing support for these families throughout the year.
7. **Earl Gardner Transportation Ministry.** Provides transportation for our worshippers to and from the Church.
8. **Emma Bordley Hospitality Ministry.** Extends Christian care and welcome by greeting members and guests, assisting with seating and special needs, and serving food at designated church functions to create a spirit of warmth and fellowship.
9. **Ernest and Yolanda Purnell Senior's Ministry.** Promotes congregational intimacy by sponsoring activities for the Seniors (age 65+) of the Canaan Baptist Church and the surrounding communities.
10. **Evangelism Ministry.** Spreads the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by engaging with the local community through door-to-door witnessing, media distribution, creative outreach methods, and providing food and clothing to those in need.
11. **Greeters Ministry.** A servant-focused ministry that welcomes and extends hospitality to all who enter for worship, where God can be magnified.
12. **Grief Share - Grief Recovery Support Group.** A friendly, caring group that will walk alongside individuals through one of life's most difficult experiences.
13. **Health Ministry.** Assists and serves the sick during worship services and promotes healthy choices through seminars, health fairs, and screenings.

- 14. Higher Ground Scholarship Ministry.** Supports the academic goals of high school graduates and college students who are members in good standing and actively involved in a ministry, offering scholarships that assist and encourage them to pursue excellence through faith, service, and learning.
- 15. Historian Ministry.** Records the "life" of the Church and its people so that the rich legacy and history of the Church will bless God's people for generations.
- 16. International Cultural Ministry.** Embodies our core value of Congregational Intimacy by bridging cultural gaps through worship and fellowship, learning from diverse backgrounds, and raising awareness of our differences.
- 17. Communications and Marketing "Good News" Ministry.** Promotes the Church's mission, vision, and activities through clear, consistent, and engaging messaging; oversees internal and external communications, including announcements, newsletters, social media, digital platforms, printed materials, and media outreach, to strengthen the Church's visibility and community engagement.
- 18. Marriage Ministry.** Encourages, enriches, and celebrates marriage in accordance with God's will by supporting couples in their relationships.
- 19. Men's Ministry.** Empowers and equips men to fulfill God's purpose, impacts faithfulness and family life, and helps cultivate a closer walk with Christ.
- 20. Next G Youth and Young Adults Ministry.** In conjunction with the Christian Education Ministry, it provides nurture and discipleship for infants through young adults. The Nursery offers safe and loving care for infants and young children during worship and activities, supporting parents and laying an early foundation of Christian nurture, and extends to children, youth, and young adults by providing biblical teaching, worship, fellowship, discipleship, and ministry training in accordance with Proverbs 22:6, guiding them in faith formation and preparing them for faithful Christian adulthood and leadership.
- 21. Philippians Ministry.** Focuses on and celebrates the Pastor and First Family by informing the Church of special days and events.
- 22. Regena Manley Missionary Ministry.** Impacts the Human Condition by fulfilling the need first and then praying that someone will cry out, 'What must I do to be saved?'
- 23. Security Ministry.** Ensures the safety and security of the Pastor, the First Family, and the congregation at large, as well as the safety and protection of Church property, including buildings, grounds, equipment, and other church assets.
- 24. Singles Ministry.** Supports unmarried adults—whether never married, divorced, or widowed—by providing spiritual growth, fellowship, and service opportunities. It helps singles grow in their faith, build community, and stay active in church life.
- 25. Sisters of Canaan Women's Ministry.** Brings women together in Christ for encouragement, service, fellowship, and spiritual growth.

- 26. Social Justice Ministry.** Advocates for equality, justice, and human dignity, principles that align with biblical values. It educates the congregation on social issues, organizes community outreach, and partners with local and national efforts to address injustice, poverty, and systemic inequality through faith-based action.
- 27. Overcomers Ministry.** Impacts the Human Condition through faith-based substance abuse counseling to help individuals challenged with substance addiction move toward a productive lifestyle that will empower them to serve their family and community better.
- 28. Thomas Risher Veterans Ministry.** Recognizes, honors, and supports all military veterans of the Church. Provides both spiritual and moral support to families of deployed military members.
- 29. Ushers Ministry.** Creates a warm, orderly, and welcoming environment for worship by greeting guests, seating attendees, assisting with offerings, and supporting the flow of service. Youth and Senior Ushers serve with kindness and attentiveness, reflecting the Church's mission and works in coordination with other ministries

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## **Canaan Baptist Church**

**Rev. Dr. Christopher Alan Bullock, Pastor**

**Rev. Dr. Debbie Bullock, Executive Pastor**

**3011 New Castle Avenue**

**New Castle, Delaware 19720**

**302-654-8818 | 302-654-8819 - Fax**

**[www.CanaanBCDE.org](http://www.CanaanBCDE.org)**

**[membership@CanaanBCDE.org](mailto:membership@CanaanBCDE.org)**



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