# Church Constitution of Lighthouse Baptist Church

**Article 1**
Name and Purpose

Section 1 - Name

This congregation of believers shall be known as *Lighthouse Brunswick (Lighthouse Baptist Church & Ministries)*.

Section 2 - Purpose

This church is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Law), including, for such purposes, the establishment and maintaining of religious worship, the building and maintaining of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, and such other religious, educational, or other charitable institutions as may be appropriate in accordance with said charitable, educational, and religious purposes, and further including the ordaining and licensing of individuals to the Gospel ministry, the evangelizing of the unsaved by the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the educating of believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Holy Scripture, both in Sunday and weekday schools of Christian education, and maintaining of missionary activities in the United States and in any foreign country.

Furthermore, this church exists to bring people to Jesus and membership in His family, develop them to Christ-like maturity, and equip them for their ministry in the church and life mission in the world, in order to magnify God's name.

**Article 2**
Statement of Faith and Covenant

Section 1 - Covenant

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

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for advancement of this church, in its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

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

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

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of the Covenant and principles of God's Word.

Section 2 - Statement of Faith

This church holds the following declaration of faith as being a summary of Christian doctrine whose authority consists only in its agreement with the Word of God.

1. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It is inerrant and infallible in its original manuscript that is to be taken as verbally inspired. The Word of God reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ. Any version of the Bible used at Lighthouse must be supported by those texts that are historically and traditionally accepted. No version that has been translated for the sole purpose of supporting the views of a religious ideology or cult will be accepted. *2 Timothy 3:16; Proverbs 30:5; Hebrews 4:12*

2. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence and obedience. The eternal God reveals Himself

to us as Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, with distant personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being. *John 4:24; Psalm 83:18*

a. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all-powerful, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. *Matthew 6:9; John 16:28*

b. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. Jesus Christ is God of very God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God taking upon Himself the demands and necessities of human nature and identifying Himself completely with mankind, yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, partaking of the nature of God and of man, and in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord. *Hebrews 13:8; John 14:6; Acts 4:12*

c. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination, He enables men to understand the truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the assurance of God to bring the believer into the fullness and stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service. *John 16:8, 13*

3. Man

Man was created by the special act of God, in His own image, and is the crowning work of His creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan, man transgressed the command of God and fell from his original innocence, whereby his posterity inherits a nature and an environment inclined toward sin, and as soon as they are capable of moral action become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purposes of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image and in that Christ died form man; therefore, every man possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love. *Genesis 1:27; 3:6-24; Romans 5:12, 19*

4. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense, salvation includes regeneration, sanctification, and glorification. *Hebrews 9:14, 22*

a. Regeneration of the New Birth

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

Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God. *Luke 13:3, 5; Romans 3:24-25; 4:5*

b. Sanctification

The experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual perfection through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit indwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life. *1 Corinthians 1:30*

c. Glorification

Glorification is the culmination of salvation and the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed. *1 John 3:2*

5. Eternal Security of the Believer

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ and sanctified by His Spirit will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into temporal sin through neglect and temptation whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. *2 Timothy 1:8-9; John 6:37; Psalm 89:30-34*

6. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. This church is an autonomous body, operating through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In such a congregation, members are equally responsible. Its Scriptural offices are pastors, elders and deacons. The church, which is Christ's body, includes the redeemed, blood-washed ones and will be called out when Christ comes again for His own. *1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 12:23*

7. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience, symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privilege of church membership. *Romans 6:3-6* The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby believers, partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming. *1 Corinthians 11:24-28*

8. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, and by refraining from worldly amusements and resting from secular employments, work of necessity and mercy only being expected. *Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7*

9. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge His as King. Particularly, the Kingdom is the real of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitments to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray

and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age. *John 3:3; Matthew 6:10*

