

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish the constitution and bylaws of The First Baptist Church of Laurel, Maryland, to ensure that the principles of our faith will be strengthened and upheld through the orderly and godly governing of this body of believers. The purpose of this constitution and bylaws is to establish a framework for cooperative effort by church members in fulfilling the purposes of this church, while preserving the individual liberties of each church member. It also defines the affiliation of this church with churches and organizations of the same faith.

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be “The First Baptist Church of Laurel, Maryland” (herein after referred to as “church”).

Whenever it is desirable to abbreviate the name of this organization, the names First Baptist Church of Laurel, First Baptist Church, or FBCL shall be considered in every way the legal name of the church corporation.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The objective of this church is to glorify God by loving Him and obeying His commands through:

- Worshiping Him;
- Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study;
- Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and evangelism;
- Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions: locally, domestically, and internationally;
- Administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper; and
- Fellowshiping among believers

This church purposes to be a source of spiritual and physical support of the Lord Jesus Christ’s command to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth (Matt. 28:19-20). This church also purposes to nurture its members in Christ, His Word, and His love through a program of Christian education.

ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF FAITH

This church accepts the Bible as its authority in all matters of faith and practice.

We recognize “The 2000 Baptist Faith and Message,” adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention as our detailed statement of faith.

ARTICLE IV – RELATIONSHIPS

This church shall be governed solely by the members who belong to it. It recognizes benefits of mutual counsel and cooperation with other Baptist churches and, insofar as is practical, will cooperate with and support the Prince George’s Baptist Association, the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

THE BYLAWS

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Qualification

A. To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible, and who affirms the church Constitution & Bylaws and Statement of Faith. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership.

Section 2. Admission Procedure

A. Applicants must complete a "new members class." The content of this class will focus on ensuring applicants have an understanding of the core doctrines and beliefs of this church, knowledge of the church organizations, functions, and the church leadership. Upon completion of such class, the applicant shall be interviewed by the elders.

B. To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission and must be received by a majority vote of the members at any regular or special member's meeting.

C. Formal records shall be kept in the church offices documenting membership details including but not limited to: admission date, disciplinary actions, resignation requests, etc.

Section 3. Rights

A. All members of this church shall be entitled to participate in all matters of church business except as detailed in this document.

B. Voting Members & Non-Voting Members

1. To be a voting member, and therefore able to vote in member's meetings, one must meet the qualifications listed above in Section 1 and be a minimum of 18 years of age.

2. Any member who meets the qualifications of Section 1 and admission procedures of Section 2, but who is also under the age of 18, will be a non-voting member and unable to vote during member meetings.

Section 4. Responsibilities

A. It is the responsibility of each member to live a Christian life in word and in deed, to faithfully attend church services, to honor, esteem and love one another. Members are to walk together in Christian love, to share in the church's organized work, and participate in the ordinances. Each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material

resources as each has received from God.

B. Under Christ, this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of qualified members to attend members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, decisions regarding membership, and other such matters as may be subject to a vote.

Section 5. Discipline

A. God involves his church in every aspect of his redemptive work. This holds true even when God disciplines his children out of his love for them so they can share in his holiness (Heb. 12:4-11). In what is commonly referred to as church discipline, God invites his church to participate with him as he carries out his loving, redeeming discipline. God carries out his discipline in and through the body of Christ (Matt. 18:15-20). If any member shall conduct himself/herself in a manner which is not in harmony with Scriptural principles, defames the name of Jesus Christ, or opposes the welfare of the church, such member may be subject to church discipline. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed to produce repentance.

Church discipline makes membership meaningful—members and leaders care about one another and commit to encourage each other to follow Christ, enabling the church to enjoy life with God and participate in his mission.

