

July 28, 2019

PBC Family:

On January 27, 2019, you unanimously approved the following motion: *Having been convinced by the Scriptures regarding the importance of the office of elder and the biblical pattern for a plurality of elders, we resolve as a congregation to move towards a leadership structure that embraces the two unique offices of elder and deacon. We further resolve to begin the process by (1) authorizing the Constitution Team to begin the process of revising the PBC Constitution to reflect this change and (2) authorizing Pastor Hopson to begin the process of raising up potential elder candidates.*

Since that motion was approved, our Constitution Team (led by Kathy Proctor alongside Steve Collins, Bubba Jones, Sandra Lindell, and Colin Smith) returned to the painstaking work of revising our Constitution. They have spent countless hours working through this document in order to prepare us to transition to an elder-led congregation.

Since their initial draft was complete, this document has undergone intense scrutiny from myself, the elder candidates (Mike Klaassen, Mike Lindell, and John Rogers), these men and the Constitution Team together, and the legal team at *Alliance Defending Freedom*. In short, we believe this proposed draft of our Constitution is a carefully crafted and biblically faithful document that can serve PBC well for years to come.

Before you read our proposal, let me highlight a few of the changes:

- Updated formatting and numbering to make it easier to follow throughout
- Revised statement of PBC's purpose (2.1)<sup>i</sup>
- Added section on our Non-Profit Status (Article 3)
- Slightly updated language in our Statement of Faith (4.3)<sup>ii</sup> and Covenant (5.3 and 5.7)<sup>iii</sup>
- Several changes to the section on church membership (Article 7)<sup>iv</sup>
- Totally revamped section on church officers (Article 8)<sup>v</sup>
- Guidelines on installing and removing officers (Articles 9 and 10)
- Removal of the section on ministry teams<sup>vi</sup>
- Updated our language on the purpose of Sunday School (12.2.1)<sup>vii</sup>
- Reduced obligation for Members' Meetings from at least every other month to quarterly (12.3.1)<sup>viii</sup>
- Added sections on indemnification (Article 13)<sup>ix</sup> and dispute resolution (Article 14)<sup>x</sup>
- Updated section on Wythe Creek Academy<sup>xi</sup>
- Added section on Dissolution (Article 17)<sup>xii</sup>

We're getting this proposal to you now in hopes you will read it carefully and come to any of the people mentioned above with your questions, concerns, or comments. We want to give you as much time as necessary to prayerfully review this document before we proceed with a vote. To help facilitate that, we'll have a special **Constitution & Elder Candidate Q&A Night on September 1 at 6 PM for everyone who desires to participate**. Thank you in advance for your willingness to do just that.

Our current constitution requires us to present proposed constitutional amendments in one Members' Meeting then vote on those amendments in the following Members' Meeting. No changes can be made without a three-fourths (3/4) approval by the congregation. To that end, **we'll formally present a final draft of the attached Constitution for church approval during our September 29 Members' Meeting. We'll then vote on the question during a Members' Meeting after the morning service on Sunday, October 6.**

Every change in this proposal is the result of hours of prayer, thought, study, and discussion. I hope you'll express your gratitude to our Constitution Team and our elder candidates for their willingness to care for their church enough to clean things up under the hood. And I hope you'll pray alongside us that, above all, we would be united together to glorify Jesus in all we do and say.

Praying By Your Side,



Pastor Hopson

[pastorhopson@poquosonbaptist.org](mailto:pastorhopson@poquosonbaptist.org)

(662) 397-6526

P.S. If you would like a digital copy of this constitution draft or a copy of our existing constitution to review alongside this document please email [secretary@poquosonbaptist.org](mailto:secretary@poquosonbaptist.org).

<sup>i</sup> The previous statement implied that the church's purpose was evangelism instead of discipleship (which includes, but is not limited to, evangelism).

<sup>ii</sup> We removed a clause from this section that said *"Although most people will be married..."*. We just didn't think it was necessary to say in this in our Statement of Faith.