10. Last Things

According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth. The dead in Christ will rise first, then we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. After the judgments of God upon this sinful world in the Great Tribulation, Jesus our Lord will come with His saints to establish His millennial kingdom. Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The redeemed of Christ, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, will receive their rewards and will dwell in Heaven forever with their Savior. The unsaved will be separated from the Kingdom of God and will be consigned forever to a place of everlasting perdition. *1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52*

11. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary efforts on the part of all rest, thus, upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and are expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods in harmony with the Gospel of Christ. *John 4:35; Matthew 28:18-20*

12. Education

The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the cause of mission and general benevolence and should receive, along with these, the liberal support of the church. An adequate system of Christian schools is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people. In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, but the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists. We reserve the right to begin and maintain a Christian school or cooperative program for home schooling families, with all the rights and privileges, as an extension of our church. *Proverbs 22:6; 2 Timothy 2:15*

13. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the Gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions, and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to us for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advance of the Redeemer's cause on earth. The tithe is to be considered the starting place of Christian stewardship. *1 Corinthians 4:2; 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7*

14. Cooperation

Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various local churches when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise

of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament. *John 13:35; Romans 12:9; 1 Corinthians 12:25*

15. The Christians and the Social Order

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his own life and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. The Christian should oppose, in the spirit of Christ, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice. He should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of principles of righteousness, truth and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends, Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love, without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth. It should be realized that social change must be the result of changed hearts; therefore, the greatest contribution the church can make to social betterment is to bring individual men to a heart changing encounter with Jesus Christ. *Matthew 6:33; James 1:27*

16. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ, they should do all in their power to put an end to war. We believe the United States of America was founded as one nation under God. If need be, we would be willing to defend with our men the rights of our freedom under God. The true remedy for the war is the Gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations and the practical application of His law of love. *Romans 12:8*

17. Religious Liberty

God alone is the Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom, no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil governments being ordained by God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The Gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties of religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and all this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power. *Mark 12:17; Romans 13:1-5; Hebrews 13:17*

18. Family

We believe that the roles of husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, and children are clearly stated in the Scriptures, including the principles of discipline, instruction, and correction. When found to conflict with laws and/or social norms, we will follow the Biblical principles. *Ephesians 5:22-33; Ephesians 6:1, 4; Proverbs 13:24; 22:6*

19. Marriage

We believe that marriage has been instituted and ordained by God, and that marriage is defined as the exclusive covenantal union of one man and one woman in which such union is a lifetime commitment. A civil government's sanction of a union will be recognized as legitimate marriage by the church only to the extent that it is consistent with the above definition of marriage. *1 Corinthians 7:2; Genesis 2:21-25*

20. Divorce and Remarriage

As a holy institution marriage is held in the highest regard and considered a permanent bond between a husband and a wife. We believe the divorce of two believers to be inconsistent with God's will for their marriage and with the lifelong vows that were taken before God and empowered by the Holy Spirit. We recognize that, due to the hardness of heart, the Bible allows for, but does not advocate, divorce under these circumstances: sexual infidelity on the part of a spouse, or desertion by a spouse who does not believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. We believe that where the aforementioned two biblical grounds for divorce exist there is a valid biblical allowance for remarriage. *Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16*

21. Human Sexuality

We believe that legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. Hence, sexual activities outside of marriage, including but not limited to, adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, and pedophilia, are inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible and the church. Further, transgender behavior and the creation and/or distribution and/or viewing of pornography are incompatible with the biblical witness. *Genesis 2:24; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4*

**Article 3**
Membership

Section 1 - The Membership

The membership of Lighthouse Baptist Church of Brunswick, Georgia, referred to herein as the "Church" shall consist of all persons whose names appear on the Church Membership Roll. All authority not herein vested in the Deacons or in any officer pursuant to these By-Laws is reserved in and to the Church and the Church reserves the right at any time to amend, supplement or revoke, in whole or in part, these By-Laws.

Membership shall be extended to all whose lives evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in, and acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who renounce sin, who endeavor to live a consecrated life wholly unto the Lord, who fully subscribe to the Statement of Faith contained herein, and who enter into the church covenant contained herein.