B. The purposes of church discipline are:

1. Repentance, restoration, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (Proverbs 15:5; 29; 1 Cor. 4:14; Hebrews 12:1-11; James 1:22);
2. Removing wickedness and instructing in righteousness (Romans 15:14; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 5:20);
3. Renewing the purity of the church as a whole (1 Cor. 5:6-7; Eph. 5:27; Jude 24);
4. Reaffirming our witness to non-Christians (Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13-16; 1 John 3:10); and,
5. Revealing the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (Duet. 5:11; John 15:8; Romans 2:24; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:12).

C. Actions to be Taken

1. Action by the individual members. The member may be sought out by any member of the church, in the spirit of brotherly love, and implored to change their course and repent (Matthew 18). If their conduct continues to bring reproach to the cause of Christ, the individual should inform the elders.
2. Action by the elders. The elders shall seek to approach such member with pastoral love and care and call the individual to repentance. If their conduct continues to bring reproach to the cause of Christ, the elders shall report the case to the church.
3. Action by the church. If, after being brought before the church at a member's meeting, the individual's conduct continues to bring reproach to the cause of Christ, the church shall determine by a two-thirds majority vote of those present to remove the individual from membership.
4. Restoration of Membership. Any person whose membership has been terminated due to church discipline, may be restored to membership in good standing when that person shows evidence, via a public recommitment, of a change of spirit and a desire

to live a Christian life. The elders shall help facilitate this restoration.

Section 6. Withdrawal of Membership

A. The church may recognize a member's withdrawal from membership:

1. After he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Resignation requests should be submitted to the elders.
2. As a result of church discipline.

B. The church shall recognize a member's withdrawal from membership:

1. Following his or her death.
 2. Following his or her self-professed apostasy as confirmed by vote of the members during a members meeting.
 3. Should such a member be unable to located.
 4. Following his or her lack of participation within the church for a period of 6 months.
- C. The church shall have the authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

D. Upon the vote of a simple majority of the members present at any member's meeting, membership can be withdrawn; except in the circumstance of church discipline when a two-thirds majority is necessary.

ARTICLE II – STAFF

Section 1. Senior Pastor.

A. The senior pastor shall conduct all worship services or make provision for a substitute, act as advisor in all phases of church life, serve as an ex-officio officer of all program organizations, and promote the spiritual welfare of the church. The senior pastor shall moderate or appoint a moderator at all member's meetings unless special provision has been made to do otherwise by the church, and shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees. The senior pastor shall serve as one of the elders with no terms or time limits. A current job description of the senior pastor's duties, prepared by the Personnel Committee and approved by a majority of the church members, shall be kept on file in the church office and in the files of the Personnel Committee.

B. A senior pastor shall be recommended by a Pastor Search Committee (Article VI, Sec. 2) and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. The committee shall bring only one person at a time for consideration by the church. Election shall take place at a meeting especially called for that purpose and for which at least two weeks public notice has been given from the pulpit.

C. Election shall be by secret ballot with an affirmative vote of 85% of those members voting being necessary for a call.

D. The senior pastor shall serve until the relationship is dissolved at the request of either the senior pastor or the church. Thirty days' notice shall be given prior to the date of resignation. In order for the church to dismiss the senior pastor, a petition for dismissal signed by ten percent of the active membership shall be presented to the elders, deacons, or Personnel Committee who shall call a special

member's meeting for that purpose. A petition for dismissal may also be brought to a member's meeting upon recommendation of the elders. At least two weeks' public notice shall be given from the pulpit for the meeting. A majority vote of those present is required; the vote shall be by secret ballot.

E. An interim senior pastor may be elected by the church when it is known or anticipated that the senior pastor will be absent for an extended period. The interim senior pastor shall be recommended by the personnel committee with the election procedures the same as those for senior pastor.

Section 2. Additional Staff Members.

A. Other staff personnel, including but not limited to Directors of Discipleship, Music, Youth, Children, Head of School, etc. shall be elected by the church as needed. They shall be recommended by the Personnel Committee and elected by the church. Election shall be made by a simple majority vote of those present at a member's meeting by show of hands. Resignations shall be in accordance with the employee handbook. Termination procedures shall be the same as those outlined for the senior pastor.

