

Constitution and Bylaws of River of Life Baptist Church (ROLBC), Inc. Sunset Beach, North Carolina

A.D. 2021

History

In 2010, Pastor Tom Gore began a series of bible studies and small groups. A dedicated and enthusiastic group met at local restaurants and the North Myrtle Beach Flea Market and steadily grew over time.

From these community ministries and with the support of area churches across North and South Carolina, River of Life Baptist Church was formed as a church plant in Little River, South Carolina.

Living Water Baptist Church was one of the first local churches to support ROLBC. Pastor Lebron Crisp and his congregation prayed and financially supported ROLBC.

The first official Sunday worship service was held at the C.B. Berry Community and Historical Center in Little River, SC. As the congregation continued to grow, Pastor Gore was led to move the church to Sunset Beach, North Carolina. The church met at Sea Trail Convention Center from circa 2012 through circa 2016.

Circa 2015, God blessed the church with a donation of 45 acres of land along Highway 17 in Sunset Beach. After faithful prayer and determination, ROLBC held their first worship service in their new, permanent location during Christmas 2016.

Following the motto, "Don't just go to church, be the church", ROLBC continues to grow the church and continue the mission to share the love of Christ to others and offer the good news to those living in coastal North Carolina, South Carolina, and beyond.

Constitution

For the purpose of preserving and making secure the principles of our faith to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner, consistent with the teachings of the Bible and for the purpose of preserving the churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this Constitution.

I. Name

This body shall be known as River of Life Baptist Church (ROLBC) of Sunset Beach, North Carolina, Inc. in accordance with articles of incorporation from the North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State filed on the 16th Day of May, 2014 and shall hereinafter be referred to as “church.” In this document, when the word Church is used, it refers to the Church universal.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this church body shall be to provide regular opportunities for public worship; to sustain the ordinances, doctrines and ethics set forth in the Bible for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ; to teach and train its members; to support with its offerings all phases of the Lord’s work; and to preach and proclaim among all people the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to the end that lost souls might be saved, lives enriched and relationships restored.

III. Articles of Faith

This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention of 2000 as listed below.

1. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

2. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us

as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever-present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 79; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His Church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the

Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the Church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

3. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

4. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:62:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

5. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

6. The Church

A New Testament Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural

officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the Church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

7. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a Church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the Church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

8. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

9. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19;

1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

10. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

11. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

12. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is coordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited

by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

13. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

14. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

15. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the

spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

16. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

17. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

18. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption. Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His Church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the Church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:35; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

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IV. Church Covenant, A Guide for Christian Living

Having been led, 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, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We commit, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness and wellbeing; to promote its prosperity

and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, and expenses of the church, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also commit to maintain family and personal devotions; to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; to seek the salvation of our family and friends; to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our behavior; to avoid all gossiping, backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from the abuse of all intoxicating substances; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further commit to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the instructions of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover commit that when we leave River of Life Baptist Church (ROLBC) 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.

V. Church Government (Polity)

The government of this church is vested in the body of baptized believers that compose it as a membership non-profit corporation, who recognize Christ as the Head of the Church. It is subject to the control of no other person or group of persons, but it recognizes and sustains the obligation of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among the churches within the Southern Baptist Convention.

All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the church, unless otherwise specified by church action.

VI. Affiliation

Section 1. This church is a free, autonomous, independent body, congregational in nature with authority to determine for itself in the manner set forth in this constitution, free of any outside control, authority or power, whether governmental or otherwise, the use of its property and all church policies.

Section 2. The church recognizes the value and mutual helpfulness in the voluntary association of churches which are in such agreements in faith and practice as to make possible a spirit of

fellowship and good will. It is recognized that association and cooperation between such churches will influence the missionary, educational and benevolent interest of each other. The church desires to work in mutual cooperation with other like-minded groups.

Section 3. This church shall be deemed to be in friendly cooperation with the aims and purposes of the Brunswick Baptist Association (BBA), the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC), and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and as set forth in the constitution of these autonomous bodies and through duly elected messengers will participate in their deliberative assemblies, and shall as we are able, support the missionary, benevolent and educational programs of each.

Section 4. The calling of a church conference for the purpose of voting on withdrawal from affiliations with either the BBA or the BSCNC or the SBC will require that written notice be sent to each member of the church thirty (30) days prior to such action, stating the purpose and time of said meeting. Action to withdraw must be carried by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) majority for the BBA, the BSCNC and SBC of the members present and voting, assuming that a quorum of forty percent (40%) of membership is present for such a meeting.

VII. Adoption and Amendments

Section 1. This constitution will be considered adopted and in immediate effect following a majority vote from the church congregation based on a forty percent (40%) quorum of resident members at a scheduled church business meeting. The River of Life Baptist Church (ROLBC) congregation must be notified in writing of this proposed constitution two weeks before this vote can take place.

Section 2. This constitution will be reviewed for pertinent changes at a minimum of every ten years. Such reviews to be done in joint cooperation between the pastoral staff, the bylaws committee, the ministry council, and the deacon-elder council. Any changes that are proposed will be approved by the ministry council and deacon-elder council to be voted on by the church congregation at a scheduled business meeting with at least thirty day's (30) notice for the congregation to review the proposed changes. An approval vote by the church congregation will require a forty percent (40%) quorum of resident membership present with a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.

Section 3. This Constitution may be amended, altered or repealed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote based on a forty percent (40%) quorum of the resident members at a scheduled or specially called business meeting of the church; provided, however, that such an amendment, alteration or repeal must be given to the bylaws committee in writing; approved by the ministry council and deacon-elder council to be voted on by the church congregation; and the proposed changes are presented to the church at least thirty (30) days prior to the time the vote is taken.

Section 4. The adoption of this constitution shall affect a repeal of all previously adopted constitutions, bylaws, rules, regulations or procedures that may be found in conflict herewith.

