

CHURCH CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1 – NAME AND PURPOSE

SECTION 1 – NAME

This congregation of believers shall be known as the Middle Cross Baptist Church.

SECTION 2 – PURPOSE

- (A) This congregation is organized as a church 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 Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building, maintaining and operating of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, print shops, day care centers, camps and nursing homes.
- (B) The church shall also ordain and license men to the Gospel ministry; evangelize the unsaved by the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; educate believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture; both in Sunday and weekday schools of Christian education; and maintain missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country.

ARTICLE 2 – STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT

SECTION 1 – STATEMENT OF FAITH

- (A) **The Holy Scriptures.** We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God. The Scriptures are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed, and therefore are the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six (66) books of the Old and New Testament are the complete and divine revelation of God to man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their normal grammatical-historical meaning. The King James Version of the Bible shall be the official and only translation used by the church (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
- (B) **Dispensationalism.** We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations – the law, the church, and the kingdom – are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture (Gen. 1:28; 1 Cor. 9:17; 2 Cor. 3:9-18; Gal. 3:13-25; Eph. 1:10; 3:2-10; Col 1:24-25, 27; Rev. 29:2-6)
- (C) **The Godhead.** We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three Persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 14:10, 26).

(D) The Person and Work of Christ

1. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8).
2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:18-36; Rom. 3:24-25; 1 Pet. 2:24; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:3-5).
3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2).

(E) The Person and Work of Christ

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16:8-11; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14).
2. We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 1:17-18; 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27).
3. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of spiritual gifts to every believer. God uniquely uses evangelist, pastors, and teachers to equip believers in the assembly in order that they can do the work of the ministry (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12).
4. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. We believe that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit and that ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God frequently chooses to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing. (1 Cor. 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22).

(F) The Total Depravity of Man. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and, that man is totally depraved, and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23; 5:12; 6:23; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19).

(G) Salvation. We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. (John 1:12; Rom. 10:9-10; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

(H) The Eternal Security of the Believer.

1. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1; Rom. 8:38-39; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 1 Pet. 1:4-5)

2. We believe that it is the privilege of the believer to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-15).

(I) The Church.

1. We believe that the local church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is solely made up of born-again believers. (1 Cor. 12:12-14; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:2-23; 5:25-27).
2. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament scriptures. (Acts 14:27; 20:17; 8:32; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11).
3. We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control. (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Rom. 16:1, 4; 1 Cor. 3:9, 16; 5:4-7, 13; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
4. We recognize water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper as the scriptural ordinances for the church in this age. (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:18; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

(J) Separation. We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded of God. (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Cor. 6:14; 7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9:11).

(K) The Second Advent of Christ. We believe in the "blessed hope," the personal, imminent return of Christ who will rapture His Church prior to the seven-year tribulation. Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints, to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom which was promised to the nation of Israel. (Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; 1 Thess. 1:10; 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6).

(L) The Eternal State.

1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13).
2. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 20:4-6).
3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious punishment and torment until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer ever-lasting conscious punishment and torment (Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15).

(M) The Personality of Satan. We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the Fall of Man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and, that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6-7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

- (N) **The Personality of God.** We believe that God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution, as unscriptural theories of origin. (Gen. 1:2; Ex. 20:11).
- (O) **Civil Government.** We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home; 2) the church; and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, church, and the state are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14).
- (P) **Human Sexuality.**
1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. Any employee of the church becoming pregnant or causing pregnancy as a result of consensual intercourse, outside of the marriage relationship, or found to be involved in any of the above mentioned in this paragraph, shall be terminated from employment. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom 1:26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4).
 2. We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23).
 3. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12).
- (Q) **Divorce and Remarriage.** We believe that God hates divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouse's die. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon. (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Tim 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).
- (R) **Abortion.** We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5, 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).
- (S) **Missions.** We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20).

(T) Lawsuits Between Believers. We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32).

(U) Giving. We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portions of God's wealth entrusted him, is obligated to support his local church financially. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of the tithe or offering once the gift has been made. (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17).