B. An interim staff member may be elected by the church when it is known or anticipated that a regular staff member will be absent for an extended period. The interim staff member shall be recommended by the personnel committee with the election procedures the same as those for regular staff members.

C. Job descriptions outlining duties, benefits, etc. shall be prepared by the Personnel Committee and approved by the church. A current copy of each job description shall be on file in the church office and with the Personnel Committee.

D. Any staff member that concurrently serves as a pastor/elder will do so without terms or time limits.

Section 3. Supporting Staff. Supporting staff positions, including but not limited to: secretaries, office personnel, custodian, musicians, etc. shall be employed by the church as needed. Persons employed in each position shall be selected by the professional staff in coordination with the Personnel Committee and need not be approved by the church for election or termination. Job descriptions outlining duties, benefits, etc. shall be prepared by the Personnel Committee and approved by the church. A current copy of each job description shall be on file in the church office and with the Personnel Committee.

ARTICLE III -OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

Section 1. Elders.

A. Qualifications: The elders shall be men chosen according to the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

B. Duties:

a. The primary duty of the elders shall be to oversee the ministry and resources of the church. The elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

b. The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism

and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. Further, the elders shall seek to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, affirm our fundamental gospel convictions and do not teach our church anything contrary to the Statement of Faith.

C. Election: The elders shall be elected by an affirmative vote of 85% of those voting via a secret ballot.

D. Terms:

a. The term of office for an elder shall be three years, unless otherwise specified. An elder who has completed a three-year term shall not be eligible for re-election until one year has lapsed. Those elders elected to fill an existing vacancy may be re-elected by the church for a three-year term. However, an elder may not serve consecutive terms of less than three years. In case of death, removal, or incapacity to serve, the church may elect to fill the unexpired term.

b. An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and I Timothy 5: 17–21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members' meeting of the church.

E. Relationship between elders: While elders are overseers of the flock, they are themselves members of the flock; therefore, each elder as an individual is under the oversight of his fellow-elders and subject to the same discipline as are members of the flock.

Section 2. Deacons.

A. Qualifications: The deacons shall be chosen according to the qualifications set forth in Acts 6:3-6 and I Timothy 3:1-13.

B. Duties. A primary duty of the deacons shall be to minister to and visit each church family. Each deacon shall be assigned this responsibility for a group of families each year. New families shall be assigned to a deacon as soon as possible after joining the church. The deacons shall be charged with aiding the administering of the Lord's Supper, keeping the membership enlisted in the full program of the church, assisting in keeping the church rolls up-to-date, and promoting peace, harmony, and the spirit of cooperation among the membership. They shall administer the Deacons' Fund. They shall meet regularly. They shall manifest at all times full cooperation with the church leadership and the entire program of the church.

C. Election. There should be a minimum of 12 active deacons. The deacons shall be elected by an affirmative secret vote of 75% of those voting.

D. Term: The term of office shall be three years. A deacon who has completed a three-year term shall not be eligible for re-election until one year has lapsed. Those elected to fill an existing vacancy may be re-elected by the church for a three-year term. However, a deacon may not serve consecutive terms of less than three years. In case of death, removal, or incapacity to serve, the church may elect to fill the unexpired term.

E. There is no obligation to elect as a deacon a brother who comes to this church from another where he has served as a deacon.

F. Deacons shall be appointed to ministries annually, as needed.

Section 3. Trustees.

A. Qualifications: The trustees shall be church members who are at least 21 years of age.

B. Duties:

a. The Trustees shall form the body corporate by the name and corporate title of "The Trustees of the First Baptist Church of Laurel, Maryland," and shall hold in trust all the property, effects, etc. for the benefit of the church.

b. The Trustees shall act as directed by Public Laws of Maryland. They shall be responsible for the handling of all legal and financial matters, custody and management of all church property, interest and inheritance of the same as required by law. They shall be responsible for all money received. They shall be responsible for auditing the Treasurer's records as outlined in Article IX, Section 4 of these Bylaws. They shall be responsible for the church being properly heated, ventilated, lighted, cleaned and maintained in proper order. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without a specific vote from the church authorizing such action.