Bylaws

I. Church Organization

Section 1. The church, its people, and all its associated resources ultimately belong only to God. As such, it is the intention of these bylaws to organize the church strictly according to biblical principles. Moreover, it is the intention of these bylaws to implement and enforce the following specific principles:

1. Biblically qualified deacons and those deacons that also qualify as elders (i.e., deacons who also have the gift of teaching and spiritual oversight per I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and I Peter 5:1-4, and are recognized as elders by the deacons and pastoral staff) or deacon elders shall serve together on the deacon-elder council for the purposes of these bylaws. The pastor, at his discretion may also appoint dedicated deacon elders or simply elders as advisors to serve on the deacon-elder council without all the servant responsibilities of deacons. Together as one deacon-elder council body, deacons, deacon elders, and elders shall be servant leaders and biblical overseers of the church, fully accountable to the other deacons, to the deacon elders, to the elders, to the pastoral staff, to the church congregation, and ultimately to God.
2. All decisions shall be made with complete openness and transparency that is apparent to all members of the church congregation.
3. As all people including mature Christians are fallible and capable of sin, authority shall be balanced and divided amongst multiple individuals and groups within the church. No one individual or one group within the church shall have complete authority and power in any regard that is pertinent to the church.

Section 2. As such, it is the intention of these bylaws to organize the church like a corporation where all the members of this church congregation are the stockholders; the deacon-elder council is the board of directors of the corporation answering to the congregation (i.e., the stockholders); the ministry teams, committees, and church staff are the core working body of the corporation; the ministry council is the executive leadership team of the corporation; the senior pastor is the chief executive officer of the corporation answering to the board of directors (i.e., the deacon-elder council) and the congregation (i.e., stockholders); and finally, the customers of the church and corporation are the lost and hurting people of this world that need Jesus according to the Great Commission. **Figure 1** below illustrates the intended corporate organization of the church according to the bylaws contained herein.

ROLBC Organization

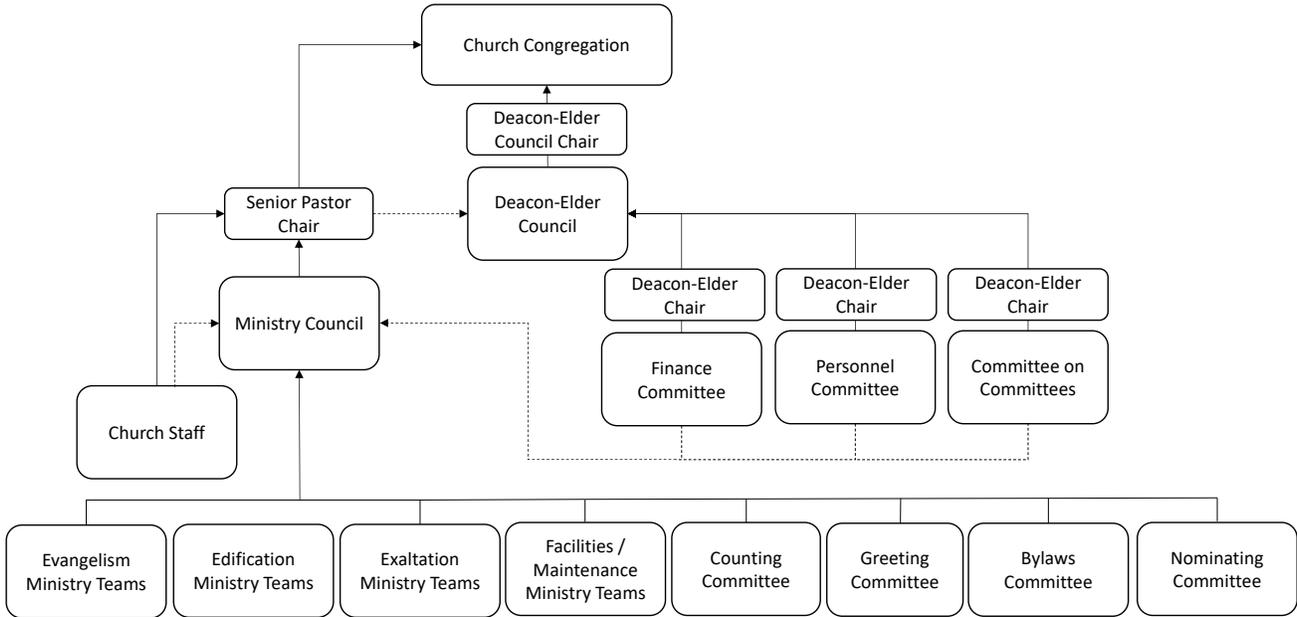


Figure 1

II. Church Membership

Section 1. QUALIFICATIONS: The membership of the church shall consist of such persons as confess Jesus Christ to be their Savior and Lord and who have been accepted by the vote of the church and have been baptized by immersion.

Section 2. ORIENTATION: Those desiring membership of the church must complete the appropriate new member orientation and have satisfactorily completed the pastoral interview that gives evidence of regeneration and a consistent Christian lifestyle.

Section 3. DUTIES: Members are expected to enter into this covenant (1) to be faithful in all the duties essential to the Christian life, including regular participation in regular church activities, (2) to give regularly of their time, talents, and tithes & financial gifts for the support of the church and its causes, and (3) to share in the work of its ministries.

Section 4. RESIDENCY: A Resident member is one living in the community and actively involved in the church. A Non-resident member is one who is not living in the community and has not yet requested a letter of membership transfer.

Section 5. RIGHTS: Such members that are in good standing with the church (i.e., active resident members) may act and vote in the transactions of the church and are eligible to serve in positions of leadership within the body.

