

**Constitution and By-Laws of  
New Salem Baptist Church Limestone, Inc.**

**ARTICLE I NAME**

This church shall be known as New Salem Baptist Church of Limestone, Tennessee.

**ARTICLE II PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of this church shall be to preach and teach the Bible so as to win the lost to Jesus. The church shall also make every effort to disciple those who are won, and to minister to the spiritual, moral, and social needs of its members. This Church shall be missionary-minded in its teaching and practice.
2. Though wholly independent of any other body, this Church shall cooperate with other churches of like faith and practice for the advancement of missions and evangelism promoted through the Holston Baptist Association, the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

## ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

### *Section A – Qualifications*

1. Membership in this Church shall be granted only to persons who give satisfactory evidence of their repentance toward God, their personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Redeemer and Savior and who have been immersed in water in accordance with the Biblical example of Baptism.

### *Section B - Admission of Members*

1. Those applying for membership shall be received upon pastor recommendation and by majority acknowledgment by this Church at any regular or special service.
2. In the rare incident of opposition to the acceptance of a person into membership, the matter shall be referred to the Pastor and Deacons without discussion for their investigation and report.
3. Membership will be granted under the following conditions:
  - a. Baptism - Upon satisfactory evidence of repentance toward God and profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, an applicant may be received as a Candidate for Baptism by immersion. After Baptism he/she will automatically enjoy the full fellowship of this Church.
  - b. Letter - A member of another church of like faith and order may be received by a letter of recommendation from such church. When a member is received on promise of a letter and such a letter cannot be secured within a ninety day period; the Clerk shall at that time record such member as, "*Received on the statement of Faith and prior Baptism by Immersion*".
  - c. Statement of Faith - Any person not covered by paragraph 3a and 3b, section B, of Article III may be received as a member upon statement of faith in Jesus as Savior and statement of prior Biblical Baptism by immersion.
  - d. Restoration - Any former member whose membership has been terminated on account of some offense, upon satisfactory evidence of true repentance and reformation, may be restored to full fellowship by a vote of this Church. Any former member whose membership has been terminated on account of continued absence, upon satisfactory explanation, may be restored to full fellowship by vote of this Church.

### *Section C - Rights and Duties of Members*

1. The members of New Salem Baptist Church retain the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this Church.
2. The Membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this Church and the conditions of such membership.
3. Every Church member may vote in all elections and on all questions submitted to this Church membership, provided the member is present. When voting on the election or the dismissal of staff members, the voting member must be 16 years of age or older.
4. Every Church member may participate in the ordinances of this Church as administered by this Church.
5. Every Church member who is eligible under these By-Laws may be considered by the membership as a candidate for elective office in this Church.
6. It is the duty of every Church member, including the Pastor, Staff and the Deacons to strive to fulfill Article X of these by-laws, to support their Church by regular attendance at the services of the Church, and to contribute to the needs of the Church through their tithes and offerings

### *Section D - Termination of Membership*

1. Letter - If a member desires to unite with another Baptist Church, they shall present themselves to that church and request such membership. This Church by vote shall, upon receipt of request from that church, authorize the Church Clerk to grant a letter of dismissal and recommendation to the church

making such request. Should the vote be to deny recommendation for any reason, the Clerk shall notify the requesting church that the request has been received and said person is being dropped from this Church's files and no letter of recommendation is being sent.

2. Certificate - If a member unites with a church of another denomination, this Church shall by vote authorize the Church Clerk to give that church a certificate of that member's standing and shall terminate their membership in this Church. This may be done upon the request of the other church or the individual in writing.
3. Exclusion - Membership may be terminated by exclusion at the request of the member in writing or as the result of disciplinary action by this Church in keeping with section E of ARTICLE III.

***Section E - Discipline of Members***

1. Offense - Should a member become an offense to this Church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unbecoming conduct or by persistent breach of ARTICLE X of the By-Laws, this Church may terminate his/her membership under the conditions cited in Paragraph 4 of Section E of Article III.
2. Inactivity - Should a member remain in or move from the community and fail to attend or support this Church for a period of six months, this Church may terminate his/her membership under the conditions cited in paragraph 4 of Section E of ARTICLE III.
3. Unknown - Should a member fail to keep this Church advised of changes in name and/or address so that no contact can be established for six months, this Church, after making diligent effort to find and enlist such member, may terminate his/her membership under the conditions cited in Paragraph 4 of Section E of ARTICLE III.
4. Disciplinary Procedure - All matters of discipline shall be referred to the Deacons for investigation and recommendation and no action shall be taken until refereed to and reported on by the Deacons. In dealing with all such cases the Deacons shall be guided by the New Testament. No member shall be put on trial or dismissed from the fellowship until he/she has been informed in writing of the specific charges against him/her, cited to appear and given an opportunity to answer; provided that this shall not void the provisions of Paragraph 3 of Section E of ARTICLE III. Should any member fail to give satisfaction to this Church concerning any charges or refuse to answer a summons to appear before this Church, he/she shall be dismissed from the membership of this Church by simple majority of the votes cast in any Regular Business Meeting of this Church.