SECTION 2 – AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing statement of faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible, and therefore, is binding upon all members. All literature used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the statement of faith.

SECTION 3 – COVENANT

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

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred, acquaintances, and all others; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful to our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of, and use of, intoxicating drink 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 of speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior, to secure reconciliation without delay.

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

ARTICLE 3 – MEMBERSHIP

Upon a majority vote of the members present at any church service or meeting, membership shall be extended to all who have had and whose lives evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord 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; and upon compliance with any one of the following conditions:

- (A) By baptism (immersion) as a true believer in Christ Jesus as personal Savior;
- (B) By letter of transfer from another Bible-believing church of like faith and practice, or other written statement of good standing from the prior church if the applicant has been baptized by immersion subsequent to a profession of faith;
- (C) By testimony of faith, having been baptized by immersion; or
- (D) By restoration, if having been removed from membership, upon majority vote of the congregation after confession is made publicly before the church membership of the sin or sins involved, and satisfactorily evidencing repentance to the pastor (or the Board of Deacons if the office of pastor is vacant).

SECTION 2 – DUTIES OF A MEMBER

On becoming a member of this church, in addition to the covenant contained in Article H, Section 3, each one further covenants to love, honor, and esteem the pastor; to pray for him; and to recognize his authority in spiritual affairs of the church; to cherish a brotherly love for all members of the church; to support the church in prayer, tithes, offerings and with other financial support as the Lord enables; and in accordance with Biblical commands to support through a life-style walk affirmation of the beliefs and practices of the church.

SECTION 3 – PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

- (A) This congregation functions, not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the pastor as the undershepherd with the counsel of the Board of Deacons. Membership in this church does not afford those individuals with any property, contract, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Determination of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The pastor shall oversee and/or conduct all aspects of this church. The Board of Deacons shall give counsel and assistance to the pastor as requested by him. The membership of the church has certain limited areas of exercising a vote. Members may not vote to initiate any church action, but rather the vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the church as determined by the pastor and the Board of Deacons.
- (B) Each member of the church shall be entitled to vote on all matters except those pertaining to the disciplining of members, the purchase or sale of real property, and the dismissal or calling of a pastor, in which matters, only members at least eighteen years of age shall be entitled to vote.

SECTION 4 – DISCIPLINE OF A MEMBER

- (A) There shall be a discipline committee consisting of the pastor and the Board of Deacons. These men shall have sole authority in the determining heretical deviations from the

statement of faith and violations of the church covenant. If the pastor or a deacon is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall not sit as a member of the discipline committee. He shall be entitled to the same steps as other church members and be subject to the same discipline.

- (B) Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of any offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration.
- (C) If reconciliation is not reached, a second member, either a deacon or the pastor is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination, and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration
- (D) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (B) and (C) have been taken, the discipline committee, as the church representatives Biblically responsible for putting down murmuring, shall hear the matter. If the matter is not resolved during the hearing before the discipline committee, the committee shall recommend to the members of the church that they, after self-examination, make an effort personally to go to the offending member and seek that member's restoration.
- (E) If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (B), (C), and (D) have been taken, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the membership of the church upon a majority vote of the membership present at a meeting called for the purpose of considering disciplinary action.
- (F) No matter may be heard by the discipline committee or the church unless the steps outlined in subsections (B) and (C) have been taken, except in the case of a public offense.
- (G) If the matter involves heresy of the Scriptures, the pastor shall first admonish him. If he refuses to repent, he will be brought before the discipline committee for the second admonition. Should he still refuse to repent, he will be brought before the church for removal from membership.

SECTION 5 – TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Members, not under the disciplining process of Section 4, may request that letters of transfer be sent to another church.

SECTION 6 – TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- (A) The membership of any individual member shall be automatically terminated without notice if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding six months. Upon good cause being shown to the pastor, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the pastor.
- (B) No member of this church may hold membership in another church. If any member unites in membership with another church, that person is automatically terminated without notice from membership in this church.