Section 2 - Admission and Termination of Membership

Request for membership shall be voted on at any regular preaching service of the Church on any Sunday, any regular midweek service of the Church, or any publicly and previously announced preaching service of the Church or at any like meeting held by a mission of the Church. Membership shall become effective:

1. After a public profession of faith in Christ as personal Savior, and upon baptism by immersion in water as authorized by the Church; or
2. By statement, acceptable to the Church, of previous membership after scriptural baptism in another Bible-believing church of like faith and order.

Membership may be terminated only in the following manners:

1. Upon the death of the member; or
2. Upon issuance of a Church letter of dismissal and recommendation for membership in some other Bible-believing church of like faith and order; or
3. Upon a member joining a congregation of another faith; or
4. Upon withdrawal of fellowship by the Church from a member as provided by the Holy Scriptures and more particularly in *Matthew 18:15-17* and *1 Corinthians 5*.

Section 3 - Duties of Membership

On becoming a member of the church, each one covenants to honor, pray for and support the leadership of the Church, to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the Church, to support the Church in prayer and with financial support as the Lord enables, and in accordance with Biblical commands to support through a lifestyle a walk of affirmation of the beliefs and practices of the Church. All members of the Church shall be subject to church discipline. If after prayerful an deliberate effort, all endeavors to correct the cause fail, then the Church shall withdraw fellowship and membership upon a majority vote of the membership present at a meeting called for such purpose and requesting such action.

Section 4 - Voting of Membership

On any matter coming before the Church for its determination, each member present, of the age of 16 or older, shall be entitled to one vote, which shall be exercised in person and not by proxy; and all such matters shall be determined at a regular or special conference meeting of the Church held in accordance with the By-Laws by the vote of a majority of the active members present and voting.

Section 5 - Membership Rules

Active Members: All those who show their interest in the welfare of the Church and Kingdom of our Lord by regular attendance and financial support and those who because of sickness or infirmities are unable to attend services or contribute financial support to the work shall be classed as active members.

Inactive Members: All those who without reasonable excuse do not attend the regular services of the Church for a period of six months and all members who fail to communicate with the Church for a period of one year may be placed on an inactive list. Inactive members hold no voting privileges. Names of the inactive list shall not be counted in any statistical reports. Any members on the inactive list shall automatically become active members upon their resumption of regular attendance.

Section 6 - Meetings of Members

Worship Services: Public services for worship shall be held on Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening each week. Other public services for worship may be held as such other occasions are deemed best for the advancement of the cause of Christ by direction of the Church leadership.

Regular conference meetings: Regular conference meetings of the members for the transaction of the business and affairs of the Church shall be held at the third Wednesday service in each quarter and notice thereof to members shall not be required. The Church leadership holds the right to postpone or cancel this meeting.

Special conference meetings: The Church may be called into conference for the handling of its business and affairs by oral announcement and without prior notice at any regular scheduled Sunday service or Wednesday service by the Church leadership.

Quorum of Members: The members present at any regularly scheduled worship on Sunday or Wednesday shall constitute a quorum.

**Article 4**
Church Officers

Section 1 - Designation

The officers of this Church shall consist of the following: a pastor, who shall serve as president of the corporation; elders; associate pastors; a clerk, who shall be secretary of the corporation; a treasurer; and members of the board of deacons, the chairman of which shall serve as vice-president of the corporation. Only members of the Church in good standing are eligible for election or appointment to any office of the church. The election of officers shall occur during the month of January.

Current Officers & Board Members
*Pastor/President/CEO – David J. Hudson
Deacon/Vice-President – Jeff Eller
*Secretary – Susan Hudson
*Treasurer/CFO – Teresa Eller
Board Members – Elder Peter Lamos, Elder Patrick Owens, Deacon Jon Arbo
(*Denotes legal titles for officers through incorporation with the state of Georgia)

Section 2 - Terms of Office

The relationship between the pastor and the Church shall be a permanent one until dissolved at the option of either by giving a month's notice or less by mutual consent. The severance of this relationship may be considered at any regular business meeting provided that notice has been given from the pulpit two Sundays prior to said meeting. A majority of the members present and voting shall be sufficient to decide the matter. However, removal of the pastor for apostasy (divergence from the doctrinal statement), shall be after due trial by the deacons and a three-fourths vote of the congregation.