## ARTICLE IV MEETINGS

### *Section A – Worship*

Regular meetings for Worship shall be held every Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and every Wednesday evening. The Pastor or Deacons may if the need dictates cancel any service. Special services may be called at any time to further this Church's ministries.

### *Section B - Ordinances*

1. The Ordinance of Baptism shall be administered as soon as possible after a person presents themselves for baptism.
2. The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed quarterly at the service set by the Pastor or Deacons.

### *Section C - Business Meetings*

1. Regular meetings for the transaction of business shall be held on Wednesday evening after the first Sunday of each month. The Pastor or the Deacons may cancel or change such meetings by giving notice on the preceding Sunday.
2. Both the Fiscal Year and the Church Calendar year shall close on August 31 of each year.
3. Special Business Meetings may be called by the Pastor and/or Deacons when necessary and shall be called by the Pastor and/or Deacons when requested to do so in writing by 20 members who are 16 years of age or older. At least one public notice on the previous Sunday must be given for all special meetings. This rule must not be construed so as to prevent this Church, when assembled on any occasion, from transacting business for emergencies and business concerning that which has no division or sentiment within the membership.
4. Presiding Officer The Pastor shall be the Moderator at business meetings. In the absence of the pastor, the Chairman of Deacons will moderate. In case both of these are absent and a business meeting is absolutely necessary, the Vice-Chairman of Deacons will moderate.
5. Quorum Twenty members 16 years of age or older shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any Regular or at any Special Business Meeting duly called as provided in Paragraph 3 of Section C of ARTICLE IV.
6. Voting Qualifications Only true members as stated in Article III may vote on any business. The member must be present to vote and age restrictions may apply as outlined in other sections of these By-Laws.
7. Business meetings shall observe good parliamentary procedure, using Robert's Rules of Order as a general guide.
8. A regular business meeting shall consist of the following:
  - a. Minutes of the last meeting being read and adopted
  - b. A financial report being read and adopted
  - c. Unfinished Business (to include Departmental Reports, Deacon Recommendations, Committee Reports and any old or unfinished business)
  - d. New Business
  - e. Adjournment or recessed until a specified time if necessary.
9. Any member wishing to speak shall be recognized by the Moderator before speaking. If several rise at once the Moderator shall choose the order in which they will speak
10. Members shall refrain from speaking on matters not related to business at hand and will refrain from any unkind or discourteous remarks displaying always the spirit of love and Christ likeness. Should a member fail to so conduct himself, the Moderator shall call him to order.

11. Should a member be speaking in a way as to be in violation of these rules and will not come to order after being called to order by the Moderator; the Moderator may call for adjournment and such adjournment will be decided by a majority of the members present standing for dismissal in prayer.
12. No member shall speak more than twice on the same matter except by majority vote of the members present.
13. Any person submitting a recommendation requiring action by the Church is expected to move its adoption in order to facilitate placing the matter before the body.
14. A motion must have a second before it can be discussed or voted on. (A nomination does not require a second.)
15. A motion may be withdrawn at any time by its mover before it has been amended or voted upon.
16. When a motion is under discussion, no other motion shall be received except a motion to adjourn, to table the motion, to amend, to postpone, or to commit. Such motions shall have precedence in the order in which they are stated.
17. A motion to adjourn or to table a motion shall be decided without debate. A motion to adjourn is always in order, unless a member is speaking or the body is engaged in voting.
18. Use of a secret ballot A secret ballot will be used in determining the disposition of any issue concerning individual personalities. This does not include Nominating Committee reports or nominations filling volunteer positions. It does include the election of all ministerial and non-ministerial staff in paid positions that are filled by Church vote. This Church may call for a secret ballot vote by motion, second and majority vote of members present on any matter of business before this Church. The moderator may call for a secret ballot at any time that he wills.
19. All matters of business will be decided by simple majority of the votes cast except where stated otherwise in these By-Laws.