<sup>iii</sup> In 5.3 we updated our language related to the use of alcohol to more clearly condemn drunkenness, which was the intent of a previous revision in July 2016. In 5.7 we added a promise about our relationship to church leaders.

<sup>iv</sup> We've clarified and simplified the qualifications and admission process for new members, explained the duties and privileges of church membership, explained at length the biblical basis for and practice of church discipline, and clarified and simplified the section on termination of membership.

<sup>v</sup> This is the section most relevant to the change to elder leadership at PBC. Please examine this section very carefully.

<sup>vi</sup> Although some of our ministry teams will become obsolete once elders have been installed (e.g., Nominating, Personnel, Constitution, etc.) that will not be the case with all teams. Removing this section from the Constitution **does not mean** that we intend to eliminate other teams (although we do think it's best for ministry teams to eventually be led by qualified deacons). We simply did not believe it was necessary to enshrine these teams in the constitution.

<sup>vii</sup> From being "the basic organization for the Bible teaching program" for PBC to being a "tool designed to equip the Church to do the work of the ministry."

<sup>viii</sup> We feel this is the minimum frequency we should have these meetings. Of course we can have Members' Meetings more regularly, but we would not necessarily need to with this change.

<sup>ix</sup> Important to protect church staff, elders, and other representatives in the event of a legal claim against the church.

<sup>x</sup> Important to encourage members to handle conflict biblically

<sup>xi</sup> Revising the purpose of WCA from "reach families (children and adults) for Christ" to "show and share the love of Jesus." Also to clarify the leadership structure of WCA (the director ultimately reporting to the leadership of the elders under the authority of the congregation).

<sup>xii</sup> In the event that PBC dissolved (God forbid) at some point in its future.

## **Preamble**

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call some of His servants to unite here in Poquoson, Virginia, under the name Poquoson Baptist Church to worship God and to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we the Members of Poquoson Baptist Church adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of Jesus Christ and bring Him glory, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the Statement of Faith and Covenant of this Church.

## **Article I—Name**

1.1 This Church shall be known as the Poquoson Baptist Church, hereafter referred to as “PBC” or “Church.”

## **Article II—Purpose**

2.1 PBC is a Church of baptized believers covenanted together to worship God and make disciples of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit to the glory of God the Father. Everything this Church does should contribute to fulfilling this purpose (either directly or indirectly) and anything contrary to this purpose should be eliminated from the work and program of the Church.

## **Article III—Non-Profit Status**

3.1 The Church is organized and shall be operated exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended.

## **Article IV—Statement of Faith**

4.1 *We believe God exists eternally in Trinity.* There is one, and only one, true God, infinite in all His perfections, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each of these three persons is fully and equally God, equal in every divine perfection while executing distinct and harmonious roles in the great work of salvation. We believe God is the sovereign creator and sustainer of all things.

4.2 *We believe God reveals Himself to His creation through His Word.* The 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament constitute the written Word of God and are verbally inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, sufficient, necessary, trustworthy, and authoritative. The Bible includes within it the only way of salvation and has its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. The Bible alone is our final authority for all doctrine and practice.

4.3 *We believe God created people in His own image as uniquely male and female.* Because we are made in God’s image, every human life is sacred from the moment of conception until the moment of natural death. Because we are made uniquely male and female, gender is a gift that is fundamental to human existence, with maleness and femaleness being an unchangeable characteristic congruent with human embodiment. God gave people the mandate to build society through procreation and vocation. While God calls some to singleness (without loss of personhood, dignity, or contributive capability), heterosexual monogamy is God’s design for men and women in marriage. We will not participate in and/or recognize marriages that deviate from God’s design. Any sexual activity before or outside of God’s design for marriage is sinful. Homosexual behavior, same-sex attraction, gender dysphoria and any gender expressions incongruent with one’s biological sex are results of the Fall to be redeemed through the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit.