The term of office for all officers except the pastor, elders, and associate pastors shall be five years, at the expiration of which they may be reconfirmed by the Church to continue to fill that role or replaced by the election of another member. A vacancy occurring in any office or board except in the cause of the pastor, elders, or associate pastors may be filled at any regular church business meeting. All elective and appointed offices shall serve their respective offices until their successors are duly elected and qualified. The paid staff of the church shall be under supervision of the pastor and the board of deacons who has the authority to hire and dismiss the same.

Section 3 - Duties

Pastor: The Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the Church. The Church and the Deacons shall support the Pastor with their prayers and finances in such manner as to allow him the greatest time for evangelism and preaching of the Gospel. The Pastor must support the Covenant, Statement of Faith, and his personal convictions must conform to the Word of God. *1 Timothy 3:1-15; 5:19-25; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 6:3-6* It shall be the duty of the Pastor to preach to the Church, to administer or cause to be administered the ordinances of the Gospel, to act as moderator at the conferences and to perform the various other duties incumbent on his office.

The Pastor shall be elected by the Church as recommended by the Elders and the Deacons and shall continue as Pastor until his service is terminated by his death, resignation, or by vote of the Church. If the Pastor is proven to be physically or spiritually incompetent of functioning as under-shepherd of the Church, a quorum of the Deacons and Elders may lead the church into voting for his termination. The Pastor, with the counsel and advice of the Elders and Deacons, shall have full power and authority to employ such employees as are necessary to carry on the work of the Church. Any Associate Pastor or any Assistant

Pastor shall, under the supervision of the Pastor, assist the Pastor and perform such duties as the Pastor may assign to him.

Elder: The role of Elder is established to provide leadership to the Church. This role is filled by some members of the Pastoral staff and lay Elders. Those who serve and minister in these roles shall collectively and individually oversee, provide for and encourage the spiritual life, welfare and total ministry of the congregation in order to insure the proper equipping of the saints. The Elders must support the Covenant, Statement of Faith and activities of the Church and their personal convictions must conform to the Word of God. *1 Timothy 3:1-15; 5:19-25; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 6:3-6*

An Elder shall be appointed by the recommendation of the Pastor and the Deacons and shall continue until his service is terminated by his death, resignation, or by vote of the Church. If the Pastor is proven to be physically or spiritually incompetent of functioning as under-shepherd of the Church, a quorum of the Deacons and Elders may lead the church into voting for his termination

Deacon: The business and secular affairs of the Church shall be administered by the Deacons in accordance with these By-Laws. The Deacons shall constitute the Board of Directors of the Church. The Deacons must support the Covenant, Statement of Faith and activities of the Church and their personal convictions must conform to the Word of God. They must have a servant's heart as that is the literal rendering of the word *Deacon*. *Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:8-13*

The scriptural qualifications of a deacon are as follows: Reverent, not double tongued, not addicted to wine, not greedy for money, sound in faith, blameless, husband of one wife, and manager of their household.

The term of office of a Deacon shall terminate upon the earliest of the last Sunday in January after five years unless reconfirmed by the Church, his death, his resignation, termination of his membership in the Church, his removal from such office by the Church, or the action of the Deacons as hereinafter provided: *On behalf of the church and without additional church action, the Deacons may accept the resignation of any Deacon and may drop from its membership any Deacon who is absent during the previous calendar year for more than five regular meetings of the Deacons, without excuses deemed valid by the Deacons after investigation by the Pastor, Elders, and Deacons.*

Clerk: The Clerk shall keep a correct record of the proceedings of the Church, of all baptisms, issue letters and certificates of ordination and commissioning as directed by the Church, and preserve all documents, papers, and letters coming into the Clerk's hands during the Clerk's term of office, all of which are to be kept in the Church office, and deliver the same with all records kept by the Clerk to their successor. The Clerk shall keep an account of any special events in the life of the Church which are of a historical interest and value.