## ARTICLE V OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

### *Section A - Names of Officers*

For its ordained officers, this Church shall have Pastors and Deacons. In addition to its Ordained officers this Church shall have a Clerk, a Treasurer, and three Trustees and such other officers as may be necessary to carry out the ministries of this Church.

### *Section B – Qualifications*

No person shall serve in any capacity unless he/she is a member of this Church in good standing and is seeking to live the testimony given in Article X of the By-Laws.

### *Section C - Pastor*

1. Qualifications In the selection of a Pastor this Church shall be guided by the Biblical qualifications as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7. No person shall serve as Pastor who is not a regularly ordained Baptist Pastor in good standing with the denomination. The Pastor shall be male and if married, shall be the husband of one wife as given in I Timothy 3:2.
2. Duties The duties of the Pastor shall be such as are prescribed in the New Testament and such as usually devolve upon the Pastor of a Baptist Church. He shall give himself to the ministry of prayer, preaching and teaching, soul winning, pastoral ministry, and to being the spiritual leader of the Church. He shall serve as Moderator of the Church, shall serve as ex-officio member of all committees and ministry groups, and he shall be the official Administrator of all Church functions and programs. As Administrator he shall direct the work of all Church staff, other employees, and volunteer workers. The Pastor shall administer the budget.
3. Election When a vacancy in the pastorate occurs, the Deacons shall promptly nominate a Pastor Search Committee made up of five members. The retiring or resigning Pastor shall not serve on this committee, ex-officio or otherwise.
4. Pastor Search Committee When elected by this Church, this committee shall select a Chairman and a Secretary from its members and shall proceed with as little delay as possible to select some minister of the Gospel whose character and qualifications fit him for the office of Pastor of this Church. When the committee has made a choice, it shall give at least one week notice of the meeting at which it shall present its report. The committee shall put before this Church only one name at the time and no nominations shall be made from the floor. The nominated candidate must preach in at least one Church Service (preferably on Sunday morning) before the vote is taken. To be elected the candidate must receive at least three-fourths of the votes cast. The votes shall be cast by secret ballot and counted by at least three Deacons appointed by the Deacon Body. It is desired that the vote be unanimous. Should the committee's nomination fail to receive the necessary three-fourths vote, the Moderator shall declare the nominee not elected. The committee shall then resume its duties. If the nominee is elected the committee is thereby dissolved.
5. Termination of Pastor The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite term. Should the Pastor or this Church desire to terminate the pastoral relationship, the party desiring such a change shall give the other written notice of at least 30 days. Termination of the Pastor will require a simple majority of the votes cast at a business meeting called for this purpose.

### *Section D – Deacons*

1. Scriptural Qualifications Every deacon shall meet, to the best of his ability the qualifications and standards set forth in Acts 6: 3 - 8 and I Timothy 3: 8 – 13, as well as basic Christian principles set forth in the Word of God.
  - a. He shall be a growing, informed, and missionary minded Christian.