4.4 *We believe all people are sinful and in need of salvation.* Though created in the image of God, Adam and Eve voluntarily rebelled against God and brought sin into the world through the Fall. As a result, all people are born sinners, inheriting the condemnation of our first parents. We are sinners by nature and choice, with every aspect of our being corrupted by sin including our intellect, will, and emotions so that, apart from Christ, we cannot please God. All people are, apart from God's grace, unable to turn to God and are under just condemnation to eternal punishment, without defense or excuse.

4.5 *We believe sinners can only be saved through the work of Jesus Christ.* He is the second person of the Trinity, truly God, eternally begotten of the Father, not created. He became truly human, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and lived a full life without sin. His perfect life and death on the cross provide the only atonement that satisfies the righteous requirements of God for sinful people. In His death, Jesus fully and finally paid for sin and became our sacrificial substitute, absorbing the full wrath of God, forgiving sins, and adopting into the family of God any who repent of their sin and believe in Him. In His bodily resurrection, Jesus powerfully testifies of His deity and His existence as humanity's only hope. This message of salvation and hope is known as the Gospel.

4.6 *We believe salvation is available to all who repent and believe in Christ.* Although sin condemns a person to eternal punishment, the power of the Gospel is sufficient to save even the greatest sinner. People everywhere are commanded to repent and believe upon Jesus because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Apart from the grace of God all would receive eternal condemnation, because there is no salvation apart from the work of Jesus. Those who receive the Gospel are justified by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

4.7 *We believe the Holy Spirit is the supernatural agent who applies salvation to sinful people.* He is the third person of the Trinity, truly God, eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. He convicts the world of sin and its consequences, brings repentance and faith to sinners through regeneration, indwells believers, gives them assurance of salvation, sanctifies them, and causes them to bear the fruit of Christian character. He guides, instructs, and empowers Christians, gifting them to serve the local church.

4.8 *We believe salvation is applied to the believer by the grace of God.* In justification, God declares believers righteous in His sight because He has fully forgiven them of their sin and imputed Christ's righteousness to them. In sanctification, God progressively frees believers from the power of sin and grows them in practical holiness. While this growth is a gift of grace, it also requires the believer to actively, intentionally, and persistently fight sin through means such as prayer, Bible intake, and meaningful involvement in a local church. In glorification, God perfects the believer upon the return of Christ. All those who are truly justified will persevere and will be progressively sanctified and ultimately glorified.

4.9 *We believe the local church is central to God's plan for believers.* The local church is an autonomous congregation that covenants together for worship, discipleship, service, fellowship, mission, discipline, and the celebration of the ordinances. The church is governed by God's Word, which teaches that elders are given to oversee the church, deacons are to serve the church, and members are to guard the church's membership, doctrine, unity, and purity. Members of local churches are commanded to assemble regularly and live lives that bring glory to God in accordance with the Scriptures. The mission of the church is to display God's glory to the world by preaching the Gospel and making disciples.

4.10 *We believe baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances to be observed by the local church.* Baptism of believers in water by immersion is the initial sign of identification with Christ and His people. The Lord's Supper of bread and fruit of the vine is the ongoing sign of identification with Christ and His people. These ordinances are matters of Christian obedience, not to be regarded as means of salvation. Although baptism is performed once upon a believer's genuine profession of faith, the Lord's Supper should be observed regularly until the return of Christ.

4.11 *We believe Jesus will return to earth to judge all people and to rule and reign with His people forever.* At Christ's return, all people will be resurrected to give account of their lives before God. Believers in Christ will be resurrected to everlasting blessedness and joy in God's presence. Unbelievers will be resurrected to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment. The ultimate hope of all creation, and the final state of all that now exists, is the new heaven and new earth in which righteousness dwells.