Section 6. TERMINATION: The continuance of membership shall be subject to the principles and usages of Baptist Churches, and especially as follows:

a. Any members in good and regular standing who require a letter of dismissal or recommendation to any other Baptist Church are entitled to receive it upon request. In case of their relocation to another church community they should promptly make such request.

b. If members in good standing request to be released from their covenant obligations to the church for reasons which the church may finally deem satisfactory, after it shall have patiently and kindly endeavored to secure their continuance in its fellowship, such requests may be granted, and their membership terminated.

c. The church may annually examine its membership roll and, after due notice and hearing and kind effort to make such action unnecessary, may terminate the membership of persons for any of the following reasons:

1. Member has been non-resident for the period of one year.
2. Member has not regularly attended church for extended period of one year.
3. Member has not supported the church for a period of one year.
4. Member has indicated an intentional termination of church membership.

c. Should a member become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, by persistent breach of covenant vows, or non-support of the church, the church may terminate such person's membership, but only after due notice and hearing and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and restoration.

d. The membership of no person shall be terminated (except as noted in points a and b above) at the meeting where the recommendation for such action is made, but shall be deferred until the next church Business Meeting or for at least 30 days. Opportunity will be given to excuse any non-members prior to any discussion or statement of cause for a member's dismissal from membership.

e. All requests for termination of membership or action looking thereto shall first be considered by the deacon-elder council (except as noted in points a and b above), who shall then make recommendations to the church.

Section 7. RESTORATION: Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by a vote of the church upon evidence of repentance and reformation.

III. Church Staff

The church may employ such staff members as the need demands. Their term of ministry shall be indefinite and shall continue until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the staff member or the church, unless otherwise stated in the constitution or an amendment thereto. Staff members shall not serve on the deacon-elder council while employed by the church.

A. Senior Pastor

Section 1. The senior pastor shall be responsible for leading the church to function as a biblical New Testament church. The senior pastor shall lead the congregation, the organizations and the church staff to perform their tasks. The senior pastor shall be responsible for the welfare and oversight of the church and shall be a male that has the scriptural qualifications according to 1 Timothy Chapter 3. To fulfill his charge and calling he shall:

1. The duties of the senior pastor shall be consistent with Scripture, including equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4: 11-12) and doing the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5). In addition, he shall be the following:
 - a. Senior overseer (episkopos) of the church providing leadership
 - b. Senior elder (presbuteros) of the church providing spiritual wisdom
 - c. Senior shepherd (poiman) of the church providing guidance
 - d. Senior teacher (didaskolos) of the church providing instruction
2. Be ex officio member (i.e., by virtue of his position and without voting rights) of all church councils, organizations, departments, ministry teams, and committees.
3. Be able to call a special meeting of any council including the deacon-elder council, any ministry team, or any committee.
4. Conduct worship services on stated and on special occasions, administer the ordinances, and minister to the spiritual needs of the members of the church and community.
5. Have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church, provide for pulpit supply when he is absent, and shall arrange for a minister to assist in revival meetings and workers to assist in other special services required by the church.
6. Have the special responsibility to lead and equip the church to win the lost to Christ, to minister to the spiritual needs of the members of the congregation, and through prayer and study to render effective preaching and pastoral ministries.
7. The senior pastor shall be in regular communication with the deacon-elder council regarding the affairs of the church, and he shall request counsel regarding particular matters as they arise.
8. Supports the continuation of church planting as a part of the mission of ROLBC through prayer, encouragement, and financial support from the church.

9. Can lead ROLBC from a planted church to a church that shows growth in population, spiritual maturity, discipleship, and missions.
10. Perform other duties that usually pertain to his calling.
11. Shall understand, follow, support, and adhere to the church's constitution and bylaws.

Section 2. Whenever a vacancy occurs, a senior pastor shall be called by the church to serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the senior pastor, recommendation of the deacon-elder council, or by a vote of the church congregation. In either case, at least a thirty (30) day notice shall be given of termination of the relationship, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon, with both senior pastor, deacon-elder council, and church seeking to follow the will of God through the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Section 3. In the event that by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote the active deacon-elder council agrees that, for any reason, the senior pastor has lost his effectiveness, or he is jeopardizing the goodwill of the members and the welfare and progress of the church by remaining as senior pastor, and after consultation with the senior pastor, decides that the situation cannot be resolved, it shall be their duty to request his resignation. If the resignation is not forthcoming as requested, the matter shall be brought before the church in a meeting set for disposition of this sole matter. Any vote concerning the dismissal of the senior pastor shall be by secret ballot, the senior pastor being absent during the discussion and voting. The church's vote to dismiss a senior pastor shall require at least a three-fourths majority vote of the members present and voting, assuming that a quorum of forty percent (40%) of resident membership is present for such meeting. If the church votes to dispense with his service, the senior pastor shall be paid at least thirty days salary and accrued benefits, and the pulpit shall be vacated immediately. All church property shall be vacated by the senior pastor upon demand after notice has been given.

Upon the vacancy of the office of senior pastor:

1. If necessary or helpful, an interim pastor shall be recommended by the deacon-elder council and called by the church to serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the interim pastor or the church.
2. Members will be given an opportunity to nominate a church member(s) to serve on the pastoral search committee (PSC). After having been notified of the need, church members will be given two weeks to submit nominees to serve on the PSC. Name(s) shall be submitted in writing to the chairman of the deacon-elder council.
3. The chairman of the deacon-elder council will receive the nominations. Then, after prayerful consideration and with the help of the deacon-elder council and pastoral staff, seven names shall be recommended by the deacon-elder council. The chairman of the deacon-elder council will then contact each of the seven nominees to ensure their willingness to serve. After seven have been selected and agreed to serve, the deacon-

elder council shall submit the list of nominees to the church at the next business meeting to establish this committee by majority vote. If the recommendation fails, the process will begin again. This committee will serve until the task of selecting a senior pastor is completed. In the event a member of the PSC resigns or is unable to serve further, the PSC committee will continue without that member. If the number of members on the PSC committee drops below a number deemed too low by the deacon-elder council (e.g., less than three (3)), the deacon-elder council shall repeat this entire nomination process to put together a new PSC committee.