ARTICLE 4 – OFFICERS

SECTION 1 – CHURCH OFFICERS

The church officers are **Pastor** (see Article V, Section 1) **Deacon** (see Article V, Section 2), minister of records, **Secretary** (see Article V, Section 3) Minister of finance, **Treasurer**, (Article V, Section 4A), **Financial Secretary**, (Article V, Section 4B), minister of Sunday School, **Sunday School Superintendent**, (Article V, Section 5), minister of hospitality (see Article V, Section 6), and minister of financial affairs, Trustee (see Article V, Section 7).

**One person may hold two or more offices. The pastor, from time to time as he deems appropriate, may appoint other church officers, subject to a confirmation vote of the church membership.*

SECTION 2 – DESIGNATION OF CORPORATE OFFICERS

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church the pastor shall serve as president of the corporation; the minister of records shall serve as secretary of the corporation; the minister of finances shall serve as treasurer of the corporation; and the chairman of the Board of Deacons shall serve as vice president of the corporation.

SECTION 3 – ELIGIBILITY FOR CONTINUANCE OF OFFICE

- (A) All church officers shall affirm their agreement with the statement of faith (as set forth in Article 2) annually in the presence of each other.
- (B) All church officers must be approved initially and thereafter annually by the pastor in order for them to commence or continue in their offices.
- (C) Only church members are eligible for election or appointment to any church office or position.

SECTION 4 – TERMS OF OFFICE

- (A) Three-fourths majority of members present shall elect the pastor.
- (B) The relationship between the pastor and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice, or less by mutual consent. The severance of the relationship between the pastor and the church may be considered at any regular church administration meeting, provided notice to that effect shall have been given from the pulpit two Sundays prior to said regular church administration meeting. A three-fourths majority of the members present and voting shall be required to decide the matter. Disciplinary removal of the pastor from office automatically terminates his membership. A restoration to membership after disciplinary removal will be subject to the requirements of Article 3, Section 1 (D).
- (C) The term of service for office of deacon shall be four years. At which time he will rotate off of the deacon board for a period of one year. He may then be reappointed at the discretion of the pastor. However, if the church has less than four deacons they will remain on the deacon board for an indefinite period.
- (D) The term of service for all other offices and positions in the church, shall be one year at the expiration of which they may be re-elected or appointed.
- (E) A vacancy occurring in any office or board except in the case of the pastor, may be filled at any regular church administration meeting.

- (F) All elected and appointed officers shall serve in their respective offices until their successors are duly elected or appointed.
- (G) Members of the Board of Deacons may be removed from office for unbiblical conduct, as determined by the other board members, upon a majority vote of the remaining members of the Board of Deacons.

SECTION 5 – ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The annual election of officers by the church membership shall occur during the month of October at the regular quarterly meeting, at which time teachers shall also be elected.

ARTICLE 5– DUTIES OF OFFICERS

SECTION 1 – THE PASTOR

- (A) The pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God as the Lord leads him. He shall administer the ordinances of the church, act as moderator at all church meetings for the transaction of church matters, supervise the teaching ministries of the church, and tenderly watch over the spiritual interests of the membership.
- (B) The pastor shall appoint members to any needed committees at the annual election of teachers and officers meeting in August. He shall serve as the president of the corporation. He shall publicly inform all newly elected officers of the particular function and the responsibilities of their respective offices. He shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all new members on behalf of the church and perform such other duties as generally appertain to such a position. The pastor shall be free to choose the means and methods by which he exercises the ministry that God has given him.
- (C) 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 the stated appointments shall be under the control of the pastor and the Board of Deacons.

SECTION 2 – THE BOARD OF DEACONS

- (A) The Board of Deacons shall assist the pastor, in such manner as he shall request, in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in conducting the religious services, and in performing all other work of the church. They shall make provision for the observance of the ordinances of the church. They shall, if requested by the pastor, consider applications for church membership. They shall, in cooperation with the pastor, disburse the benevolence fund. They shall assist the pastor in visitation and all other evangelistic efforts of the church. They shall provide the pulpit supply and act as leaders for church meetings if the office of pastor is vacant. The Board of Deacons shall assist the pastor in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries as requested by the pastor.
- (B) Immediately following the annual church administration meeting, the Board of Deacons shall assemble and elect, from their own number, a chairman who shall be vice president of the corporation, a vice-chairman, and a secretary.