- b. His family relations shall be right. If married, he shall be the husband of one wife as is given in I Timothy 3:12. The Deacon shall manage well his own household and exercise proper control over his children. He shall claim the respect of his home. (Note: The above does not mean a Deacon must be married to serve as a Deacon.)
  - c. He shall abstain from the sale and use of beverage alcohol or the sale and use of any illegal drug.
  - d. He shall set a right example in Christian living, loyalty to Christ's Church, to the Pastor, and to New Testament stewardship. No one in this Church shall be more loyal in attendance at all worship services, Christian education, and mid-week services. He shall be a leader in seeking to further the cause of Christ and in seeking to edify this Church.
  - e. He shall practice Scriptural giving and shall set an example before this Church in bringing God's tithes and offerings into the Lord's storehouse on the Lord's Day.
  - f. He shall not be a new convert, but be a tried and proven Christian.
2. Non-scriptural Qualifications All Deacons shall meet the following requirements.
    - a. He shall be at least twenty-one years of age.
    - b. He shall have been a member of New Salem Baptist Church for at least one year.
3. Duties
    - a. The Chairman of Deacons shall be the Vice-Moderator of the Church
    - b. The Deacon shall set a personal example of Christ-like living. He shall support all of this Church's programs. This example of Christian living is considered of the highest importance.
4. Service- The office of Deacon is not an honorary office. A Deacon is called for service as were the first men selected as Deacons in the New Testament Church. This service shall include but not be limited to the following areas.
    - a. Ministry to the families assigned to him by the Pastor or the Deacon Chairman.
    - b. Ministry to others in crisis situations.
    - c. Assist in the administering of the Lord's Supper.
    - d. Present and interpret this Church's program to members and prospective members of this Church at every opportunity.
    - e. Support and assist the Pastor in every way possible to further the cause of Christ. This includes prayer, evangelism and outreach.
5. Selection of Deacons
    - a. The Office of Deacon is a calling to special service, first by God and then by the local Church.
    - b. Members of New Salem Baptist Church who are 16 years of age or older can nominate the name of any male member of this Church including previously ordained men who are believed to meet all of the qualifications of a Deacon.
    - c. All nominees will be personally screened by the Pastor and Deacon officers to determine whether they meet the scriptural and non-scriptural standards set forth in the By-Laws. This screening will be done discreetly and with spiritual sensitivity.
    - d. Previously ordained men who meet the standards and who are willing to serve shall then be elected by this Church as Deacon Candidates. They shall then serve a minimum of six months before being elected as an Active Deacon.
    - e. Unordained men who meet the standards and who are willing to serve shall then be elected by this Church as Deacon Candidates. They shall then serve a minimum of six months before they will be considered for Deacon Ordination.
    - f. To be elected as a Deacon Candidate, as an Active Deacon, and for Ordination the nominee must receive three-fourths of the votes cast by this Church.
6. When paragraph 5c of Section D of Article V has been fulfilled, the Deacons shall then:
    - a. Recommend the candidate for Ordination if three-fourths of the Deacons approve, or

- b. Present the candidate to this Church without recommendation if three-fourths do not approve.
- c. The Candidate must receive three-fourths of the votes cast by this Church to be ordained.
- 7. Training All Deacon Candidates will undergo the Training Program in use at the time of their selection. No candidate will be recommended for ordination until they complete this training. Deacons will be expected to undergo training each year to better equip them for the ministry.
- 8. Ordination and Election Ordination and election will be by three-fourths of the votes cast by this Church. Term of service shall be for an indefinite length of time.
- 9. Active Deacons. The number of Deacons of New Salem Baptist Church will be determined by the number of Family Units in this Church. The ideal is one Deacon per 5 to 7 family units. (A family unit can be only one person.)
- 10. Procedures The Deacons shall have such officers and such organization as required to fulfill their duties. The Deacon Body shall select their own officers, to wit, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, and assistant Secretary. These shall be elected at the August meeting. The Chairman of Deacons is charged with the duty of working closely with the Pastor and his staff in leading the Deacons and other members of this Church to implement the programs of this Church.
- 11. Meetings The Deacon Body shall meet at a designated time each month with special meetings called as need dictates. The Pastor shall be aware of all Deacons' Meetings and will attend unless providentially hindered. The Pastor may be asked to excuse himself from a meeting where sensitive issues involving him are discussed. The Pastor will be made aware of what such issues involve and what disposition was made. Any other discussions, business, or considerations entered into by the Deacon Body will be done in his presence or if he must be absent from any Deacon's meeting he shall be informed of all discussions, business, or considerations at the earliest possible time . There shall be no secret Deacon's Meetings and if such meetings are held, any and all decisions made or business conducted shall be null and void.

***Section E - Non-Ordained Officers***

- 1. General
  - a. The church clerk shall be elected to office annually.
  - b. The church treasurer shall be elected to office annually.
  - c. The church trustees shall be elected to office annually.
- 2. Duties
  - a. The church clerk shall:
    - (1) Keep a suitable record of all actions of this Church except as otherwise herein provided.
    - (2) Keep a register of names of the members of this Church, with dates of admission, dismissal, death, or erasure, together with a record of baptisms.
    - (3) Issue letters of dismissal voted by the Church.
    - (4) Preserve on file all communications and written official reports.
  - b. The church treasurer shall:
    - (1) Receive, preserve, and pay out, upon approval by authorized persons, all money or things of value paid or given to this Church.
    - (2) Keep an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements.
    - (3) Render to the Church an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements of the preceding month at each regular business meeting.
    - (4) Render an annual report at the end of each fiscal year and, upon its acceptance and approval by this Church, send a copy to Holston Baptist Association.
    - (5) Render a record of gifts, upon request, to each person who gave recordable gifts to this Church. This is to be done annually by January 31 of the next year.
  - c. The church trustees shall:



- (1) Hold in trust the properties of this Church.
  - (2) Represent this Church in official and legal transactions.
  - (3) Have power to enter in contracts, to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property of this Church, but only upon a specific vote by this Church authorizing such action on a case by case basis.
  - (4) Sign legal documents involving the sale, rental, mortgage, or purchase of property, or other legal documents relating to Church-related matters, so long as these matters were duly voted on and approved by this Church on a case by case basis.
  - (5) Have no powers implied or otherwise to conduct legal transactions for this Church unless stated herein.
  - (6) Carry out the legal vote of this Church in all matters regardless of personal opinion and the refusal to carry out the legal vote of this Church in all matters is considered to be an official resignation from the position of Trustee.
- d. All other non-ordained officers shall have their duties described in the area of their service.

## ARTICLE VI STAFF

### *Section A - Ministerial Staff*

1. The ministerial staff shall be called and employed as this Church determines the need of staff positions.
2. Those staff members, of whom this Church requires evidence of a personal call of God to minister, shall be recommended to this Church by the Pastor and the Deacons and called by Church vote. Three/fourths of the votes cast are required for election of staff except where stated otherwise in these by laws.
3. Ministerial staff shall give at least 30 days notice of resignation.
4. Termination of ministerial staff shall be by recommendation of the Pastor in consultation with the Deacons.
5. These terminations will be implemented by seeking a voluntary resignation.
6. Each staff member agrees to resign if asked to by the Pastor when three/fourths of the Deacons are in agreement with the Pastor. It is always preferable for all involved to keep such situations from dividing this Church.
7. No pastor or staff member serving under the authority of this Church will officiate or support through their position as a representative of this church any event that contradicts our articles of faith.
8. At the time of resignation or termination, this Church may compensate the ministerial staff member with an amount agreed to by the Pastor and the majority of the Deacons. This amount shall not exceed one/twelfth of the individual's annual salary and will not be paid if the staff member has been dismissed for unchristian conduct or fails to comply with Paragraph 7 of Section A of Article VI.

### *Section B - Non-ministerial staff*

1. The Church support staff shall be recommended by the Pastor in consultation with the Deacons.
2. No non-ministerial staff member serving under the authority of this Church will officiate or support through their position as a representative of this church any event that contradicts our articles of faith.
3. Hiring or appointment (if a volunteer position) shall be approved by simple majority of the votes cast by this Church.
4. Termination shall be by recommendation of the Pastor in consultation with the Deacons.
5. All support staff will agree to resign if asked to by the Pastor when three/fourths of the Deacons are in agreement with the Pastor. It is always preferable for all involved to keep such situations from dividing this Church.
6. If the support staff is a paid position, then at the time of resignation or termination, this Church may compensate the ministerial staff member with an amount agreed to by the Pastor and the majority of the Deacons. This amount shall not exceed one/twelfth of the individual's annual salary and will not be paid if the staff member has been dismissed for unchristian conduct or fails to comply with Paragraph 5 of Section B of Article VI.

### Section C – Ministry Eligibility

1. Waiting Period - No volunteer may serve in a primary position of responsibility involving unsupervised contact with children or youth until the candidate has been regularly involved in the church for six months. Volunteers may participate in children's or youth ministries before this six month waiting period is observed, but they will be closely supervised or monitored by volunteers who have been involved for more than six months. There is no waiting period applicable to the other ministries of the church.