4. The PSC of seven (7) people (including but not limited to two women and one deacon-elder council member who will serve as committee chair) will seek a pastor of good report whose Christian character and qualifications fit him for the office.
5. Nominations for senior pastor shall be made by the PSC only, with approval of the deacon-elder council. The PSC shall bring one name at a time for consideration by the church. Notice and the name of a senior pastor candidate and the intention to vote on the senior pastor candidate shall be given by the PSC publicly and one week in advance of the vote to allow the congregation time to pray in consideration of the upcoming vote. The church's vote to call a new senior pastor shall require at least an eighty percent (80%) majority vote of the resident members present and voting, assuming that a quorum of forty percent (40%) of resident membership is present for such meeting. Election shall be by secret ballot. Should the minister recommended by the PSC fail to receive an eighty percent (80%) majority, the PSC will seek another candidate.
6. For more details on the nomination and selection process for the senior pastor, refer to the associated procedures and documentation for the pastor search committee.

C. Pastoral, Ministerial, and Other Employees

1. Employees shall be employed by the church and under the direct supervision of the senior pastor or his delegate. They shall work in accordance with the senior pastor's vision toward the spiritual well-being of the church as a whole and his expectation of maintaining the highest standards in the ministries to which they are called. They shall report regularly as requested by the senior pastor to either himself or the appropriate staff person and cooperate with all other church staff and officers as it concerns the planning and execution of their programs and duties.
2. The church shall employ new personnel as needed. Titles and job descriptions shall be written when the need for a position is determined. Following approval by the senior pastor and deacon-elder council, the personnel committee shall present titles and job descriptions to the church for approval.

3. Pastoral staff who are or shall be ordained shall meet the proper qualification as mentioned within Scripture (e.g., 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Pt. 5:1-4). They shall be under the direct supervision of the senior pastor or his appropriate delegate.
4. Other employees are those without ministerial or pastoral responsibilities. Examples of other employees are the lead office administrator, administrative assistants, facilities staff, and grounds staff.
5. Ministerial staff employees without ordained pastoral responsibilities and all employees without ordained pastoral responsibilities may be male or female subject to the specific qualifications of the job or position.
6. The search for and hiring of a pastoral staff member or ministerial staff member will initiate with the senior pastor or someone working on his behalf, and continue forward through the personnel committee, deacon-elder council, and congregation.
7. The senior pastor, or someone working on his behalf, shall have the ability to immediately discipline for just cause any employee that is not a member of the pastoral staff or the ministerial staff, the personnel committee being notified when appropriate. Should any such employee consistently fail to respond to the senior pastor's reasonable instructions, such employee shall resign or be subject to termination by the personnel committee.
8. Suspension, discipline, or dismissal of pastoral staff, who is not the senior pastor, and ministerial staff shall be upon recommendation to the deacon-elder council by the senior pastor and personnel committee. The deacon-elder council shall have the ability to approve discipline for such an affected employee. Based upon a recommendation for suspension or dismissal, the deacon-elder council shall have the authority and option to approve the recommendation and ask such an affected employee to resign. If the affected employee chooses not to resign, the personnel committee shall make a recommendation to the church to suspend or dismiss the affected employee at a specially called church business meeting. The church vote to dismiss the affected employee shall require at least a two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting, assuming that a quorum of forty percent (40%) of resident membership is present for such meeting.
9. All other employee benefits, expectations, and hiring and dismissal procedures and policies shall be outlined in the personnel committee authored and deacon-elder council approved employee handbook.

IV. Church Officers

A. Deacon-Elder Council

Section 1. The duties and responsibilities of the deacon-elder council shall include the following:

1. The deacon-elder council shall be responsible for biblical oversight of the administration of the church as managed by the ministry council. This will consist of the following authorities and associated responsibilities:
 - a. The deacon-elder council shall have biblical oversight and responsibility for the finance committee including annual budget approval, major changes to the budget (e.g., a change in a budget line item greater than twenty-five percent (25%), depending on the total amount of the line item), new budget line items, capital expenditures, investments, other large disbursements of funds, changes to financial procedures and policies, and any other financial issues deemed germane to the church by the chairman of the finance committee and the deacon-elder council.
 - b. The deacon-elder council shall have biblical oversight and responsibility for the personnel committee including the approval of all pastoral, ministerial staff, lead office administrator and other personnel issues deemed germane to the church by the chairman of the personnel committee and the deacon-elder council.
 - c. The deacon-elder council shall have biblical oversight and responsibility for the committee on committees, including the establishment of any new committees or ministry teams and other committee on committee issues deemed germane to the church by the chairman of the committee on committees and the deacon-elder council.

All other administration and oversight shall be the responsibility of the ministry council.
2. The deacon-elder council shall be responsible for leading ROLBC church services in communion, including preparation for communion.
3. The deacon-elder council shall be responsible for leading the church in ministry to widows and orphans.
4. The deacon-elder council shall be responsible for leading the church in ministry to the sick and dying.
5. The deacon-elder council shall be responsible for leading the church in ministry to those in need inside and outside the church.

Section 2. The duties and responsibilities of each deacon-elder council member shall include the following:

1. Each deacon-elder council member shall be responsible for implementing and adhering to a deacon ministry plan as outlined in the The Family Ministry Plan. Within that responsibility, each deacon-elder council member shall be responsible for providing direct ministry and support to the families assigned to them as deacons.
2. Each deacon-elder council member shall be responsible for understanding and representing the administrative views of the families assigned to them as deacons when voting and providing leadership and biblical oversight on the deacon-elder council.
3. Each deacon-elder council member shall be responsible for representing and embodying the beliefs, principles, and policies set forth in this document.

Section 3. Deacon-elder council members must be both disciples and servants of the church at all times. As the Holy Spirit leads, the senior pastor and the deacon-elder council are to consider and make recommendations to the church family in matters pertaining to its work and progress. Deacons shall hold one another accountable in conducting themselves with a Christian biblical character at all times. In addition, those deacons that qualify as elders shall mentor the other deacons, shall directly support and protect the senior pastor and his pastoral staff and shall simultaneously hold the senior pastor and his pastoral staff accountable for conducting themselves with a Christian biblical character at all times. All deacons shall assist the senior pastor and/or staff in the observance of the church ordinances, and they shall attend all regular deacon-elder council meetings, if at all possible. The senior pastor or the chairman of the deacon-elder council shall call the deacon-elder council into special sessions whenever the need arises.