SECTION 3 – THE MINISTER OF RECORDS

The minister of records shall:

- (A) Certify and keep at the office of the Church, or an agreed designated place, the original bylaws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations by the bylaws.
- (B) Keep at the place where the bylaws or a copy are kept a record of the proceedings of meetings of the Board of Deacons, with the time and place of holding, the notice of meeting given, the names of those present at the meetings.
- (C) Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law.
- (D) See that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws. In case of the absence or disability of the Secretary, or his or her refusal or neglect to act, notice may be given and served by the Pastor, or the Chairman of the Board of Deacons.
- (E) Be custodian of the records of the church, including the membership roll, baptism, and certificates of ordination, licenses and commissions.
- (F) See that the reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed.
- (G) Exhibit at all reasonable times to proper persons on terms provided by law the bylaws and minutes of proceedings of the Board of Deacons or the minutes of the meetings of the church members.
- (H) Keep an account of any special events in the life of the church, which are of historical interest and give a report at the annual church administration meeting of the status of the church membership roll in the past year.
- (I) Keep all records at the office of the church or an agreed designated place, and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office.

SECTION 4 – THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

The minister of finance shall consist of two positions:

- (A) **Treasurer** – have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds of the Corporation, and deposit all funds in the name of the Church in banks, trust companies, or other depositories as shall be selected by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.
- (B) **Financial Secretary** – Receive, and give receipt for all contributions, gifts and donations to the Church
- (C) Disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the Church as may be directed by the Pastor, the Board of Deacons, or the budget adopted by the members of the church at the annual church administration meeting, taking proper vouchers for the disbursements.
- (D) Keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the Church's properties and business transactions including account of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, and capital.
- (E) Make all expenditures of the church (except miscellaneous petty cash disbursements) by check.
- (F) When and requested, render to the Pastor and the Board of Deacons accounts of all his/her transactions as minister of finance and of the financial condition of the church.
- (G) Present a written report of itemized disbursements at the regular quarterly church administration meetings and make a general report for the year at the annual church administration meeting.
- (H) Keep all church financial records at the office of the Church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office.

SECTION 5 – THE MINISTER OF SUNDAY SCHOOL

The minister of Sunday school shall supervise the Sunday school. In consultation with the pastor he shall recommend the appointment of the teachers of the Sunday school. He shall preside at the teachers' meetings, and report on the condition of the Sunday school at the annual church administration meeting.

SECTION 6 – THE MINISTER OF HOSPITALITY

The minister of hospitality, in cooperation with the pastor, shall appoint a sufficient number of assistants to care for the work of ushering and extending the official hospitality of the church to its members and visitors.

SECTION 7 – THE MINISTER OF FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

The minister of financial affairs shall constitute the board of trustees for the corporation. The board of trustees shall exercise only the following specific powers.

- (A) To purchase, hold, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church.
- (B) To sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church, to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and the use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages or pledges.
- (C) To exercise all powers necessary in cooperation with the Board of Deacons, the dissolution of the church corporation, if such action is mandated by a vote of the church membership.

SECTION 8 – ASSOCIATE PASTORS

Under the direction and guidance of the pastor, the associate pastors of the church shall assist the pastor in carrying out the ministries of the church.

SECTION 9 – DUTIES OF ALL OFFICERS

- (A) Any officer who neglects his duties as outlined in the Bylaws for a period of three months may be removed from his office at the discretion of the pastor and the deacon board and another may be appointed by the pastor and deacon board to serve the unexpired term.
- (B) All officers, staff and members who hold a position, shall faithfully attend all worship services as set forth in Article 6, Section 1. Failure to do so will result in either voluntary or mandatory resignation. (1 Cor. 4:2; Heb. 10:25)

SECTION 10 – INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

A public installation service in which all newly-elected officers of the church are to be dedicated to their respective offices and the ordination of newly-elected deacons shall be held at a public church service following their election at the annual election of teachers and officers meeting.

