

**BYLAWS  
LAGRANGE BAPTIST CHURCH**

**ARTICLE ONE: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

**SECTION 1. GENERAL**

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

**SECTION 2. CANDIDACY**

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be examined by the pastor, and upon recommendation of the pastor will be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:

1. By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
2. By promise of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church.
3. Upon statement of prior conversion experience and subsequent baptism by immersion, when no letter is obtainable.

**SECTION 3. RIGHTS OF MEMBERS**

Every member of the church is entitled to one vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting.

Every member of the church, subject to the restrictions in the following bylaws, is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elective offices in the church.

Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

**SECTION 4. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

Members shall be terminated in the following ways: Death of the member; Dismissal to another Baptist church; Exclusion by action of this church; At the request of the member; or Erasure upon confirmation of proof of membership in a church of another denomination.

## **SECTION 5. DISCIPLINE**

It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment.

Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the pastor and the deacons will take every reasonable measure to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a two-thirds vote of the members present is required; and the church may proceed to declare the person to be no longer in the membership of the church. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance.

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.

## **ARTICLE TWO: CHURCH OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES**

All who serve as officers of the church and those who serve on church committees shall be members of the church.

### **SECTION 1. CHURCH OFFICERS AND DEACONS**

The officers of this church shall be the elders, the church ministerial staff, a moderator, a clerk, a treasurer, and trustees.

1. The elders are responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The elders will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks. The elders are leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such, they work 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) Shepherd the church's members and lead them in showing the love of Christ to the community.

A minimum of four and not more than seven elders shall serve at any one time. Should the number of elders fall below four, the chairman of the deacons shall meet with the elder body until additional elders are affirmed by the church.

Any man of the congregation over 18 years of age believing himself to be called to the office of elder is to present himself to an ordained man of the church as a candidate for the office. The candidate's life, Christian walk, and doctrinal positions will be examined by a council of ordained men of the church in light of the biblical mandates for elders as given in God's Word (1 Timothy, Titus, Acts, 1 Peter). Upon completion of the examination, the examining council will vote "yes" or "no" as to the qualifications and call of the candidate to the office of elder. A unanimous vote of confidence (100%) is required by the examining council. If a unanimous vote is not reached, any ordained man voting "no" must give reason(s) in accordance with the Scriptures for his vote of "no confidence". Upon unanimous agreement by the examining council, the candidate will be presented to the congregation and a time established for a congregational vote of affirmation. Ten percent of the roll of resident membership shall constitute a quorum for the affirmation of an elder. An affirmation vote of 75% or more of the congregation voting is required before a man will be affirmed as an elder of the Church. If the affirmed candidate has not been previously ordained to the gospel ministry, an ordination service will be held where the candidate will be ordained to the gospel ministry and publicly set apart for the service of elder by the laying on of hands. Any ordained man serving on the examining council may take part in the laying on of hands.

Elders, with the exception of the pastor-teacher elder, may be removed from office by resignation or vote of the congregation. An elder may resign his office at any time if he finds he is no longer able or no longer qualified to fulfill the duties of his office. A grievance may be brought against an elder due to his adherence to or teaching of beliefs contrary to the doctrinal position of the church or due to conduct on his part disqualifying him from serving as an elder. The grievance should be brought to the elder body by two or more church members in accordance of Matthew 18 and 1 Timothy 5. If the elder body, after investigation, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, the elder in question can be removed from office upon recommendation of either the elder body or the deacons and, in either case, a majority vote of the congregation present and voting.

The pastor-teacher shall always be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described above and shall be recognized by the congregation as particularly gifted and called to the vocational ministry of preaching and teaching.

The pastor-teacher 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-teacher selection committee shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor-teacher, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. Any church member has the privilege of making other nominations according to the policy established by the church. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by ballot, and affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary for a choice. The pastor-teacher, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request.