C. Election: There should be a minimum of 12 Trustees, of which a minimum of four are elected at the annual election of officers. Election shall be by a simple majority of those voting members.

D. Term: The term of office shall be three years. A trustee who has completed a three-year term shall not be eligible for re-election until one year has lapsed. Those elected to fill an existing vacancy may be re-elected for a three-year term. However, a trustee may not serve consecutive terms of less than three years. In case of death, removal, or incapacity to serve, the church may elect to fill the unexpired term,

E. Indemnification: No member or officer of the "Trustees of the First Baptist Church of Laurel Corporation" shall be personally liable to the corporation or its members for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as an officer or director, provided, however, that this provision shall in no way be construed to eliminate or limit the liability of an officer or director (i) for any breach of his or her duty of loyalty to the corporation or its members, (ii) for acts or omissions not in good faith or involving intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of the law, or (iii) for any transaction from which the officer or director derived an improper personal benefit.

Section 4. Clerk.

A. Qualifications: The clerk shall be a church member who is at least 18 years of age.

B. Duties: The clerk shall keep the records of all members' meetings of the church.

C. Election and Term: The clerk shall be elected for a two-year term at the annual election of officers by a simple majority of those voting. The Clerk may serve unlimited consecutive terms. In the event of a mid-term vacancy, a new Clerk can be elected at any members' meeting by a simple majority of those voting to complete the unexpired term.

Section 5. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.

- A. Qualifications: The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall be church members who are at least 18 years of age.

- B. Duties: The Treasurer shall disburse the funds of the church under the direction of the Finance Committee as budgeted by the church or at the order of the church. The Treasurer shall make a monthly report to the Finance Committee and a quarterly report to the church. The Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer as required.

- C. Election and Term: The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer shall be elected by a simple majority of those voting for two-year terms at the annual election of officers. In the event of a mid-term vacancy, a new Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer can be elected at any members' meeting by a simple majority of those voting to complete the unexpired term. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer may serve unlimited consecutive terms.

Section 6. Financial Secretary.

- A. Qualifications: The Financial Secretary shall be a church member who is at least 18 years of age.

- B. Duties: The Financial Secretary shall keep the record of each member's contributions. At the end of each quarter, contributing members shall be given a statement of their contributions.

- C. Election and Term: The Financial Secretary shall be elected by a simple majority of those voting for a two-year term at the annual election of officers. The Financial Secretary may serve unlimited consecutive terms. In the event of a mid-term vacancy, a new Financial Secretary can be elected at any members' meeting by a simple majority of those voting to complete the unexpired term.

Section 7. Church Hostess.

- A. Qualifications: The Church Hostess shall be a church member who is at least 18 years of age.

- B. Duties: The Church Hostess shall oversee the special fellowships that are given by the church family and coordinate other special activities as requested by the elders, deacons, and/or the church family.

- C. Election and Term: The Church Hostess shall be elected for a two-year term at the annual election of officers by a simple majority of those voting. In the event of a mid-term vacancy, a new Church Hostess can be elected at any members' meeting by a simple majority of those voting to complete the unexpired term. The Hostess may serve unlimited consecutive terms.

Section 8. Ministry Directors

- A. Definition: The ministry directors may include but are not limited to: Women's Ministry Director, Men's Ministry Director, Music Ministry Director, Discipleship Ministry Director, Recreation Ministry Director, and ESL Ministry Director.

- B. Qualifications: Each director shall be a church member.

- C. Duties: Duties of each director shall be specified by the elders. Directors may be appointed by the elders as ministry needs arise.

- D. Election: The directors shall be elected for a two-year term by a simple majority of those voting at the annual election of officers. The term of office shall begin September 1. Those who are ministry directors according to their job descriptions and are paid are exempt from being elected as a director.

