



# **CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

A Nonprofit Religious and Charitable Organization

Amended September 16, 2015

# CONSTITUTION

## PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be subject to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and governed in an orderly democratic process under the direction and leadership of the Senior Pastor (hereinafter referred to as "Pastor") with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist Churches, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of the Church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to the churches of the same faith and order, we do declare and establish this our Constitution and Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE I: NAME AND PRINCIPLE OFFICE**

The name of the Organization is "BELLAIRE BAPTIST CHURCH". This Organization will be further referred to in the Constitution and Bylaws as the "Church". The Church maintains its principle office at 4330 Panther Drive, Bossier City, Louisiana 71112. The Church is a nonprofit religious and charitable organization under the provision of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States.

## **ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

The Mission or purpose of the Church is to be a Biblically based community of believers dedicated to impact our world with the good news of Jesus Christ. We are committed to seeing the five purposes of worship, fellowship, discipleship, service, and evangelism accomplished through this body both individually and collectively.

## **ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God and as the only basis of our beliefs. This Church accepts "The Baptist Faith and Message" as amended, as an affirmation of basic Christian beliefs, and a general statement of our faith as follows:

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.

See 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 7-9; 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 Saviour, 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 inherits 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 Savior, 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 1:6-2:11; 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 co-ordinate 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; 1 Corinthians 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 2:3- 5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7*

- 19. Statement on Marriage, Gender and Sexuality:** We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the Church.

Because we believe in the biblical teaching that marriage is between one man and one woman, marriages outside those parameters will not be performed by church ministers or on church property.

Additionally, the Bible (Scripture) is the authority for all matters of faith and practice in the Church, and the Church shall operate in accordance with Scriptural principles specifically relating to marriage, the family and sexual morality. We believe the Church's Statement on Marriage and Sexuality is based upon God's will for human life as conveyed to us through the Holy Scriptures, upon which this Church has been founded and anchored, and this policy shall not be subject to change through popular vote; referendum; prevailing opinion of members or the general public; influence of or

interpretation by any government authority, agency, or official action; or legal developments on the local, state or federal level.

Therefore, if it reasonably appears to the Church that the general welfare of the Church, its members or employees, are jeopardized by the conduct of any person inconsistent with the mission or principles of the Church, including, but not limited to, those principles described herein including the exercise of sexual expression outside the biblical definition of marriage in any manner, the Church may take those actions it deems appropriate and necessary in accordance with Scripture and the Bylaws, including, but not limited to, disallowing the person from accessing or entering the facilities and/or property belonging to the Church.

It is the policy of the Church that all of the Church's assets and property shall be used to glorify God in fulfillment of the mission of the Church. Accordingly, the Church may disallow any use of its property, formal or informal, by those affiliated with the Church or otherwise, inconsistent with the mission or principles of the Church, including, but not limited to, those principles described herein.

*Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:18-25; I Corinthians 6:18, 7:2-5; Matthew 15:18-20; I Corinthians 6:9-10; Matthew 5:16; Phillipians 2:14-16; I Thessalonians 5:22; Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31*

#### **ARTICLE IV: CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and 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 in 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, worship, ordinances, doctrines, and discipline; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of this ministry, the expenses of the church, and the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our department; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to use our influence to combat drug abuse, pornography, and abortion; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

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

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.

### **ARTICLE V: AFFILIATION**

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers (members) who compose it. This church will be, and is always to be a sovereign, autonomous Baptist church, self-governing on all matters by a majority of the body of members who compose it and recognize and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist Churches. In no way is this to be understood that such co-operation or affiliation shall ever become one of the doctrines and/or tenets of this church.

### **ARTICLE VI: DOCTRINE**

This church receives the scriptures (Holy Bible) as its authority of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of the Baptist churches as indicated in the Articles of Faith referred to in Article III.

# BYLAWS

## **ARTICLE I: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1: GENERAL**

The membership of this Church shall be composed of individuals who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm the tenets of the Church Constitution, and who offer evidence, by their confession and their conduct, that they are living in accord with their affirmations and this Constitution and Bylaws, and are actively pursuing and continuing in a vital fellowship with the Lord, Jesus Christ.

We believe that to carry on the religious mission of the church, to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons who associate with the church as members should abide by and agree to the following statements and conduct themselves in accordance with them.