The pastor-teacher may relinquish the office of pastor-teacher by giving a least two week's notice to the church at the time of resignation. The church may declare the office of pastor-teacher to be vacant. Such action shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, subsequent to the approval of the grievance process for elders, of which at least one week's public notice has been given. The meeting may be called upon the recommendation of: (1) a majority of the personnel committee and the elder body; (2) a majority of the personnel committee and the deacons; or (3) by written petition signed by not less than one-fourth of the resident church members. The moderator for this meeting shall be someone other than the pastor-teacher. 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-teacher so excluded from office, the church will compensate the pastor-teacher 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 30 days.

2. The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as the church determines the need for such offices. A job description shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. Those staff members of whom the church requires evidence of a personal call of God to minister shall be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and called by church action. At the time of resignation, at least two weeks' notice shall be given to the church. The church may vote to vacate such positions upon recommendation of the personnel committee, such termination being immediate and the compensation conditions being the same as for the pastor, except that the amount

shall relate to the individuals compensation.

Non-ministerial staff members shall be employed as the church determines the need for their services. The church personnel committee shall recommend to employ and to terminate services of non-ministerial staff members. Such employment and termination of services shall be with the recommendation of the supervising staff member and, as appropriate, with the consultation of related committees of the church. Recommendations will be voted upon at the next business meeting.

3. The church shall elect deacons by written ballot at a business meeting called for that purpose, which will take place at the end of a morning service by/on the first Sunday of October. All un-ordained men elected as deacons will be ordained in an evening service by/on the first Sunday of October. All men who are members of the church and widely known to meet the qualifications of Acts 6:3, i.e., are of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, as well as the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13, which among others include, holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, being tested over time and found blameless, and being faithful in all things, are eligible for nomination.

Deacons shall serve on a three-year rotation. Each year the assigned term of office of those deacons completing their third year of service shall expire, and an election shall be held to fill vacancies. There shall be at least one deacon elected for assigned service for every fifty resident members, provided they are qualified.

Men eligible for election must first be nominated by a member, vetted by those deacons rotating out of office and presented by the deacon body to the congregation as eligible for office.

To be elected, an individual must receive 75% approval from the voting congregation present. No votes by proxy or absentee will be allowed.

In case of the inability to complete a three-year term, or after serving a term of three years, a deacon shall be eligible for re-election only after the lapse of at least one year. There shall be no obligation to constitute as an assigned deacon someone who has been a deacon in another church; but in such instances as one might be chosen by this church for assignment as a deacon, after he has been tested and proven to be blameless and faithful to the call of the deacon office, by an ordination council, his previous ordination by another church of like faith and order shall suffice for this church.

In accordance with the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. Their task is to serve under the direction of the elders. Their ministries to the church are to the practical details of church life.

When there is no pastor, the deacons will serve as a pulpit supply committee if there is no elder body to serve as this committee

4. The church shall elect annually a moderator as its presiding officer. In the absence of the moderator, the chairman of deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and preside for the election of an acting moderator.
5. The church shall elect annually a clerk as its clerical officer. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. The clerk shall be responsible for keeping a register of names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communication and written official reports, and give required notice of all meetings where notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. The clerk shall be responsible for preparing the annual letter of the church to the association.
6. The church shall elect annually a church treasurer as its financial officer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by the authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements of the preceding month. The treasurer's report and records shall be audited annually by a non-affiliated auditing committee or public accountant. The treasurer may be bonded, the church paying for the bond.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year and its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the church.

The responsibilities of the office of the treasurer may be delegated to the financial secretary.

7. The church shall elect five or more 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, they shall sign

legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property, or other legal documents related to the church approved matters.

Trustees shall serve as the church elects.

## **SECTION 2. CHURCH COMMITTEES**

The committees of this church shall be a nominating committee, a personnel committee, a church property and space committee, a finance committee, and such other regular and special committees as the church shall authorize. Additional regular committees may be added by the amendment procedure prescribed within these bylaws. All church committee members shall be recommended by the church nominating committee and elected by the church unless otherwise specified within these bylaws. Committee members shall serve on a three-year rotation basis with one-third to be elected each year.