2. Background Checks New Salem Baptist Church has always operated in an atmosphere of trust. This policy is intended to simply provide structure to the exercise of that trust in our ministry to those most vulnerable to an abuse of that trust, our children and youth. To provide as safe and secure an environment as possible for them, and to minimize the likelihood that the ministry and those who work in it could be subject to an unwarranted accusation, the following procedures apply to the conduct of the New Salem Baptist Church Children's and Youth Ministries.
- a. A background check shall be conducted for any prospective staff member or volunteer who may have the opportunity to work directly and unsupervised with children and/or teenagers. These events would include, but are not limited to, Sunday school, nursery, VBS, youth group, youth choirs, plays, retreats and bus drivers.
  - b. Background checks shall be conducted using the appropriate procedures available and deemed appropriate at the time of screening. This may include searches via the internet or through those state and/or federal agencies that provide such services. Screenings should include, at a minimum, social security traces, sex offender data bases and criminal background checks.
  - c. Reports shall remain sealed and completely confidential. Findings will not be discussed outside of approving committee meetings. Access to all reports and findings shall be limited to the following:
    - 1) Search committee chairman
    - 2) Deacon chairman
    - 3) Sunday School superintendent
  - d. If the background check reveals any credible information that a candidate poses a threat of abuse to children, youth or any adult working in the ministry, the candidate shall be removed from consideration for work in that ministry.
  - e. A candidate may also be removed from consideration if the process reveals problems that do not involve abuse but indicate an inability of the applicant to conform to the ministry's behavior standards.
  - f. This church shall continually strive to make every decision under the leadership of God and in a constant attitude of prayer. Allowances must always be made for the forgiveness provided by the shed blood of Jesus Christ and the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit that accompanies the salvation experience.
  - g. In the event that the background screening returns a positive finding and it becomes apparent because of a past offense that the volunteer could pose a threat to our young people, the volunteer would be prohibited from working with children and youth at our church. If the circumstances of the incident(s) in question suggest that the abusive behavior occurred before the person became a Christian, and his/her life has exhibited evidence of the fruit of the Spirit at work, and there have been no such occurrences since salvation, the pastoral staff will work closely with the volunteer to find other appropriate ways to serve in the congregation.

## ARTICLE VII CHURCH COMMITTEES

### *Section A - General*

1. All who serve on Church Committees shall be members of this Church in good standing.
2. There shall be Standing Administrative Committees and such other administrative, service, and special committees as this Church shall authorize. All committees whose guidelines are not given in these by-laws shall be governed by the guidelines given at the time of their appointment or election.
3. The Standing Administrative Committees of this Church shall be:
  - a. Nominating Committee: Comprised of the following; WMU President, Sunday School, Director, Chairman of Deacons, and Church Clerk
  - b. Building and Grounds Committee: Shall consist of four members which will be nominated and elected annually.
  - c. Budget and Finance Committee: Comprised of the following: WMU President, Sunday School Director, Treasurer, and Chairman of Deacons.
4. All committees shall consist of three to five members excluding ex-officio member.
5. Any new committee or committees that may form during the year will first be adopted by this Church. After the committee is adopted the Pastor will appoint the members to work on that committee. If that new committee remains in place into a new Church year or becomes a standing committee, then the Nominating Committee will annually nominate and the Church elects members for said committee.

### *Section B - Duties and Procedures*

1. The Nominating Committee will:
  - a. Meet during the month of July and be ready to present a slate of officers and teachers in the August Business Meeting for election.
  - b. Meet to secure replacements for any vacancies during the Church year. Replacements will be presented at the next Regular Business Meeting.
2. The Building Grounds Committee will:
  - a. Coordinate the maintenance of all Church property
  - b. Recommend policies regarding the use of Church properties
  - c. Use funds provided in the annual Church Budget for maintenance and repairs. When budgeted funds are depleted, this committee will bring before the Church in Business Meeting any further spending
  - d. Secure at least two bids with three desired on any item over \$600.00 before it is presented to the Church.
3. The Budget and Finance Committee will:
  - a. Meet in the month of July and prepare a new budget for the coming year. They shall present a printed copy to each member at the Sunday Morning Worship Service before the August Business Meeting
  - b. Present to the Church in the September Business Meeting the new budget for adoption
  - c. Oversee the administering of the Budget as follows:
    - (1) No purchase or expenditure from any Budgeted Item may be made without the approval of the Pastor, or the Treasurer, or the Chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee, or the Budget Committee in official session, or this Church body in legal Business Meeting.

- (2) All expenditures will be made in line with current cash flow and monthly allotment of annual amounts in the budget line items.
- (3) The following items are not affected by this rule: mission budgeted items, salaries, retirement fund payments, insurance, taxes, utilities, fuel and maintenance for the church van, regular orders of literature, debt retirement payments, designated gifts, and special love offerings
- (4) No expenditure or purchase not in the Budget may be made without approval by the Finance Committee or by this Church in Business Meeting.

## **ARTICLE VIII CHURCH PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

### ***Section A - Sunday School***

1. The Sunday School shall be the basic organization responsible for Bible Teaching and Outreach Ministries of this Church.
2. The Sunday School shall be age-graded with each person going to their own age group except where a true exception exists.
3. Sunday School officers and their duties.
  - a. The Sunday School Director shall be elected annually and be responsible for the whole on-going ministry of the Sunday School. He/she shall use as many assistant directors as needed to accomplish the work of the Sunday School.
  - b. The Sunday School Secretary shall be elected annually and be responsible for all Sunday School Records. He/she shall use as many assistants as needed to accomplish the work
  - c. Department directors, teachers, and other workers in the Sunday School shall be elected annually or as need dictates.