Section 4. The number of deacon-elder council members shall be determined by the senior pastor in consultation with the deacon-elder council. The number of deacon-elder council members will be a minimum of five (5), not including the senior pastor, and will be increased on an as needed basis. The deacon-elder council will elect its own chairman, vice chairman, and secretary. Deacons or deacon elders are also qualified to be elected as the chairman, vice chairman, and secretary of the deacon-elder council. Dedicated elders, without deacon responsibilities, should not be elected as deacon-elder council officers when other deacon or deacon elders are available to serve in those roles. The senior pastor shall serve as an ex officio member (i.e., by virtue of his position and without voting rights) of the deacon-elder council, but shall not serve as chairman, vice chairman, or secretary of the deacon-elder council. The deacon-elder council shall serve as the board of directors for the corporation River of Life Baptist Church (ROLBC) of Sunset Beach, North Carolina, Inc. The deacon-elder council chairman, vice chairman, and secretary shall function as trustees for the corporation with regard to all relevant legal documents and transactions. The deacon-elder council secretary shall function as secretary of the corporation and be assisted where needed by the

lead church administrator and other appropriate administrative staff. The deacon-elder council secretary or his appointed administrative staff shall be responsible for recording the minutes of all business meetings to be made available to the church congregation upon request.

Section 5. Up to three (3) new male deacon-elder council members as needed shall be elected each year on a planned three-year rotation. This number can also increase over time as the membership of the church increases. The senior pastor and pastoral staff will present potential candidates to the deacon-elder council. The deacon-elder council will then nominate up to three (3) potential deacon-elder council members as needed to the church body to be voted on in a scheduled business session. The church body can make additional nominations of those who have been contacted and are willing for their names to be presented. I Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-6 are the scriptures used to set the minimum standard for an individual to serve as a deacon. The specific and detailed process for nominating and electing deacons shall be as follows:

1. The senior pastor shall identify the need for additional deacons, deacon elders, and elders. The senior pastor shall prioritize men qualified as deacons and elders or deacon elders to serve on the deacon-elder council (i.e., deacons who also have the gift of teaching and biblical oversight per I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 and Peter 5:1-4, and are recognized as elders by the deacons and pastoral staff). Additional deacons who qualify as deacons but do not qualify as elders shall also be selected to assist the deacon elders and to have the opportunity to become deacon elders if they are gifted by the Holy Spirit as teachers and biblical overseers.
2. The senior pastor shall lead the deacon-elder council in the search and nomination process for additional deacon candidates.
3. The candidate shall be interviewed by the senior pastor and then by the deacon-elder council to determine his ability and willingness to serve and discuss the responsibilities of deacons, deacon-elders, and elders.
4. The deacon-elder council may nominate deacon, deacon-elder, and elder candidates deemed appropriate and meeting the aforementioned biblical standard and ROLBC conditions for a deacon as part of the nomination and election process.
5. Upon the approval of the senior pastor and the deacon-elder council, the candidate shall be presented to the church congregation for a vote of confirmation.
6. The church congregation may nominate deacon-elder council candidates deemed appropriate and meeting the aforementioned biblical standard and ROLBC conditions for a deacon-elder council member as part of the nomination and election process.
7. The church family shall be given a two week notice before the election of the deacon-elder council members. Should there be no additional nominations the church will vote at that time for up to three nominated deacon-elder council members.

8. If the candidates have not been previously ordained as deacons, deacon elders, or elders, the candidates shall be ordained by means of an ordination service where a charge is given and a laying on of hands in prayer is conducted.
9. If the candidates have not been previously ordained as deacons, deacon elders, or elders, they shall go through an orientation process including introduction to deacon family assignments as outlined in The Family Ministry Plan.

Section 6. I Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-6 are the Scriptures used to set the minimum standard for an individual to serve as a deacon. In addition, deacons at ROLBC are expected to continually mature in their servant leadership roles as deacons and optionally seek to qualify themselves as deacon elders according to I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-4, and 1 Corinthians 1:31 if they are gifted by the Holy Spirit as teachers and biblical overseers. Deacons and deacon elders should serve together on the deacon-elder council to fully discharge the duties and responsibilities of the deacon-elder council. Furthermore, to qualify as a deacon at River of Life Baptist Church (ROLBC), the following conditions must be met:

1. The deacon must be a member in good standing of River of Life Baptist Church (ROLBC) at least one year before beginning a term of service as deacon.
2. The deacon must be an active member of ROLBC and available for regular deacon meetings.
3. The deacon must be a man at least 18 years of age.
4. The deacon must be a man with a strong testimony of salvation.
5. The deacon must be a man who is committed to missions.
6. The deacon must be regularly involved in evangelism.
7. The deacon must be a man who is committed to ROLBC's doctrinal statement.
8. The deacon must be a man who is committed to ROLBC's vision, values, and mission.
9. Only one member of a household may serve on the deacon-elder council at the same time.
10. No member of the household may succeed himself or any other members of the same household without one year's leave from the deacon-elder council.
11. Staff members will not serve as deacon-elder council members while employed by the church.

Section 7. The term of a deacon-elder council member's active service shall be 3 years, with the possibility of being selected for two consecutive terms. After a one-year sabbatical he would then be eligible for active service again. A deacon-elder council member may terminate his service with a thirty-day notice. Should a deacon-elder council member not fulfill his three-year term, his replacement will take place via the same above dynamics, albeit for only one deacon-elder council member candidate.