4.12 *We hold these truths in humble conviction.* This statement is not an expression of human wisdom but represents the essential doctrines we believe are clearly taught by the Scriptures. This statement does not exhaust our beliefs but summarizes beliefs we deem essential to Membership in this local church, employment and service in its ministries, and faithfulness to our Lord. 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 we believe. As a church committed to Christian orthodoxy, we also affirm the Nicene Creed and Apostles' Creed. As a church affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, we also affirm the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. As a church committed to a historical understanding of marriage and sexuality, we affirm The Nashville Statement on biblical sexuality.

## **Article V—Church Covenant**

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

5.2 *We are worshippers.* With God's help we pledge to not forsake assembling together for worship. We further pledge to work together to continue faithful worship in this Church, as we sustain its ordinances, discipline, and doctrines.

5.3 *We are disciples.* With God's help we pledge to grow in obedience to Christ and His Word, laboring to put our sin to death while abstaining from sexual immorality, drunkenness, substance abuse, gluttony, and other practices which harm the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith. We further pledge to help one another as we follow Jesus together.

5.4 *We are family.* With God's help we pledge to walk together in Christian love and unity. We further pledge to be quick to listen, slow to speak, quick to forgive, and slow to take offense.

5.5 *We are servants.* With God's help we pledge to cheerfully and regularly give of our time, talents, and treasure to support the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel to all nations.

5.6 *We are missionaries.* With God's help we pledge to seek the salvation of our families, friends, and acquaintances. We further pledge to labor in love towards our neighbors and the nations, pursuing them with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

5.7 We commit to pray for our leaders, submit to them as they submit to Christ, and hold them accountable as they lead us in obedience to Christ. We moreover engage that when we move 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. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

## **Article VI—Policy and Relationships**

6.1 This Church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical and consistent with this Constitution, this Church will cooperate and support the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

## **Article VII—Membership**

### **Section 1—Qualifications for Membership**

7.1.1 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 by immersion following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each Member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the PBC Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the PBC Covenant. The Elders shall be responsible for recommending qualified individuals for Membership. In making this determination, the Elders may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as they deem appropriate.

### **Section 2—Admission of Members**

7.2.1 To be admitted into Membership, applicants shall be recommended by the Elders for admission and accepted by vote of the Members at any Members' Meeting and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

### **Section 3—Duties and Privileges of Membership**

7.3.1 In accord with the duties enumerated in the PBC Covenant, 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 each has received from God. Only Members of this Church are entitled to serve in the ministries of the Church; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the Elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the Church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

7.3.2 Under Christ this Church is governed by its Members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of Members to attend Members' Meetings and vote on the election of Officers, on decisions regarding Membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote. All Members 18 years of age or older, are entitled to vote and act on all transactions of the Church.

## Section 4—On Church Discipline

7.4.1 Any Member guilty of unrepentant sin or any conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the Church, shall be subject to the admonition of the Elders and the discipline of the Church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and the example of Scripture.

7.4.2 Church Discipline can include private admonition by the Elders, public admonition by the Church, removal from office, and Excommunication (see Matthew 18:15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; 1 Timothy 5:19–20; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5). Excommunication is the act by which the Church removes unrepentant sinners from Membership, barring them from the Lord’s Supper until they repent and are restored to the Church. This does not mean excommunicated persons are mistreated or shunned, but that Members “treat them as unbelievers” (Matthew 18:17), lovingly pleading with them to repent and be restored. Excommunication should ordinarily only be contemplated in cases of significant, outward, unrepentant sin after individual private admonition has failed.

7.4.3 The purposes of Church Discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined;<sup>1</sup> For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them;<sup>2</sup> For the purity of the Church as a whole;<sup>3</sup> For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians;<sup>4</sup> and supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.<sup>5</sup>

## Section 5—Termination of Membership

7.5.1 The termination of Membership in the Church occurs upon approval by the Members present and voting on the question at any Members’ Meeting. The Church shall recognize the termination of a person’s Membership in one of four ways: (1) following his or her death, (2) after he or she has voluntarily resigned, (3) after he or she has joined, or expressed intent to join, with another church that believes the same Gospel (as defined in 4.5 above), or (4) as an act of Excommunication (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the Elders).