### ***Section B - Discipleship***

1. The Discipleship program of this Church shall elect such Directors and Workers as needed to implement a Discipleship program that will effectively disciple all members and others in attendance including all children, youth, and adults.

### ***Section C - Missions***

1. This Church shall develop a plan whereby mission education and mission action is an ongoing part of this Church program.
2. This Church shall encourage its members to do mission work and will itself support various mission efforts on an ongoing basis.

### ***Section D - Music***

1. The Music Ministry of this Church will:
  - a. Teach Music to all ages.
  - b. Train people to lead, sing, and plan music.
  - c. Provide music in the services of this Church and in other settings when possible.
  - d. Enlist and develop choirs for all ages as well as encourage soloist, ensembles, musicians and other music groups to carry on an active evangelistic music ministry.
2. The Church Music Ministry shall have such officers and organization as needed to accomplish its work.

### ***Section E - Church Evangelism Ministry***

1. The Evangelism Ministry of this Church will:
  - a. Teach people the Biblical basis for witnessing.
  - b. Train people to share personal testimonies concerning their salvation experience through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
  - c. Train people to share the Biblical plan of Salvation.
  - d. Enlist people in a program of visitation and evangelism,
  - e. Provide and interpret information regarding the evangelistic work of this Church.

### ***Section F - Other Church Ministries and Programs***

1. Other Church ministries and programs shall be engaged in so as to aggressively implement the program of a true New Testament Church.

2. These ministries shall follow the duties and procedures given in the minutes of this Church when they were started and/or by the biblical principles upon which they are based.

**ARTICLE IX GENERAL AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

***Section A - Elections***

1. No person shall serve in any capacity unless he/she is a member of this Church in good standing and is seeking to live the testimony given in Article X of the By-Laws.
2. All non-staff workers of this Church shall be elected annually unless otherwise stated in the By-Laws. Those so affected must be re-nominated to their current position and duly elected or step down from their place of service at the end of term.
3. These annual elections will be held according to the By-Laws or if not given in the By-Laws in the Business Meeting in the month of August with term beginning on September 1 of the same year.

***Section B - Conflicting Meetings***

1. No meeting of any sort shall be held in the Church building during the progress of any regular worship service unless it is part of such service.

***Section C - Secular Meetings***

1. No meetings of a secular nature shall be held in the Church buildings except by permission of the Pastor or the Deacons.

***Section D - System of Finance***

1. The system of finance used by this Church shall be the "unified budget" system whereby weekly offerings are received from the people and applied toward the defraying of all expenses of all departments of this Church.
2. The offerings may be made through the Sunday School or during the Worship Services; they also may be mailed or delivered to the church office.
3. No Sunday School Class, Department, or any other group may withhold any amount whatsoever from the offering thus brought to the Lord and His Church.

***Section E - Designated Gifts***

1. The use of the "unified budget" shall not in any way be construed as a prohibition or refusal of special or designated gifts.
2. Such gifts shall be received for and distributed to only those special designated funds that have been established by this Church by vote or as given in Section F of Article IX.
3. At the completion of a specified project or endeavor to which designated funds were contributed, any and all remaining funds will automatically revert to the church's general fund.

***Section F - Special Offerings or Campaign for Funds***

1. The Pastor and/or Deacons may on occasion and for good reasons authorize a free-will offering for special purposes
2. No campaign for funds may be promoted within this Church without the authority of this Church in conference except as given in this paragraph.

***Section G - Paid Entertainment, Sales, etc.***

1. No entertainment for which an admission fee is charged shall be allowed in the Church Buildings.
2. Neither this Church, nor any organization, nor any member or group of members, nor person or persons shall conduct any sale, raffle, or entertainment for the purpose of raising money. Exceptions can be made for the support of mission projects and/or special circumstances, upon approval by a simple majority vote of this Church.



3. This does not prohibit tapes, books, or other materials being made available to the membership for purchase so long as it is done as a courtesy and not as a campaign for funds and has advance approval by the Pastor and/or Deacons.

***Section H - Resolutions***

1. All resolutions presented to this Church must be automatically referred to the Deacons for report and recommendation to this Church.