ARTICLE 6 – MEETINGS

SECTION 1 – MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Unless otherwise determined by the pastor, the church shall meet each Sunday for public worship both morning and evening and at least once during the week for Bible study and prayer. Except when circumstances forbid it, the ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday evening of each quarter. However, the pastor may determine to observe more frequently as he is led by the Spirit of God.

SECTION 2 – MEETINGS FOR CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

- (A) A quarterly church administration meeting shall be held the first Wednesday evening of each quarter, at which time the regular church administration shall be considered. A quorum shall consist of the members present. The date for the annual church officers shall be determined at the regular church ministry affairs meeting in August of each year at the election of teachers and officers meeting.
- (B) All church administration meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer for divine guidance and blessing.
- (C) The following order shall be observed at the regular church administration meetings:
 - 1. Devotion and prayer
 - 2. Reading of minutes
 - 3. Reception of members
 - 4. Dismissal of members
 - 5. Report of officers
 - 6. Reports of any committees
 - 7. Unfinished matters
 - 8. Election of officers, if any
 - 9. New matters
 - 10. Adjournment
 - 11. Benediction

SECTION 3- SPECIAL MEETINGS

- (A) The pastor (or deacons if the office of pastor is vacant or the pastor is the subject of possible disciplinary action) may call a special meeting by giving notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called to the church from the pulpit at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting. A meeting for election of a pastor may be called by the pulpit committee at any regular church meeting at least two weeks in advance.
- (B) Bible conferences, missionary conferences, and revivals may be held as the pastor deems beneficial.

SECTION 4 – FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1 and end December 31.

ARTICLE 7 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

SECTION 1 – PURPOSE

The church believes that it is to provide the members' children with an education that is based upon and consistent with Biblical teachings. The church believes that the home and church as responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To this end, the church shall engage in ministries in education in keeping with the Constitution and Bylaws.

SECTION 2 – CHURCH PARTICIPATION

All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church shall be primarily for the benefit of the members of the church; however, the pastor may permit non-church members to participate in church educational programs or courses of instruction if he deems it in the best interest of the church.

SECTION 3 – STAFF MEMBERSHIP

All instructors, teachers, and administrators shall be members of this church. This provision shall not apply to visiting missionaries, evangelists, or preachers engaged for the purpose of delivering sermons, conducting revivals, or other special meetings on a temporary basis.

SECTION 4 - STATEMENT OF FAITH ACCORD

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be taught and presented in full accord with the statement of faith of the church.

SECTION 5 – UNITY

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the church.

SECTION 6 – TEACHING

All educational programs, of instruction, shall be conducted consistent with the teaching of the inerrant Word of God. Any assertion of belief, which conflicts with or questions a Bible truth, is a pagan deception and distortion of the truth which will be disclaimed as false. It is the responsibility of every instructor or teacher to present the inerrant Word of God as the sole infallible source of knowledge and wisdom.

SECTION 7 – CHRISTIAN WALK

All administrators, instructors, and teachers shall continue or adopt a life-style consistent with the precepts which they teach, whether in or out of the classroom.

ARTICLE 8 – EXPENDITURES

SECTION 1 – UNAUTHORIZED EXPENDITURES

Any expenditure not authorized in a regular business meeting or annual budget must be authorized by the pastor and the Board of Deacons.

SECTION 2 – AUTHORIZED EXPENDITURES

The Pastor and Board of Deacons shall have the authority to spend up to \$500 without a vote of consent by a quorum.

ARTICLE 9 – ORDINATION

SECTION 1 – ORDINATION QUALIFICATIONS

Any male member of this church or its mission churches, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, may be ordained as a minister of the Gospel.

SECTION 2 – ORDINATION PROCEDURE

- (A) Upon a conference with the pastor and after the pastor has approved the candidate for ordination, the pastor shall call a council to examine and pass on the qualification of the candidate. The ordination council shall consist of ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate in the examination of the candidate.
- (B) If the candidate is found worthy of the ordination by the council, the ordination council may ordain the candidate on behalf of the church.
- (C) The pastor and the chairman of the deacons shall arrange for the ordination service.