7.5.2 The Church shall have 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.

## Article VIII—Officers

### Section 1—Summary

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<sup>1</sup> See Psalm 119:115, 141:5; Proverbs 15:5, 17:10, 25:12, 27:5, 29:15; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26–27; 18:15–17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; I Corinthians 4:14, 5:5; Galatians 6:1–5; Ephesians 6:4; II Thessalonians 3:6, 14–15; I Timothy 1:20, 3:4–5; Titus 1:13–14; Hebrews 12:1–11; James 1:22.

<sup>2</sup> See Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; I Corinthians 5:11, 15:33; Colossians 3:16; I Thessalonians 5:14 (note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders); I Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24–25.

<sup>3</sup> See I Corinthians 5:6–7; II Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2.

<sup>4</sup> See Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13–16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1–14; Ephesians 5:11; I Timothy 3:7; II Peter 2:2; I John 3:10.

<sup>5</sup> See Deuteronomy 5:11; I Kings 11:2; II Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8, 18:17, 25; Romans 2:24, 15:5–6; II Corinthians 6:14–7:1; Ephesians 1:4, 5:27; I Peter 2:12.



8.1.1 The Biblical Officers in the church are Elders and Deacons. In addition, this Church recognizes Administrative Officers of Trustee, Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary. All Officers must be Members of this Church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

## **Section 2—Elders**

8.2.1 Elders shall be comprised of not less than three (3) men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of Elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4. In accordance with 1 Timothy 2:12 and 3:2, women shall not serve as Elders. The biblical terms “Elder”, “pastor”, and “overseer” are understood to refer to the same biblical office. No Elder shall hold the office of Deacon during his tenure.

8.2.2 In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17, Titus 1:5-9, James 5:14 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the Elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock. Subject to the will of the Church, the Elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the Church. The Elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and recommend prospective Members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, work in conjunction with the Deacons and appointed Church agents and teams in order that the ministries are in keeping with the Church’s mission and vision, conduct worship services, oversee the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, 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. The Elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the Church, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

8.2.3 Elders shall be composed of both Staff Elders and Lay Elders, with the majority of the active Eldership being Lay Elders, not in the regular pay of the Church. Staff Elders shall have no more formal authority than any other Elder. Lay Elders shall be reaffirmed by vote of the Church triennially, and having served two consecutive three-year terms, shall not be eligible for re-election for one year. Staff Elders shall not be subject to a reaffirmation vote, nor to any term limits.

8.2.4 The Elders may choose to operate among themselves by consensus, but they must have a majority approval of the Elders in order to proceed with an action. The Elders shall annually elect among their number an Elder to serve as Chairman of Elders’ meetings and another Elder to serve as Moderator of Members’ Meetings. The Chairman and Moderator have no more formal authority than any other Elder. The Elders may establish ministry positions or teams to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities.

## **Section 3—Lead Pastor**

8.3.1 The primary responsibility for preaching and teaching the Scriptures in public meetings of the Church may be vested in a Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor is an Elder and shall perform the duties of an Elder described in 8.2 above. Although he shall have no more formal authority than any other Elder, he shall be recognized by the Church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. As a Staff Elder, he shall not be subject to a reaffirmation vote, nor to any term limits. He shall preach on the Lord’s Day, administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and

perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the Constitution. In the absence or incapacity of the Lead Pastor the Elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

## **Section 4—Deacons**

8.4.1 The office of Deacon is described in I Timothy 3:8–13. The Church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, individuals who are giving of themselves in service to the Church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These Members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His Church and set apart as Deacons.

8.4.2 Deacons shall assist the Church and the Elders in achieving the vision and goals of the Church. The Elders shall take the responsibility to examine and instruct prospective candidates for service as Deacons, ensuring the candidates possess the biblical qualifications (1 Timothy 3:8-13) and particular gifts of service required. The duties and responsibilities of Deacons shall vary as needed and agreed upon by the Elders and Church, except for the Deacon of Finance whose responsibilities are outlined below.