Treasurer: The Treasurer shall make a report of all funds contributed and shall dispense the same as ordered by the Church. The Treasurer, with the committee of finance which is appointed by the Pastor, Elders, and Deacons, shall recommend an annual budget to the board of Deacons. The Treasurer shall present a report of itemized disbursements at business meetings showing the actual financial condition of the Church and make a general report for the year at the annual business meeting. Major expenditures must be approved by the Church. The fiscal year of the Church will be from January 1 to December 31.

Associate Pastors: The Associate Pastors of the Church shall assist the Pastor in carrying out the ministries of the Church. The Pastor shall be allowed to interview and hire an Associate Pastor with the approval of the Deacons to do so. The Associate Pastor must support the Covenant, Statement of Faith,

and his personal convictions must conform to the Word of God. *1 Timothy 3:1-15; 5:19-25; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 6:3-6* The Associate Pastors service shall continue until it is terminated by death, resignation, or removal of employment by the Pastor with the approval of the Elders and Deacons to do so.

**Article 5**
Amendments

This constitution may be revised or amended by the three-fourths vote of the members present and voting, at any regular church business meetings, provided that said revision or amendment has been submitted in writing and announced from the pulpit two weeks before the vote is taken.

**Article 6**
Ordination

Any member of this Church, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications therein, may be ordained as a minister of the Gospel, with these conditions:

1. Upon a conference with the Pastor and with the Pastor's approval, a council shall be called, and they will examine and pass on the qualification of the candidate;
2. If the candidate be found worthy of the ordination, the council shall report that fact to the Church and thereupon may vote to ordain such a candidate;
3. The Pastor and Chairman of the Deacons shall arrange for the ordination service.

**Article 7**
Financial and Legal Provisions

Section 1

No part of the earnings of the Church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, officers, or other private persons, except that the Church shall be authorized to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article 1, Section 2 hereof.

Section 2

Upon the dissolution of the Church, the officers and remaining members shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the Church, dispose of all of the assets of the Church exclusively for the purposes of the Church in such manner to such organizations which with agree with the Church's Statement of Faith.

Section 3

The Church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and therefore shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin.

**Article 8**
Adoption of the Constitution and By-Laws

This Constitution and By-Laws supersedes any other constitutions and/or by-laws of the Lighthouse Baptist Church. This Constitution and By-Laws has been adopted at a meeting of the church by three-fourths majority vote of the members present and voting in accordance with the church charter.

**By-Laws of Lighthouse Baptist Church**

Only members at least sixteen (16) years of age shall be entitled to vote.

All Church administration meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer for divine guidance and blessing.

All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof, including time and place and the use of the property belonging to the Church for purposes other than stated appointments, shall be under the control of the leadership of the Church.

All literature used in the Church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith.

The following order shall be observed at the regular Church administration meetings:

Prayer
Reading of Minutes
Reception of Members
Dismissal of Members
Report of Officers
Unfinished Matters
New Matters
Adjournment
Benediction

These By-Laws may be altered, suspended, or amended at a regular Church administration meeting by a majority vote of the members present and voting.

# Lighthouse Statement on Church Discipline

Church discipline is the corrective process which God has given to the church when a member persists in sin. Such persistent sins may be:

- Personal – sins which wrong or injure particular individuals; e.g. slander, anger, bitterness, theft *Matthew 18:15-20*
- *General – sins which are not directed at a particular individual; e.g. heresy, divisiveness, immorality, drunkenness Galatians 1:8-9; Romans 16:17-18; 1Corinthians 5*
- *Private – sins known only to a few Matthew 18:15; Proverbs 25:9*
- *Public – sins which are conspicuous and widely known 1Corinthians 5:13*

*Church discipline is neither intended to humiliate someone nor to seek revenge. It is an expression of God's fatherly love. Proverbs 3:11-12* Those involved in bringing this correction are to be motivated by sincere love and their words and actions are to combine both grace and truth.