B. Ministry Council

Section 1. The ministry council shall work with the senior pastor to provide administrative and operational oversight of all the work of the church. Duties and responsibilities of the ministry council shall include:

1. The ministry council, led by the senior pastor, shall be responsible for oversight of the church staff.
2. The ministry council shall establish, implement and evaluate objectives, goals, and action plans consistent with the statement of faith, purpose, vision, values, and mission of the church.
3. The ministry council shall provide operational leadership in all areas of church administration between business meetings of the church.
4. The ministry council shall provide oversight to all committees via direct involvement of ministry council team members on the committees or via liaison members from the committees.
5. The ministry council shall manage and provide direct oversight to all ministry teams via direct involvement in the ministry teams by ministry council team or church staff members.
6. Committees and ministry teams shall seek guidance from the ministry council on all administrative matters including priorities, decisions, finances, personnel, and other resources.
7. In the event of the absence of a senior pastor, the ministry council shall be responsible for providing the leadership of the congregation, filling the pulpit with a temporary or interim pastor, and supporting the church staff under the guidance of an acting ministry council chairman from the deacon-elder council as stipulated in **Section 5** below until such a time that a new senior pastor has been hired by the church.

Section 2. Each member who serves on the ministry council must meet the following qualifications:

1. The ministry council member must have a strong testimony of salvation.
2. The ministry council member must be a member of ROLBC in good standing.
3. The ministry council member must be regularly involved in evangelism.
4. The ministry council member must be committed to missions.
5. The ministry council member must be committed to ROLBC's doctrinal statement.
6. The ministry council member must be committed to ROLBC's Vision, Values & Mission.

Section 3. The number of members of the ministry council shall minimally be three (3) who meet the qualifications and shall be increased on an as needed basis depending on the

number of people in the church congregation and the number of committees and ministry teams in the church that require oversight. The number of members of the ministry council shall be recommended by the senior pastor or other acting chairman and approved by a majority vote based on a forty percent (40%) quorum of resident church membership at a scheduled church business meeting.

Section 4. The makeup of the ministry council shall be as much as possible representative of the population of the congregation with respect to but not limited to gender, race, ethnicity, and age groups, and other applicable demographics present in the church. Qualified members of the church can serve on the ministry council and deacon-elder council simultaneously; however, member of the church who qualify for the ministry council and who do not serve as deacon elders shall have priority to serve on the ministry council.

Section 5. The senior pastor will serve as the chairman and shall lead the ministry council in their work. In addition, the senior pastor as chairman shall represent the ministry council at the deacon-elder council. If there is a vacancy in the position of a senior pastor, the deacon-elder council shall appoint one deacon-elder council member to be the acting chairman of the ministry council until such a time that the church has a new senior pastor. If there are deacon-elder council members already serving on the ministry council, one of those ministry council members who is also a deacon-elder council member shall have priority to serve as the chairman of the ministry council until such a time that the church has a new senior pastor.

Section 6. The selection of each additional ministry council team member will be according to the following guidelines:

1. Under the leadership of the chairman, the current ministry council shall seek qualified members of the congregation who are willing to be considered for service.
2. The ministry council shall meet with the candidate to discuss the following:
 - a. Salvation
 - b. Call to service
 - c. Doctrinal position
 - d. Christian lifestyle
 - e. Spiritual gifts
3. Following the meeting with the candidate the current team members shall devote themselves to a week of prayer for wisdom.
4. The team members shall then meet to discuss recommendation of the candidate to the church body. The current team members must confirm the decision to move forward with an 80% majority.
5. The team members shall then recommend the candidate to the church body at the

annual business meeting or a specially called business meeting.

6. The church body must confirm the recommendation by a majority based on a forty percent quorum (40%) of resident membership of the church.
7. The newly elected team member shall begin the term of service immediately following the meeting at which the selection occurred. The new member shall serve for a period of three years at which time the team member is eligible to serve an additional three-year term. After two consecutive terms the team member is to have a one-year sabbatical after which time the team member would be eligible to serve again.
8. A team member may terminate service with a thirty (30) day notice, at which time the ministry council shall begin the process of seeking a replacement.
9. If for any reason a team member no longer meets the qualifications for service, he should remove himself. If he fails to do so, the ministry council has the responsibility to address the situation in light of Matthew 18:15-20 and I Timothy 5:19-21.

Section 7. Upon the recommendation of the senior pastor, the ministry council shall elect a nominating committee. The nominating committee shall be appointed in July of each year and shall operate under the direction of the senior pastor. It will dissolve immediately following the annual business meeting at which time it brings recommendations. This committee will bring all required nominations for vacancies of all non-deacon church officers, ministry team members, and standing committee team members for the upcoming church year consisting of the following nominations:

1. Treasurer
2. Assistant treasurer
3. Members of the ministry council
4. Members of the evangelism ministry teams
5. Members of the edification ministry teams
6. Members of the exaltation ministry teams
7. Members of the facilities / maintenance ministry teams
8. Members to serve in standing committees including:
 - a. Finance
 - b. Personnel
 - c. Counting
 - d. Greeting
 - e. Committee on committees
 - f. Bylaws

C. Treasurer

Section 1. The term of the treasurer is indefinite. If the office of the treasurer is vacant for the upcoming year, the treasurer shall be elected by the church at its annual business meeting upon the recommendation of the nominating committee. In the event the position of treasurer is found to be vacant between meetings, a new treasurer shall be recommended by the ministry council and approved by majority vote based on a forty percent (40%) quorum of resident church membership at a scheduled church business meeting.

Section 2. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to oversee the receipt, disbursement, deposit, and recording of the finances of the church. Furthermore, it shall be the duty of the treasurer to keep in a bank and disburse by check upon proper authority all money or things of value that are given to the church in accordance with instructions from the church.

Section 3. The treasurer shall be responsible for keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. Monthly financial statements shall be distributed to the ministerial staff, finance committee, and other committee chairs. All books, records and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be property of the church. The treasurer shall upon invitation meet with the ministry and deacon-elder councils.

Section 4. The treasurer shall be responsible for receiving the empty offering envelopes and the copies of checks after money has been removed and counted by counting committee members; and from these the treasurer or assistant treasurer shall give each contributor individual credit as provided in the record system approved by the church.

Section 5. Where possible, the treasurer shall be responsible for the management and reporting of all electronic records of giving, including from the online Givelify application, to give each contributor individual credit as provided in the record system approved by the church.

Section 6. The treasurer shall be responsible for the preparation and distribution of regular statements to all contributing members and non-members as the church directs.