ARTICLE 10 – INDEMNIFICATION

SECTION 1 – ACTIONS SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION

The Church may indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the Church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the Church, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner he/she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe their conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment order, settlement, conviction, or a pleas of *nolo contendere* or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that was reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

SECTION 2 – EXPENSES SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION

To the extent that a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, he or she may be

indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.

SECTION 3 – LIMITATIONS OF INDEMNIFICATION

Any indemnification made under this Article, may be made by the Church only as authorized in the specific case on a determination that indemnification of the pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because he has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in Section I of this Article. The determination shall be made (a) by a majority vote in a quorum consisting of the pastor and deacons who were not and are not parties to, or threatened with, the action, suit, or proceeding; (b) if the described quorum is not obtainable, of if a majority vote of a quorum of disinterested deacons so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or (c) by a majority vote of the members of the church.

SECTION 4 – TIMING OF INDEMNIFICATION

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article, may be paid by the church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by the Board of Deacons in the specific case, on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the Church.

SECTION 5 – EXTENT OF INDEMNIFICATION

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by the Church, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification under this Article in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office, and may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

SECTION 6 – INSURANCE

The Church may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a pastor, deacon, officer, employee, or agent of the Church against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in that capacity, or arising out of his status in that capacity, whether or not the Church would have the power of indemnify him against liability under the provisions of the Article.

ARTICLE 11 – TAX-EXEMPT PROVISIONS

SECTION 1 – PRIVATE INUREMENT

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered 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 – POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

SECTION 3 – DISSOLUTION

Upon the dissolution of the church, the trustees shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all of the assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501 © (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the trustees shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to organizations that agree with the church's statement of faith.

SECTION 4 – RACIAL NONDISCRIMINATION

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

SECTION 5 – LIMITATION OF ACTIVITIES

Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws, the church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in Article 1, Section 2.

ARTICLE 12 – DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the pastor and the Board of Deacons. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article 1, Section 2.

ARTICLE 13 – BINDING ARBITRATION

SECTION 1 – SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION

Believing that lawsuits between believers are prohibited by Scripture, all members of this church agree to submit to binding arbitration any matters which cannot otherwise be

resolved, and expressly waive any and all rights in law and equity to bringing any civil disagreement before a court of law, except that judgement upon the award rendered by the arbitrator may be entered in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

SECTION 2 – NOTICE OF ARBITRATION

In the event of any dispute, claim, question, or disagreement arising out of or relating to these Bylaws or any other church matter, the parties shall use their best efforts to settle such disputes, claims, questions, or disagreement as befits Christians. To this effect, they shall consult and negotiate with each other in good faith and, recognizing their mutual interests not to disgrace the name of Christ, seek to reach a just and equitable solution. If they do not reach such solution within a period of sixty (60) days, then upon notice by either party to the other, disputes, claims, questions, or differences shall be finally settled by arbitration as described in Section 1, above, and such Procedures for Arbitration as are adopted pursuant to the following sections.

SECTION 3 – LIMITATIONS OF ARBITRATION DECISIONS

- (A) Should any dispute involve matters of church discipline, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures for church discipline as outlined under Article 3, Section 4, were followed.
- (B) Should any dispute involve the removal from office of the pastor or any church officer, the arbitrators shall be limited to determining whether the procedures set forth in Article 3 were followed.

SECTION 4 – ARBITRATION PROCEDURES

The procedures for arbitration shall be as adopted by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE 14 – AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and Bylaws may be revised or amended by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular church administration meeting provided that said revision or amendment has been submitted in writing and announced from the pulpit fourteen (14) days before the vote is taken.

ADOPTION

(Revised 10/16)

The revised articles of this Constitution and Bylaws were adopted by a unanimous vote of members present and voting at a duly-called meeting of the church in which a quorum was presented.

This Constitution and Bylaws supersede any other Constitution and Bylaws of Middle Cross Baptist Church.

Date

Minister of Records (Church Clerk)

Date

Pastor or Chairman of Board of Deacons