### **SECTION 2: CANDIDACY (QUALIFICATIONS)**

Any person, who agrees to abide by the Church's Statement of Faith and Statement on Marriage, Gender and Sexuality and conduct themselves in accordance with them, may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this Church. All such candidates shall be presented to the Church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:

- A. A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation;
- B. Baptism by immersion as a testimony of salvation;
- C. Transfer of membership from another Southern Baptist Church or church of like faith and order.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the Pastor and Deacon Body for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths vote of those church members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

### **SECTION 3: DUTIES AND RIGHTS OF MEMBERS**

Members are expected first of all to be faithful to all the duties essential to the Christian life; and also to attend regularly the services of this church, to give regularly for its support and its causes and to share in its organized work.

Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present.

## **SECTION 4: STATEMENT OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (*1 Corinthians 5:6*), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (*1 Timothy 5:20*), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (*Galatians 6:1*).

The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the Pastor and the Deacon Body and is to follow the biblical pattern as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8 and 2 John 7-11. Any member of this church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgement of the Pastor and Deacon Body, is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of this church, or is divisive to the body, shall be subject to church discipline.

Discipline will follow the said biblical pattern, and is an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect the church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry and communion, as well as dismissal from the fellowship of this church. An individual may be disciplined by the Pastor and Deacon Body short of dismissal from the fellowship, as they deem appropriate for the specific circumstance.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request of the excluded person, and by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

## **SECTION 5: TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: (1) the death of the member, (2) dismission to another Baptist Church, (3) exclusion by action of this church, or (4) erasure upon request of proof of membership in a church of another denomination.

## **SECTION 6: FINAL AUTHORITY ON MATTERS OF FAITH AND CONDUCT**

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of the church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, our Pastor and Deacon Body is the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

## **SECTION 7: RECORD OF MEMBERSHIP**

A recording secretary shall keep an accurate roll of all members, and insofar as possible, an up-to-date record of addresses.

## **ARTICLE II: CHURCH ORGANIZATION**

### **SECTION I: PASTOR**

The Pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The Pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks.

The Pastor is the leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such, he works with the deacons and church staff to: (1) lead the church in the achievement of its mission, (2) proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and (3) care for the church's members and other persons in the community.

A Pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given.

A Pastor Selection Committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. The Committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three fourths of those present being necessary for a choice. The Pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request.

The Pastor may relinquish the office as pastor by giving at least two weeks' notice to the church at the time of resignation. The church may declare the office of Pastor to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of a majority of the personnel committee and deacons. The moderator for this meeting shall be designated by the members present by majority vote, and he shall be someone other than the pastor. The vote to declare the office vacant shall be by secret ballot; an affirmative vote of two thirds of the members present being necessary to declare the office vacant. Except in instances of gross misconduct by the Pastor so excluded from office, the church will compensate the pastor with not less than one twelfth of his total annual compensation. The termination shall be immediate and the compensation shall be rendered in not more than thirty days.

### **SECTION 2: MINISTERIAL AND NON-MINISTERIAL STAFF**

The ministerial and non-ministerial staff members shall be called and employed as the Church and/or Personnel Committee determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. With the consultation of the Pastor, the Church Personnel Committee will employ such staff according to the guidelines set forth in the Church Budget.