8.4.3 A Deacon's two-year term begins on the date of the vote affirming them to the office. A Deacon's term may be reaffirmed by the Church once, but Deacons who have served two consecutive two-year terms must take a sabbatical for at least one year before being eligible for reelection.

8.4.4 Deacons serve the Church under the care and oversight of the Elders. Elders should keep Deacons accountable to fulfill their obligations. If the Elders determine that Deacon obligations are not being met, and corrective action fails to remedy the problem, the Elders may recommend to the Church that the Deacon be dismissed from that Deacon role, as outlined in Article 10 below.

## **Section 5—Deacon of Finance**

8.5.1 The Deacon of Finance assists the Church and the Elders in achieving the vision and goals of the Church by promoting wisdom and integrity in the area of stewardship of Church finances. The Deacon of Finance is a Deacon subject to the duties, qualifications, and term limits described in 8.4 above.

8.5.2 The Deacon of Finance will provide leadership and direction to the Budget Team, which assists in the annual budgeting process of the Church under the oversight of the Elders. The Budget Team shall be approved annually by the Church, consisting of the Treasurer, the Financial Secretary, and two lay Members. No member of the Budget Team shall be a paid Church staff member.

8.5.3 The Deacon of Finance will provide general leadership and direction to the Counting Team, which coordinates and oversees the counting, documentation, and depositing of all funds received in Church offerings. No member of the Counting Team shall be a paid Church staff member.

8.5.4 The Deacon of Finance will monitor income and expenses on a monthly basis providing feedback to the Elders and Church as necessary. The Deacon of Finance shall not be a paid Church staff member.

## **Section 6—Trustees**

8.6.1 The Trustees shall be three (3) in number and elected for an indefinite period. They shall represent the Church in its legal and property matters only. When a vacancy shall occur on the Board of Trustees, a nomination for the vacancy shall be made by the Elders and election may take place at a Members' Meeting of the Church. No Trustee shall be a paid Church staff member.

## **Section 7—Clerk**

8.7.1 The Church shall elect annually a Clerk to be responsible for keeping a suitable record of all official actions of the Church. The Clerk will relinquish the Church records upon completion of the term of office. In the absence or incapacity of the Clerk, the Elders shall appoint a Member to perform the duties of the Clerk.

## **Section 8—Treasurer**

8.8.1 The Church shall elect annually a Treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon approval by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid or given to the Church, keeping at all times adequate financial records for the Church. The Treasurer shall make monthly division of funds received, in accord with the Church budget. The Treasurer's report and records may be audited annually at the direction of the Deacon of Finance or the Elders. Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year (January 1 – December 31) and its approval by the Church, the records shall be delivered by the Treasurer to the Church Clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as part of the permanent records of the Church. The Treasurer shall not be an active Elder or paid Church staff member.

## **Section 9—Financial Secretary**

8.9.1 The Church shall elect annually a Financial Secretary to maintain an accurate record of contributions and at the end of the year provide statements of contributions. The Financial Secretary shall not be an active Elder or paid Church staff member.

## **Section 10—Support Staff**

8.10.1 The Church may create or dissolve paid support staff positions upon the recommendation of the Elders and the subsequent agreement of the Members present and voting on the question at any Members' Meeting. Support staff will serve under the supervision of the Lead Pastor and the other Elders. The Elders are responsible for developing ministry descriptions and lists of qualifications for each position. The outworking of these responsibilities may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated. The support staff shall not be subject to a reaffirmation vote, nor to any term limits. All staff members shall affirm and support the PBC Statement of Faith, PBC Covenant, this Constitution, and shall exemplify godly character. Support staff may be terminated upon determination of the Elders.