Section 9. Vacancies

- A. A vacancy of a ministry director, other than Elder, Deacon, or Trustee, shall be filled temporarily by the elders until such time as a new director is elected. New directors can be elected at any members' meeting by a simple majority of those voting.
- B. An office may be declared vacant by a majority of the members voting when the incumbent fails to perform his or her duties.

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ARTICLE IV -CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship.

The church shall gather every Lord's Day for public worship, prayer, and Bible study.

Section 2. Business.

- A. The church year shall be from October 1st to September 30th. The school year shall be from September 1st to August 31st,
- B. Members' meetings of the church shall be held quarterly, at a minimum, and shall be scheduled by and at the recommendation of the senior pastor, elders, and/or deacons. All regularly scheduled activities should be canceled during the time of the members meeting.
- C. Special members' meetings may be called by the senior pastor, elders, deacons, or trustees, or at the written request of ten members. Two weeks public notice must be given in advance of the meeting. The reason for calling a special meeting must be stated and no other business can be transacted.
- D. Incidental matters, such as transfer of membership, requests for termination of membership, etc. in which immediate attention is needed may be brought before the church by the senior pastor or elders at any regular service or meeting.
- E. Thirty members shall constitute a quorum at members' meetings, but a meeting may be adjourned by a smaller number.
- F. The senior pastor shall be responsible to ensure records and minutes of all members' meetings are documented and kept on record. Tis task may be delegated by the senior pastor to any qualified member of the church..
- G. The most current Robert's Rules of Order shall be the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all members' meetings of the church.

ARTICLE V -ORDINANCES

Section 1. Baptism.

Baptism shall be by immersion.

Section 2. Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper shall normally be observed the first Sunday of each month and shall be administered by a pastor, aided by the deacons.

ARTICLE VI -COMMITTEES

General. The church shall have standing committees and temporary committees to perform ongoing and special tasks. All standing committees shall be elected at the annual election of officers. All members of these committees in the constitution and by-laws of the First Baptist Church of Laurel shall be members of the church unless otherwise specified. Staff members shall be ex-officio members of standing committees as defined in their job descriptions. All standing committees shall have a church approved policy statement outlining specific duties and responsibilities on file in the church office. All temporary committees, except for the Senior Pastor Search Committee, shall be appointed by the elders. All committees shall submit to the church at a members' meeting a report, as necessary, or whenever requested to by the elders, deacons, or church.

Section 1. Standing Committees.

1. School Board. The School Board shall be composed of five members elected from the church at large, plus a representative from the deacons and up to two school parents whose children are currently enrolled in the school. The chairperson of the school board must be a member of FBCL. The School Board will elect the parent representatives for a 1-year term. The five at-large members from the church shall be elected for three year terms. An at-large member who has completed a three-year term shall not be eligible for re-election until one year has lapsed. No school staff member shall serve on the Board. The Head of School shall be an ex-officio member of the board. It shall be the duty of this board to supervise the operation of the school. This will include the employment of qualified staff; the enrollment of the pupils; and the general supervision of all matters pertaining to the operation of the School. The School Board shall oversee the disbursement of School Funds and shall make a monthly report to the Church Treasurer and Finance Committee and a quarterly report to the church.

2. Finance. The Finance Committee shall be composed of six at large members. The Church Treasurer and the Financial Administrator will serve as ex-officio members. The at-large members from the church shall be elected for three year terms*. A member who has completed a three-year term shall not be eligible for re-election until one year has lapsed. The committee shall meet at least once a quarter. The Finance Committee shall prepare an annual budget and monitor expenditures. (* - To provide for future smooth transitions, in the 2023 election, 2 at-large members shall be elected to 3-year terms, 2 to 2-year terms, and 1 to a 1-year term. These at-large members shall also not be eligible for re-election until after one year has lapsed.)

3. Nominating. The Nominating Committee shall consist of six at-large members and shall be elected for three-year terms. It shall be the duty of this committee to contact a slate of possible nominees recommended by the elders for the officers and committees of the church to ascertain their interest in serving. They will report the results of their contact to the elders. The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for recommending and presenting the nominees to the church. A committee member who has served one term shall not be eligible for re-election until one year has lapsed.