## SECTION 3: DEACONS

1. Functional Role: In accordance with the meaning of the word "deacon" as practiced in the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the Church. The function of the deacon is to serve with the Pastor in performing the tasks of the Church of worshiping, proclaiming, educating and ministering.
2. Number of Active Deacons in Service: The number of deacons shall be based on the needs of the Church as recommended by the Pastor. The needs of the Church in regard to the number of deacons for the next term shall be determined by the current year's Chairman of the Deacons with input from the current year's active deacon body and presented to the Pastor as a recommendation.
3. Deacon Nominating Committee: The Deacon Nominating Committee, hereinafter referred to as "Committee", shall consist of a sufficient number of active deacons, consisting of the Chairman of Deacons and other members, to be chosen by the Pastor and Chairman of Deacons. The Pastor acts as a nonvoting moderator over the voting committee members. It is preferred for the Committee to consist of deacons who are in their second or third year of deacon service or as a church member who has served at least one year as a deacon at Bellaire Baptist Church before.
4. Nominating Procedure: The procedure is as follows:
  - A. It is essential to note the nature of the nominating procedure for our Church. It shall be a procedure in which men are reviewed and possibly selected for deacon service through a process of encouragement and spiritual discernment and not be judgmental or fault focused. We desire to encourage and exhort men into service as deacons. A "hard copy" list of eligible candidates will be made available to the church family. A church member may nominate as many individuals as they desire. The nominees will receive a questionnaire (reviewed and updated annually if necessary by the deacon body) prepared by the Committee. It is to be completed and submitted to the Pastor's office.
  - B. When all questionnaires are submitted by the nominees, the Committee shall evaluate the candidates on the basis of answers to the questions, the candidate's record of church membership, and the candidate's known compliance with the Church's qualification for deacon guidelines. Based on the total of all information received, the committee will make their selections of candidates to be interviewed for final evaluation and subsequent recommendation to the Pastor.
  - C. The Committee shall interview each selected nominee individually. All information about each nominee is confidential and shall not be discussed with anyone outside of the Committee except for the Pastor. The Committee must have unanimous affirmation of each interviewed nominee in order to be presented to the Pastor for approval.
  - D. Once the Deacon Nominating Committee selects the candidates and they are approved by the Pastor, the Church is given an opportunity to affirm the candidates when they are presented to the Church by the Pastor at an ordination service.
  - E. Deacons not selected by the Committee shall be notified by the Committee with great care. The procedure shall be conducted in a manner that

encourages and supports the individual for service everywhere in the Church or may suggest mentoring support to prepare the individual for future deacon consideration and service.

- F. Deacon Term of Service: The deacon body shall serve on a rotational basis. After serving a term of three years, no deacon shall be eligible for re-election at the end of such term until a lapse of at least one year.

- 5. Eligibility Requirements: Any male, age twenty-one or over, with at least one year of membership in the Bellaire Baptist Church of Bossier City and who meets the scriptural requirements of a deacon as found in 1Timothy 3:9-13 and Acts 6:3, is eligible to be nominated as a deacon.

## **SECTION 4: TRUSTEES**

The church shall elect six trustees to serve as legal officers for the church. They shall hold in trust the church property. Upon a specific vote of the church authorizing each action, they shall have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any church property. When the signatures of trustees are required, at least two (2) trustees' signatures are required on all legal documents. Trustees shall serve on a rotation basis, with two new trustees being elected every year.

## **ARTICLE III: CHURCH COMMITTEES**

### **SECTION 1: THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

The Finance Committee is comprised of six members. The primary function of the Finance Committee is to continuously review the financial affairs of the Church to provide a level of stewardship accountability for the Church staff to the Church membership. This committee meets as needed (or as required by its Chairman) to review the financial statements prepared by the Church Administrator, to examine prior approved disbursements for propriety, to consider the accounting and financial systems of the Church, to measure actual financial operations to budgeted amounts, and to advise the Pastor of any action needed by the body in the financial area. The Finance Committee meets annually to develop a proposed budget for the next Church fiscal year. Utilizing Church Staff input and through interviews of Church Staff submitting budget requests and recommendations of the Personnel Committee, the Finance Committee formulates a proposed budget, which is then presented to the Church in conference for church membership approval. The Finance Committee is to submit desired revisions in the current budget to the Church in conference as deemed appropriate by the committee and with approval of the Pastor.

The Finance Committee members are to serve for a three-year term and two positions are to become vacant for Committee on Committees action each year.

## **SECTION 2: PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

The Personnel Committee is a six-member committee. The function of the Personnel Committee is to assist the Pastor in determining the staffing and compensation levels of the Church and with the consultation of the Pastor or his designee, to propose staffing and compensation changes within the Finance Committee guidelines.

The Personnel Committee members are to serve for a three-year term and two positions are to become vacant for Committee on Committees action each year.

Additionally, the Personnel Committee may be asked to advise and counsel the Pastor in interviews of prospective staff members, employee benefit program considerations, and other personnel-related matters.