Section 7. The treasurer shall have the authority to open and manage all bank accounts of the church.

Section 8. The treasurer shall be responsible to make sure an accurate finance report is presented to the finance committee each month. In addition, he/she shall make certain that copies of the finance report are made available to the members of the congregation each month.

Section 9. The finance committee shall have the right to review policies, procedures, and actions at any time and to commission an external review or audit on an annual basis or as deemed to be required or appropriate.

Section 10. The treasurer may delegate some of their responsibilities to the assistant treasurer or lead office administrator in consultation with the finance committee.

Section 11. The treasurer shall not be a member of the counting committee. The treasurer shall be an ex officio member (i.e., by virtue of his or her position and without voting rights) of the finance committee.

D. Assistant Treasurer

Section 1. The term of the assistant treasurer is indefinite. The assistant treasurer shall be elected by the church at its annual business meeting upon the recommendation of the nominating committee. In the event the position of assistant treasurer is found to be vacant between meetings, a new assistant treasurer shall be recommended by the ministry council and approved by majority vote based on a forty percent (40%) quorum of resident church membership at a scheduled church business meeting.

Section 2. It shall be the duty of the assistant treasurer of finances to perform all the duties of the treasurer when the treasurer is absent or incapacitated.

Section 3. The assistant treasurer shall be responsible to make certain that an accurate counting of the weekly offerings is made. However, neither the assistant treasurer nor the treasurer shall be directly involved in the counting of tithes and offerings. This shall be done by members of the counting committee.

Section 4. The assistant treasurer shall be responsible for delivering the weekly contributions to the bank on each Monday. The assistant treasurer shall be responsible for returning a deposit receipt from the bank to the lead office administrator that matches the totals previously arrived at by the counting committee.

Section 5. The assistant treasurer shall be responsible for keeping a record of all gifts presented by check, cash, or received by other means and provide each donor a receipt of yearly gifts by the last day of January each year for the previous calendar year of contributions.

Section 6. The lead office administrator or alternatively the senior pastor shall be responsible for the writing of checks. The lead office administrator or alternatively the senior pastor will also sign all written checks. The lead office administrator or alternatively the senior pastor will present the written and signed checks to the assistant treasurer or alternatively the treasurer for a countersignature and corresponding approval.

Section 7. Church credit cards shall be used in lieu of debit cards for more security and to prevent direct access to church checking accounts. Only church staff members or their proxies shall be allowed to use church credit cards under the supervision of the lead office administrator and senior pastor. To avoid interest on credit cards, credit card bills shall be paid in full at the end of each month via checks according to the aforementioned procedures in **Section 6** for writing and signing checks.

Section 8. As part of the process to pay the credit card bills each month, the assistant treasurer or alternatively the treasurer shall review all associated credit card receipts and reconcile them to the credit card bills.

Section 9. For the protection of the senior pastor and church staff at no time shall they be responsible for the counting of tithes and offerings or the preparation of the weekly deposits.

Section 10. The assistant treasurer shall not be a member of the counting committee. The assistant treasurer shall be an ex officio member (i.e., by virtue of his or her position and without voting rights) of the finance committee.

E. Trustee

Section 1. The term of the trustee is indefinite. The church shall have at least two trustees. If there is a vacancy in the office of the trustee, a trustee shall be elected by the church at its annual business meeting upon the recommendation of the nominating committee. In the event the position of trustee is found to be vacant between meetings, a new trustee shall be recommended by the ministry council and approved by majority vote based on a forty percent (40%) quorum of resident church membership at a scheduled business meeting.

Section 2. Trustees shall act as officers of the church, shall be listed on bank resolution documents representing ROLBC, and shall sign all business documents such as loans and bill of sales only upon the request and approval of the Ministry Council, Deacon-Elder Council, and the congregation as a whole as appropriate according to the business at hand. Trustees are not authorized to act unilaterally in such matters.

Section 3. In order to qualify as a trustee, a person must be a member of ROLBC for one year or more and meet all the qualifications to serve on the Ministry Council. However, a trustee need not serve on the Ministry Council to qualify as a trustee.

Section 4. When people are discharged as trustees, their names are to be removed from the bank resolution documents representing ROLBC immediately. Likewise, when people are charged as trustees, their names are to be added to bank resolution documents representing ROLBC immediately.

V. Standing Committees

Section 1. The committee on committees under the guidance of the deacon-elder council shall recommend the creation of new standing committees and ministry teams to the church congregation for approval. The committee on committees will not nominate members to make up standing committees. Nomination of committee members will be performed by the nominating committee.

Section 2. The incoming chairman of the deacon-elder council shall designate deacons as chairmen of standing committees where the deacon-elder council determines that a liaison with

the deacons is required to provide proper biblical oversight of the church. Minimally, the list of such standing committees shall include but not be limited to the following:

1. Finance committee
2. Personnel committee
3. Committee on committees

Direct deacon-elder council oversight with deacon-elder council chairmen of additional standing committees shall be recommended by the deacon-elder council and approved by a forty percent (40%) quorum of resident membership at a scheduled church business meeting with a majority vote.

Section 3. The chairs of other standing committees with the exception of the finance, personnel, and committee on committees shall be determined by the members of each respective committee, immediately after October 1, for a one-year term. These committees shall include but not be limited to the following:

1. Counting committee
2. Greeting committee
3. Bylaws committee

Section 4. The rules, regulations, and/or guidelines from all standing committees shall be available in the church office in a manual of procedures.

Section 5. All standing committees shall operate on the rotation system, except as otherwise stated in these bylaws, with one-third of the committee retiring each year; provided, however that on those committees where persons serve by virtue of positions they hold, such persons shall serve on such committees as long as they hold the specified position. No member of a standing committee shall be eligible for re-election to the committee until one year has elapsed following a full term on such committee.