1. The Nominating Committee coordinates the staffing of all church leadership positions filled by volunteer workers, unless otherwise specified herein. The Nominating Committee shall present to the church for election those who accept the invitation to serve. New Nominating Committee positions are to be selected by the Nominating Committee each year and approved by the church.
2. The Personnel Committee assists the church in matters related to the employee personnel administration, including those called by church action. Their work includes such areas as determining staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, other compensation, policies, job descriptions, and personnel services.
3. The Church Property and Space Committee assists the church in matters related to properties administration. Its work includes such areas as maintaining all church properties for ready use, recommending policies regarding use of properties, consulting with personnel committee and church staff regarding the needs for, and employment of, maintenance personnel, and regarding the assignment of supervisory responsibility to appropriate personnel.
4. The Finance Committee develops and recommends an overall stewardship development plan, a unified church budget, and budget subscription plans. It advises and recommends in the administration of the gifts of church members and others, using sound principles of financial management. It works with the treasurer in preparation and presentation to the church of required reports regarding the financial affairs of the church. The church Finance Committee shall consist of such members as is necessary, including one active deacon and one

active trustee.

### **ARTICLE THREE: CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS**

The church shall maintain programs of Bible teaching; church member training, church leader training, new member orientation; mission education, action and support; and music education, training and performance. All organizations related to the church programs shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church, and all program activities subject to church coordination and approval. The church shall provide the human resources, the physical resources, and the financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

1. The Sunday School shall be the basic organization for the Bible teaching program. Its tasks shall be to teach the Biblical revelation, reach persons for Christ and church membership, perform the functions of the church within its constituency, provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

The Sunday School shall be organized by departments and/or classes, as appropriate for all ages, and shall be conducted under the direction of the Sunday School Director.

2. The discipleship training organization shall serve as the training unit of the church. Its tasks shall be to train church members to perform the functions of the church; train church leaders; orient new church members; teach Christian theology, and Christian ethics, Christian history, and church polity and organization; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Discipleship training shall be organized by departments for all ages and conducted under the direction of a general director.

3. Woman's Missionary Union shall be the mission education, mission action, and mission support organization of the church for women, young women, girls and preschool children. Its tasks shall be to teach missions; engage in mission action; support world missions through praying and giving; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

Woman's Missionary Union shall have such officers and organization as the program requires.

4. The Brotherhood shall be the church's organization for mission education, mission action, and mission support for men, young men, and boys. Its tasks shall be to teach missions, engage in mission action, support world missions through praying and giving, and

provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

The Brotherhood shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires.

5. The church music organization, under the direction of the Minister of Music, shall direct the music education, training, and performance for the church. Its tasks shall be to teach music; train persons to lead, sing, and play music; provide music in the church and community; and provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

The church music program shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires.

#### **ARTICLE FOUR: CHURCH PROGRAM SERVICES**

The church shall maintain media center services and recreation services for the purpose of enriching and extending the ministries and programs of the church.

1. The Media Center will be the resource center for the church. Its personnel will seek to provide and promote the use of printed and audiovisual resources. They also will provide consultation to church leaders and members in the use of printed and audiovisual resources.

The Media Center program shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires.

2. The church recreation services will seek to meet the recreational needs of members and groups. Its personnel will provide recreation activities, consultation, leadership assistance, and resources.

The church recreation program shall have such officers and organizations as the program requires.

#### **ARTICLE FIVE: CHURCH COUNCIL**

The Church Council shall serve the church by leading in planning, coordinating, conducting and evaluating the ministries and programs of the church and its organizations.

The Church Council shall seek to correlate and coordinate the activities and organizations of the church, serving only in an advisory capacity. Regular members of the Church Council shall be the Pastor, called Staff Members, the Nominating

Committee Chairman, the Personnel Committee Chairman, the Property and Space Committee Chairman, the Finance Committee Chairman, the Sunday School Director the Discipleship Training Director, the WMU Director, the Brotherhood Director the Media Center Director, the Recreation Director, Chairman of Deacons, Church Officers, and other members as the church Council deems necessary.

The Church Council shall meet monthly or quarterly, as may be desired or on the call of the pastor at any time deemed necessary. The council shall present a report at the next regular business meeting.