4. Personnel. The Personnel Committee shall be composed of six at-large members, who shall be elected for three-year terms*. The Committee shall be responsible for recruiting, interviewing, and recommending all church personnel with the exception of the senior pastor. They shall assist the elders in administering personnel matters. (* - To provide for future smooth transitions, in the 2023 election, 2 at-large members shall be elected to 3-year terms, 2 to 2-year terms, and 2 to a

1-year term.) A committee member who has served one term shall not be eligible for re-election until one year has lapsed.

Section 2. Temporary Committees.

1. Senior Pastor Search. A Search Committee shall be appointed by the church to seek a senior pastor when a vacancy occurs. Its recommendation will constitute a nomination. This committee shall consist of the Personnel committee as seated at the time the Search Committee is constituted, plus three additional members to be elected by the church from a slate of nominees presented by the Nominating Committee. This Committee shall disband six months after the assumption of duties by the new senior pastor, or at the pleasure of the church. In case of a vacancy in the Personnel Committee portion of the Search Committee, the vacated position shall be filled by a corresponding member from the then current Personnel Committee, i.e., deacon representative for deacon representative; trustee representative for trustee representative, and same term at-large member. A vacancy of one of the additional members shall be filled by election of the church.

ARTICLE VII -MINISTRIES

Section 1. General. All ministries of the church shall be under church control; all officers will be elected by the church and will report regularly to the church. The senior pastor is an ex officio officer of all ministries, and his leadership, or his designee, is to be recognized by them.

Ministries may include, but are not limited to: Discipleship, Music, Youth, Children's, Preschool, Singles, Recreational/Sports, Missions, Men's and Women's, ESL, and a School.

Section 2. Discipleship. The Discipleship Ministry shall exist for the purpose of teaching God's Word for all ages. This ministry may include but is not limited to: Sunday School, Missional Communities, Equip classes, etc. These ministries shall be taught by members of FBCL under the leadership of the elders.

Section 3. Church Music Ministry. There shall be a Church Music Ministry under the leadership of a Worship director.

The tasks of the Church Music Ministry shall be to provide music and musicians for the congregational services and the ministries of the church, lead persons to participate in singing, train persons to lead, sing, and play music, and provide organization and leadership for special music projects of the church.

(Addition- Jan 16, 2019)

Section 4. School. There shall be a ministry to the children of our church and community offering a quality Christian education. This ministry shall be called the Christian Academy of Laurel. This ministry shall teach a Christian worldview and prepare children academically for future educational endeavors. The school shall maintain Maryland State approval as a private educational organization. The school shall be operated and governed by the School Board.

ARTICLE VIII -FINANCIAL POLICY

Section 1. General. The financial needs of this church and the ministries implemented by it shall be budgeted for and fully supported by the tithes and offerings of the members and by other voluntary gifts. All non- budgeted activities shall be self-supporting. Christian Academy of Laurel shall be budgeted for and supported by a set fee paid by those attending.

Section 2. Annual Budget. The church fiscal year shall be based on the calendar year. Church funds shall be disbursed according to a unified budget prepared annually by the finance Committee in consultation with the elders, and approved by the church at the October members' meeting. Expenditures in excess of those budgeted shall require approval by the church.

Section 3. Handling of Funds. Procedures for the collection, processing, accounting, and disbursement of all funds (including the Deacons' Fund, Article III, Section 2. B.) shall be developed jointly by the Finance Committee, the Treasurer, and the Trustees.

All FBCL financial records, including those of the Treasurer, the School, the Deacons, etc shall be audited annually, and before such records are turned over to a successor, by a person or persons designated by the Trustees.

ARTICLE IX -AMENDMENTS

Changes in this Constitution and Bylaws may be made at any regular members' meeting of the church, provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting. Amendments shall be approved by three-fourths vote of the members voting.