## **Article IX—Installing Officers**

### **Section 1—Principles**

9.1.1 The following principles should characterize the process for installing Officers: (1) Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process; (2) Nominations should proceed with the support of the Elders; (3) All candidates for Church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members; (4) The

election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Section 2—The Election Process**

9.2.1 The election of Officers shall be held at a Members' Meeting of the Church. Names of nominees to serve as Elders, Deacons, or Administrative Officers shall be presented by the Elders at the previous Members' Meeting, and the election shall proceed as directed by the Moderator.

9.2.2 The Elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general Membership in the nomination process. Any Member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should normally express such concern to the individual first, and then to the Elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the Elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant Church Members' Meeting.

9.2.3 Officer candidates will be voted on individually, by ballot and must have the approval of three-quarters (75%) of the Members present and voting. The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

## **Section 3—Calling an Elder**

9.3.1 The Elders shall at any Members' Meeting solicit from the Church recommendations for the office of Elder, which recommendations shall be given to the Elders in private. The Elders shall give due consideration to any recommendation received.

9.3.2 The Elders shall at any Members' Meeting present to the Church a list of candidates to the office of Elder. For a period of at least one month, the Church shall consider whether such candidates are qualified for the office. If any Member believes any of the candidates to be unqualified, that Member should normally express such concern to the candidate first, and if need be, to the Elders. The Elders may, based on that advice, remove names from the list of candidates. No name shall be added to the list of candidates which was not included on the initial list.

## **Section 4—Hiring Staff**

9.4.1 Notice of the nomination of any staff position (which shall include, if necessary, election to Membership) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a Members' Meeting.

## **Section 5—Calling a Staff Elder**

9.5.1 In calling of any man to any Staff Elder position, the same basic processes of calling an Elder and hiring a staff Member outlined in 9.3 and 9.4 above should be followed. The Elders may encourage Members of the Church to submit names for consideration. The Elders shall nominate a Staff Elder candidate to the Church, after which the Church shall be given adequate opportunity to assess the gifts and spiritual life of the potential Staff Elder.

9.5.2 In selecting a Staff Elder who is not a current Member of the Church, the same biblical qualifications for all Elders will be prerequisite. The ability to preach will be assessed with particular care when selecting a potential Lead Pastor. In addition, the Church shall receive assurance from the Elders that, having examined the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the PBC Statement of Faith and PBC Covenant and agreement to minister in compliance with this Constitution.

9.5.3 The Elders shall bring only one recommendation for Staff Elder to the Church at a time. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to Membership and called as a Staff Elder shall be given to the members, prior to the vote at a Members' Meeting. The call of a Staff Elder shall take place at a Members' Meeting set aside for that purpose. The extension of a call shall be made upon an affirmative vote of three-quarters (75%) of the Members present and voting on the question, upon which he shall be a Member of the Church, an Elder, and a Staff Elder whom the Church shall publicly recognize as such.

## **Article X—Removing Officers**

10.1 Officers of this Church may be removed by end of term, resignation, termination of Membership, discipline, or dismissal. Any Officer may at any time present a written intent to resign to the Elders, which shall be effective upon acceptance. Any Officer whose Membership is terminated for any reason shall simultaneously be removed from office. Any Officer undergoing Church Discipline (as outlined in 7.4 above) is subject to the removal from office.

10.2 Any Member with reason to believe that an Officer should be dismissed should normally first express such concern to that Officer and then to the Elders in accordance with the instruction of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17.

10.3 If a Member believes an Elder should be dismissed from office, those concerns must be shared by another witness in accordance with 1 Timothy 5:17-21. If the concern, having come from at least two witnesses, proves to be credible, it then will be taken to the Church by the Elders.

10.4 Any Officer may be dismissed from office by a three-quarters (75%) vote of the Members present and voting at any duly called Members' Meeting of the Church.

## **Article XI—Church Ordinances**

### **Section 1—The Lord's Supper**

11.1.1 The Church shall observe the Lord's Supper regularly at the discretion of the Elders.

### **Section 2—Baptism**

11.2.1 The Church shall receive for Baptism, by immersion, any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord upon a credible profession of repentance and faith.