The functions of the Church Council shall consist of the following: Reports of progress, calendar of activities, matters which need joint consideration, organizational needs, objectives requiring team work and united spiritual emphasis.

All matters agreed upon by the Church Council shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

## **ARTICLE SIX: CHURCH ORDINANCES**

### **SECTION 1. BAPTISM**

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord.

1. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
2. The pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, shall administer baptism. The deacons shall assist in the observance of baptism.
3. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.
4. A person who professes Christ and is not baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor and or staff or deacons. Following counseling, if negative interest is ascertained on the part of the candidate, he or she may be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

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

The church shall observe the Lord's Supper at least quarterly, the first Sunday of the quarter, unless otherwise scheduled by the church. The observance shall alternate between the morning and evening services of worship. The pastor and deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper, the deacons being responsible for serving the Lord's Supper.

## **ARTICLE SEVEN: CHURCH MEETINGS**

### **SECTION 1. WORSHIP SERVICES**

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening for worship of almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of those services. The pastor shall direct the services for all the church members and for all others who may choose to attend.

### **SECTION 2. SPECIAL SERVICES**

Revival services and any other church meetings essential to the advancement of the church's objective shall be placed on the church calendar.

### **SECTION 3. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS**

The church shall hold regular business meetings monthly on the third Sunday night.

### **SECTION 4. 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 special called business meetings unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, and time and place; and it must be given in such a manner that all resident members have opportunity to know of the meeting by announcement in a prior service.

The annual meeting will be the third Wednesday night of September.

### **SECTION 5. QUORUM**

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

On all matters that come before the church, each member is entitled to one vote. Two percent of the roll of the resident membership shall constitute a quorum, except that of the election of officers, three percent; and for the call of a pastor ten percent shall be necessary.

### **SECTION 6. PARLIAMENTARY RULES**

“Roberts Rules of Order, Revised” is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

## **ARTICLE EIGHT: CHURCH FINANCES**

### **SECTION 1. BUDGET**

The Finance Committee, in consultation with the Church Council, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating the items, the amount needed and sought for all local and other expenses. Offering envelopes will be provided for member’s use.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular proportionate gifts. Annually there shall be opportunity provided to secure worthy commitments of financial support from the church members.

### **SECTION 2. ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES**

All funds received for any and all purpose shall pass through the hands of the Church Treasurer, or Financial Secretary, and be properly recorded on the books of the church. Those who have responsibility that involve actual handling of funds may be bonded, the church paying the bond.

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Stewardship Committee.

### **SECTION 3. FISCAL YEAR AND ANNUAL MEETINGS**

The church fiscal year shall run January 1 through December 31. The church year runs October 1 through September 30.

## **ARTICLE NINE: CHURCH OPERATIONS MANUAL**

A special committee of the church shall develop a church operations manual to include church policies and procedures and organization charts depicting lines of responsibility in the administration of the church. The manual shall be kept in the church office and made available for use there by any member of the church. The church secretary shall maintain the manual. The Church Council or a special committee shall review the manual at least annually, with authority to recommend changes for the church to consider. Any church member or church organization may initiate suggested changes in the manual.

Any addition, revision, or deletion of church policies requires:

The recommendation of the church officer or organization to whose areas of assignment the policy relates and approval by the church.

Procedures may be added, revised or deleted by:

Recommendation of the church officer or organization to whose areas of assignment the procedures relate, and approval of the church, if the Church Council deems it necessary.

## **ARTICLE TEN: STATEMENT OF BELIEFS**

The church uses the Baptist Faith and Message as its basic statement of beliefs. A special committee of the church shall develop an addendum statement to this document that expresses the beliefs of the church on issues of our day, not covered in the Baptist Faith and Message, deemed vital to the life of the church, furtherance of the gospel, and preservation of the family.

## **ARTICLE ELEVEN: AMENDMENTS**

Changes in the Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church. Each amendment shall have been presented in writing at previous business meetings, and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws shall be by two-thirds vote of the church members present. Amendment to the Bylaws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.