Purpose

The purpose of this gift from God is threefold:

- The glory of God *Ephesians 3:20-21*
- *The unity and purity of the church Ephesians 5:25-27*
- *The restoration of the straying church member Matthew 18:15-17*

*Practice*

*A. Self-discipline.* God calls every believer to be conformed into the image of His Son. This involves hearing and obeying God's Word and results in each believer disciplining himself so as to conform to his Savior. We recognize that most "church discipline" situations start and end here, with the believer diligently applying God's Word to his life. *1Timothy 4:7*

*B. Minor offenses.* Though in Christ every believer has been declared righteous, the Christian life is a process of gradual change, of becoming in character what God has declared us in standing. This means that every Christian will exhibit flaws and imperfections and every relationship will include some measure of tension and disharmony. Minor offenses are those which do not endanger the safety or well-being of a believer, a relationship or a church. In light of the gospel, these are best overlooked, in the manner in which God forbears and overlooks many such traits in us. *Proverbs 19:11; Romans 15:1; 1Peter 4:8*

*C. Process for addressing sin in a fellow believer.* Where self-discipline fails and where a believer sins in a manner that should not be overlooked, God provides direction for what to do. Ordinarily the process moves through stages, as described by Jesus himself in *Matthew 18:15-17*. At each stage the goal is to secure the repentance and restoration of the sinning brother or sister. For this reason each stage may include more than one meeting. The process ceases whenever the straying member evidences believable repentance and is restored to the Lord and others.

1. *Private inquiry.* When a Christian sees another church member that appears to be engaged in sin that is repeated or serious , normally he should privately, gently and graciously approach that person to inquire and, if necessary, to confront. If repentance is required and takes place, the process ends. If there is disagreement over the need for repentance or if there is refusal to repent, he should involve one or two others. *Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1; Luke 17:3*

*2. Establishing the matter with witnesses.* The concerned Christian should now involve one or two other church members, perhaps including a deacon or elder and return to the brother or sister caught in sin. If this group confirms that the brother or sister is in fact sinning, is unrepentant and is unwilling to change, then the pastors of the church should be informed so that they can confirm the facts and appeal for change. *Matthew 18:16; Deuteronomy 19:15*

*3. Telling the church.* If the straying brother or sister remains unwilling to change, failing to heed various appeals from members and/or pastors, the pastors/elders normally will inform the church of the member and the sin. Church members will be urged to pursue the erring member and appeal for repentance. *Matthew 18:17; 1Timothy 5:20*

*4. Excluding from church membership.* If, after a reasonable period of time, the member under discipline does not change, then the pastors/elders will inform the church again, this time acting to remove that person from church membership and instruct the church to treat the excluded member as an unbeliever. This means the church will no longer treat the person as a Christian, in that sense having no 'fellowship' with him or her, and instead will seek to preach the gospel to him, calling him to repentance and faith in Christ. *Matthew 18:17; 1Corinthians 5:5; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1Timothy 1:20*

5. *Appeal.* If at any point a church member believes he is being treated unjustly or inappropriately in the disciplinary process, he is welcome to appeal to the pastors/elders of Lighthouse.

D. *Public sins.* The pastors/elders may decide to abbreviate or eliminate the above process if the sin is especially conspicuous or serious, or if the member proves to be divisive, disruptive or is seen as a threat to lead others into sin. *Romans 16:17; 1Corinthians 5:13; Titus 3:10-11*

*E. Disciplinary actions.* As the disciplinary process progresses through the above stages, the actions that may be taken include, but are not limited to, private and public admonition, withholding of Communion, withdrawal of fellowship and removal from membership. *1Corinthians 11:17-34*