## **Article XII—Meetings**

## **Section 1—Worship Services**

12.1.1 The Church shall meet regularly each Sunday for the worship of almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching and instruction shall be among the ingredients of these services. The Church may cancel a regular service for reasons agreeable to the Church. The Elders may cancel a particular service where emergencies, such as severe weather conditions exist making it unwise to hold services. Other meetings essential to the Church objectives may be placed on the Church calendar under the direction of the Elders.

## **Section 2—Sunday School**

12.2.1 Sunday School is a discipleship tool designed to equip the Church to do the work of the ministry. It shall be organized and overseen under the direction of the Elders. The teachers must be Members of the Church and willing to work under the direction of the Elders. A teacher is entrusted with the sacred responsibility of teaching the Word of God, which requires adherence to the PBC Statement of Faith. In addition to teaching faithfully the Word of God, they are expected to attend faithfully the worship services of the Church and teachers' meetings as necessary.

## **Section 3—Members' Meetings**

12.3.1 The Church shall hold regular Members' Meetings at least once a quarter to conduct the business of the Church. These meetings can be attended by anyone, but only PBC Members are authorized to vote.

12.3.2 The quorum for all Members' Meetings consists of the Members present at a Members' Meeting, providing at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the total Church Membership is present. Motions shall be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present and voting on the question, except on matters otherwise provided for in this Constitution.

12.3.3 Roberts Rules of Order, Revised is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all Members' Meetings of the Church.

12.2.4 The Church may conduct special Members' Meetings to consider matters of a special nature or significance. A seven (7) day notice must be given for any special Members' Meetings (including an announcement during a Sunday morning service) unless an extreme emergency renders such notice impractical. The notice shall include the subject, the date, time and place, and it must be given in such a manner that all Members have an opportunity to know of the meeting.

## **Article XIII—Indemnification**

### **Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification**

13.1.1 If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an Officer, employee, or agent of the Church, the Church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the Elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the Church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. This

mandatory indemnification applies to administrators of Wythe Creek Academy (15.1 below), but not teachers or other workers.

## **Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification**

13.2.1 At the discretion of the Elders, the Church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the Church’s best interest and not unlawful.

## **Section 3 – Procedure**

13.3.1 If a quorum of the Elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of Elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the Membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the Membership.

## **Article XIV – Dispute Resolution**

14.1 Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian church (Matthew 18: 15–20, I Corinthians 6: 1–8), this Church shall require its Members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the Church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the Church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities.

## **Article XV—Wythe Creek Academy**

15.1 Wythe Creek Academy (WCA) is a ministry of the Church that shows and shares the love of Jesus to children and their families through a Gospel-centered preschool program. As a ministry of the Church, WCA is subject to all the requirements, responsibilities and beliefs outlined in this Constitution.

15.2 Although WCA is overseen by the Elders under the authority of the Church, the day-to-day operations of WCA may be led by a designated administrator. Only WCA administrators shall be considered PBC support staff (8.10.1 above). Although Membership in this Church is preferred for WCA employees, it is only a requirement for WCA administrators. All WCA employees must affirm the PBC Statement of Faith and agree to not act or teach contrary to it.

## **Article XVI—Amendments**

16.1 Changes in the Constitution and By-Laws may be made at any Members’ Meeting provided that each Amendment shall have been reviewed and approved by the Elders and presented in writing at a previous Members’ Meeting. Copies of the proposed Amendment shall have been furnished to each Member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments shall be approved by three-fourths (3/4) vote of the Church Members present unless otherwise stated in the Constitution and By-Laws.

## **Article XVII—Dissolution**

17.1 Upon discontinuance of this Church by dissolution or otherwise, any assets lawfully available for distribution are to be transferred to one or more organizations qualifying as an exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, by a majority of Members attending a duly called Members’ Meeting.