## **SECTION 3: COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES**

This committee shall consist of six (6) members elected on a rotating basis with two (2) new members being recommended annually by the Pastor for election by the church. Their responsibility is to recommend to the church all committee members unless otherwise specified within these bylaws.

## **SECTION 4: TELLER COMMITTEE**

This committee is composed of at least nine (9) members and will be responsible for establishing policies and procedures for the securing, counting and depositing all monies that are collected through the church, except weekday receipts. This committee does not serve on a rotation basis.

## **SECTION 5: BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE**

This committee is composed of at least six (6) members and shall be responsible for maintaining all church properties, recommending policies regarding use of properties. This committee does not serve on a rotation basis.

## **SECTION 7: SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

On occasion, special committees are appointed by the Pastor and/or church for one specific task which cease after the performance of the special task.

## **ARTICLE IV: CHURCH MINISTRIES**

The ministries of the Church are to be consistent with the Church Covenant and Articles of Faith. They are to be under the supervision of the Pastor, or his designated Church Staff member. In order for a ministry to be considered as a ministry of the Church it must be under the Scriptural authority of the Church so as to insure appropriate accountability, integrity, and management of such ministries.

A Directory of Church Ministries is to be maintained in the Church office. The directory shall describe the ministry name, the defined ministry objective, and the Church Staff position having responsibility for that ministry. The Church Staff person having that ministry responsibility may create such organizational structure with the approval of the Pastor.

## **ARTICLE V: CHURCH ORDINANCES**

### **SECTION 1: BAPTISM**

The church will receive for baptism those who have received Jesus Christ as Savior, have professed Him publicly at a worship service or at other evangelistic opportunities provided by the church, and indicate a commitment to follow Christ as Lord. See *Article III (7) of the Constitution for beliefs.*

1. Baptism shall be by immersion in water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as a symbol of the person's salvation;
2. The Pastor or whomever he shall authorize shall administer baptism.
3. A Deacon committee made up of active deacons will assist the pastor in making this ordinance a memorable experience for the candidates for baptism. They will instruct the candidates concerning procedure and necessary clothing, assist in preparing the pool, assist in dressing rooms, and take care of clean-up after the service.

### **SECTION 2: THE LORD'S SUPPER**

The Church shall observe the Lord's Supper no less than twice a year. The Pastor and deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper. See *Article III (7) of the Constitution for beliefs.*

A Deacon committee made up of active deacons will assist the pastor in preparation, organization and observance of the Lord's Supper.

## **ARTICLE VI: CHURCH MEETINGS**

### **SECTION 1: REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS**

The church shall hold regular business meetings monthly on the Wednesday following the second Sunday. The Pastor or Church Administrator shall serve as moderator. In the absence of both, the Associate Pastor shall preside.

### **SECTION 2: SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS**

The Church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. A one-week notice must be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, time and place.

### **SECTION 3: QUORUM**

The quorum consist of those members who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

### **SECTION 4: PARLIAMENTARY RULES**

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

## **ARTICLE VII: GENERAL**

### **SECTION 1: LICENSING AND ORDINATION**

Any person recommended by the Pastor having given evidence that he is called to the work of the ministry, may be licensed to preach. The Pastor shall possess the sole right to convene an Ordination Council to examine the qualifications of a candidate and, in turn, advise the Church as to the propriety of ordination. The final action to ordain such minister shall rest with the Church upon recommendation of the Pastor.

### **SECTION 2: ADOPTION OF CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

This Constitution and the Bylaws, shall be considered adopted and will become effective the 16<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2015 upon affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present at a church conference. The adoption shall affect a repeal of all previously adopted rules in conflict herewith.

### **SECTION 3: AMENDMENTS**

Changes in the Constitution or Bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the Constitution shall be by two-thirds vote of church members present. Amendments to the bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting. A copy of this Constitution and Bylaws shall, at all times, be kept by the Church Administrator along with amendments to or revisions thereof. Up-to-date copies shall also be maintained in the church offices and made available to any church member upon request.

## CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION

The foregoing Constitution and Bylaws have been duly accepted as amended this 16<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2015, by the membership of Bellaire Baptist Church of Bossier City, Louisiana 71112.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, witness the hand of the undersigned as Moderator and Senior Pastor on such date.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. F. Randy Harper  
Moderator and Senior Pastor