F. *Restoration.* The restoration of the straying believer stands at the heart of the practice of church discipline. Throughout the disciplinary process the pastors/elders will seek to define a biblically informed pathway of repentance for the sinning member. If a member is removed from membership, the pastors/elders will urge the church members to continue to seek opportunities to call the person to repentance and faith in Christ. When the church has been made aware of an individual's sin, they will also be made aware of an individual's repentance in a way that is appropriate to the situation and the good of the church, ensuring that as many people as possible may rejoice. *Galatians 6:1; Luke 15:7; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11*

G. *If a member leaves the church to avoid or cut short the disciplinary process.* At times a member may withdraw from the church to avoid or cut short church discipline and its consequences. The pastors/elders and members of our church recognize our obligation and opportunity to restore the wandering member to the Lord and to His church. While the church cannot force a withdrawing member to remain in this

congregation, the church has the right and responsibility to restore, to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, and to make final determination as to the person's membership status at the time withdrawal is sought or acknowledged. If the pastors/elders learn that a member who left under church discipline is now attending another church, the pastors/elders may inform that church of the situation, seeking to encourage the brother or sister to repent and be restored to the Lord and to any people he or she have offended. The pastors/elders may also warn the other church to be on guard against harm that the accused might do to their members. *Ephesians 4:1-6*

*H. Receiving excluded members.* People who attend our church, but have been excluded from another church, will not be allowed to partake of Communion, become members or participate in the fellowship of the church until they have repented of their sins, made a reasonable effort to be reconciled, and satisfied any biblically legitimate requirements of their former church.

# Lighthouse Faith Based Policy on Marriage and Human Sexuality

As a result of the agreed upon Statement of Faith and our belief in the need for a practice of fidelity to these beliefs, it is our policy that the facilities of this church may not be used for any ceremony that in any way approves of, solemnizes, supports or allows a same-sex union or a polygamist or any union which, in the judgment of the church leadership, in some way constitutes child abuse. It is also the policy of the church that no pastor or member of the church staff shall officiate any ceremony designed to solemnize, promote, create, or approve of such a union. Nor may any member of the church enter into such a union without being subject to church discipline.

Furthermore, the pastor and members of the church staff cannot be compelled beyond their will to conduct a marriage ceremony or civil union whether it be for any of the above described cases or any other reason (divorcees, couples cohabitating, etc.).

Furthermore, those who would choose to use the church facilities for their marriage ceremony must meet the following guidelines:

*The Bride, Groom, or their parents must be a member in good standing of Lighthouse Baptist Church.

*Both the Bride and Groom must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and be able to articulate their personal testimony of faith.

*The engaged couple must live in separate residences until their wedding day.

*The couple will make a commitment not to engage in sexual activity prior to their marriage.

*The couple will successfully complete premarital counseling.

*The wedding must be in accordance with Lighthouse Baptist Church's Statement of Faith and related doctrinal teachings on Biblical marriage.

Recognizing that we all struggle with sin, Lighthouse will provide an environment that welcomes people who struggle with sexual sin. We will seek to love all people in Jesus' name, pointing them towards Christ's power to forgive and heal. While the Bible teaches that those who engage in sexual sin, sin against their own body we also recognize that sexual sin is not characterized in Scripture as being more severe than other forms of sin. We will seek God to discern ways that we can directly and indirectly minister and share God's love with those who struggle with every kind of sin. We also recognize that there is a difference between temptation and behavior and while temptation is sometimes unavoidable we are responsible for our behavior.

*Adapted and Used by the permission of Oakwood Church in Hartland, WI

**Lighthouse Policy on Firearm Possession**

We, Lighthouse Baptist Church, recognize the rights of each citizen, according to the Second Amendment of the Constitution of the United States and House Bill 60 in the state of Georgia, to possess and lawfully carry firearms for their protection. The Church will not prohibit such actions by its members or guests as long as it is done in a peaceable and concealed manner.

The Church does, however, reserve the right to remove any persons who refuse to conceal the firearm and therefore make others uncomfortable or appear to be a threat. Any activity with a firearm that violates the law will be dealt with and turned over to the proper authorities.