VI. Ministry Teams

Section 1. Ministry teams will be used in lieu of standing committees when the demands, skills and experience needed for ministry are not best served by rotating people on and off standing committees. New ministry teams or discontinuance of ministry teams will be approved by the committee on committees and the deacon-elder council. These ministry teams shall include but not be limited to ministry teams in the following categories:

1. Evangelism ministry teams

2. Edification ministry teams
3. Exaltation ministry teams
4. Facilities / Maintenance ministry teams

Section 2. Ministry teams shall be filled by staff members, ministry council members, and the appropriate number of church members. On an annual basis, the nominating committee will recommend members of each ministry team to be approved by the church. For vacancies that occur in between nominating cycles, the ministry council shall recommend members to be approved by the church.

VII. Meetings

Section 1. This church shall hold regular times of worship, teaching, and fellowship. The Lord's Supper will be observed once quarterly or every fifth Sunday.

Section 2. Business meetings may be called in the following ways: by the senior pastor, by the chairman of the deacon-elder council, or by petition of at least ten resident church members. Such meetings may be held provided one week's notice has been given to the congregation and the nature of the business shall be announced at the time public notice is given. No new business may be voted upon without congregational notification. (Note: When emergencies occur or the one week's notice would be impractical, business may be transacted if a three-fourths majority of those members present at the morning worship service agree to a business session.)

Section 3. The chairman of the deacon-elder council shall preside over business meetings as moderator. In his absence, the vice chairman of the deacon-elder council shall preside. If neither the chairman nor vice chairman of the deacon-elder council is available, then the secretary of the deacon-elder council shall preside. In his absence, a former chairman of the deacon-elder council shall preside. The secretary of the deacon-elder council or another member of the deacon-elder council shall act as the parliamentarian of said business meetings.

Section 4. A quorum shall consist of not less than forty percent (40%) of the resident membership. Unless otherwise designated, all matters of business will be decided by a majority vote of the resident members present and voting provided a quorum has been obtained.

Section 5. On the evening of the 4th Sunday in September, unless another date in September is specified by the senior pastor or chairman of the deacon-elder council, the church will meet to review the previous church year and cast vision for the upcoming year. At a minimum the following will be discussed at the meeting: church's budget, committee on committees report and the nominating committee report.

Section 6: Notice of any meeting is sufficient if given (1) in writing in the Sunday worship folder, and (2) orally from the pulpit during the associated Sunday worship service. In addition, depending on the nature of the meeting, a combination of the following may be utilized: in writing (i.e., through the postal service) and via electronic means (i.e., through email).

VIII. River of Life Baptist Church (ROLBC) Facilities and Resources

Section 1. ROLBC shall make church facilities and resources, including buildings, grounds, staff, and access to members, available for the approved use of members and certain preapproved non-members with the stipulation that all such facilities and resources only be used in accordance with the beliefs, principles, and policies set forth in this document. ROLBC reserves the right to refuse the use of said facilities and resources when it deems that said facilities and resources will not be used in accordance with said ROLBC beliefs, principles, and policies that have been set forth in this document, specifically including all articles of faith in the constitution. Permission request forms and additional details for the use of ROLBC facilities and resources can be found in the “Church Facility Use Policy” manual available from the lead office administrator in the ROLBC office.

Section 2. According to the deed for the tracts of land that River of Life Baptist Church (ROLBC) of Sunset Beach, North Carolina, Inc. currently sits on and that are owned by ROLBC, if ROLBC ceases to exist, all parcels and tracts of land, buildings, and other net assets would be transferred to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC). This does not include transactions related to eminent domain. For details, see the associated deed in the Brunswick County, North Carolina register of deeds office in Bolivia, North Carolina.

IX. Ministry Recommendations and Ordination

Section 1. In the event a member of this church senses God's call to an area of ministry and desires to prepare in an educational institution requiring church approval, the senior pastor may recommend to the deacon-elder council the approval of this member for such an educational institution. Upon approval by the deacon-elder council, the deacon-elder council chair will present it to the church body for approval at any called business meeting called in accordance to these bylaws. However, church approval is not necessary for any consecutive subsequent years while the member attends the same educational institution. Such instances will be approved by the senior pastor.

Section 2. In the event River of Life Baptist Church (ROLBC) is requested to ordain to the Gospel ministry a male member who gives evidence of having been called of God, or is requested by another church to ordain one of its male members or a former River of Life Baptist Church (ROLBC) male member, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The senior pastor will bring the candidate's request or request from a sister church to the deacon-elder council.
2. Upon the approval of the deacon-elder council, the senior pastor shall then appoint an ordination council to examine the candidate, at a mutually agreed upon date, to determine the validity of his calling. The ordination council shall consist of, at a minimum, two ordained ministers, one of which must be a member of River of Life Baptist Church (ROLBC).
3. The church, upon a favorable report from the ordination council of the candidate's testimony and qualifications will consider the candidate and can express approval of ordination by majority vote at any called business meeting.
4. The candidate shall then be presented for an ordination ceremony.

X. Adoption and Amendments

Section 1. These bylaws will be considered adopted and in immediate effect following a majority vote from the church congregation based on a forty percent (40%) quorum of resident members at a scheduled church business meeting. The River of Life Baptist Church (ROLBC) congregation must be notified in writing of these proposed bylaws two weeks before this vote can take place.

Section 2. These bylaws may be amended, altered, or repealed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote from the church congregation based on a forty percent (40%) quorum of resident members at a scheduled or specially called church business meeting after they have been submitted in writing to the bylaws committee and reviewed and approved for presentation to the church congregation for a vote by the ministry council and deacon-elder council. A two-week notice must be given in writing to the church membership for bylaw changes before they can be voted on for approval.

Section 3. These bylaws will be reviewed for pertinent changes at a minimum of every five years. Such action is to be done in joint cooperation between the pastoral staff, bylaws committee, ministry council, and deacon-elder council. Any proposed changes to the bylaws will be approved through the process detailed in **Section 2**, immediately above.

Section 4. The appropriate church administrative staff will update the constitution and bylaws as revisions are passed. Hard and soft copies of the constitution and bylaws should be available through the church office for any member upon request.

Section 5. Any issue with interpretation or application of these bylaws will be referred to the bylaws committee.