***Section I - License to Preach***

Any male member of this Church who meets the Biblical qualifications of a Gospel Minister and who gives evidence of being called of God to the Gospel Ministry may be licensed to preach the Gospel upon recommendation of the Pastor and Deacons, provided this Church approves by three-fourths of the votes cast in a Regular Business Meeting.

***Section J - Ministerial Ordination***

1. When this Church desires to ordain a member to the full Gospel Ministry, it shall, at the request of the church which has issued him a call to become Pastor, call together a number of regularly ordained Southern Baptist Ministers and Deacons who shall form themselves into an examining council in accordance with accepted Southern Baptist procedure.
2. They shall examine the candidate with respect to his Christian experience, his call to the Ministry and his views of Bible Doctrine.
3. If the council recommends the candidate's ordination, his name shall be presented to this Church and his ordination must be approved by three-fourths of the votes cast by this Church in a Regular Business Meeting.
4. He shall then be publicly set apart and ordained with prayer and the laying on of hands by the ordained men present at the service.

***Section K - Wedding Policies***

1. Since wedding policies differ with each Pastor the policies which are current will be kept as part of the current the Minutes of this Church.
2. These policies are to be attached to the office copy of these by-laws and replaced upon each change or amendment to the wedding policies.
3. The Pastor will submit such policies to the Deacons for their approval by three-fourths majority.
4. No pastor serving under the authority of this Church will officiate any wedding that contradicts our articles of faith.

## **ARTICLE X ARTICLES OF FAITH, PRINCIPLES AND STATEMENT OF STANDARDS**

### ***Section A - Statement Of Biblical Authority***

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of church doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, the Pastor and Deacon Body shall be the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

### ***Section B – Articles of Faith***

This Church ascribes to the doctrinal stand of the *Baptist Faith and Message* adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 13, 2000 and this statement reflects the biblical basis for our practice.

The following statements are the core beliefs of the membership of this Church.

### **Section 1 – The Scriptures**

We believe that the Holy Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God. We believe it to be the true center of the Christian walk and the standard by which we should conduct ourselves.

### **Section 2 – God**

There is one, and only one, living and true God. He is the creator, author, and finisher of everything and is revealed to us in the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being.

### **Section 3 – Satan**

We believe Satan is a person and the personification of evil. Satan is the deceiver and god of this present world. He was defeated and judged at the cross and therefore his final doom is certain. He, with his demons, oppose all that is true and godly by blinding the world to the gospel, tempting man to do evil and warring against the Son of God.

### **Section 4 – The Fall of Man**

Man was created holy and righteous under the law of God, but through the temptation of Satan, Adam and Eve broke God's command and fell from that state. As a result, their descendants are born with a sin nature, resulting in condemnation and as soon as they are capable of moral choice, become actual transgressors.

### **Section 5 – The Way of Salvation**

The way of salvation for sinners is only through Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega; (John 1:1-3); who took on human form, suffered a vicarious death on the cross, rose again on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, and ascended into heaven to be with our Heavenly Father. (*John 14:6 – “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.”*)

### **Section 6 – Justification**

Justification is God's gracious act of making sinners righteous through the shedding of Christ's perfect and precious blood on Calvary. Justification is something that cannot be earned, but received only through redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ.

### **Section 7 – The Freeness of Salvation**

Salvation is made free to all by the price Christ paid in full for each of us. It is the responsibility of all to accept this gift by obedient faith. There is nothing that prevents one from accepting this gift that Christ has given to us, except one's unbelief in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Section 8 – Regeneration**

Regeneration or to be “Born Again” is the accepting of God’s free gift of salvation through belief in Christ. This brings about a change of heart that may be seen in one’s life by the fruit they bear to glorify God.

**Section 9- Repentance & Faith**

Repentance is the turning away from sin and recognizing the need of God’s mercy and grace in one’s life. Once this happens, the Holy Spirit urges the acceptance, through faith, of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of one’s life. We believe both of these to be works of God’s Spirit in the heart of man.

**Section 10 – Sanctification**

Sanctification is the process of being set apart for the service of the Lord. It is a continual process of spiritual growth and maturing, which is nurtured through grace and the continual study of God’s Word. Sanctification is a lifelong process.

**Section 11 – Security of the Believer**

True believers endure to the end and are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

**Section 12 – A Gospel Church**

A gospel church is a congregation of baptized believers, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His Word and Holy Spirit, and seeking to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth by sharing their collective spiritual gifts among and beyond their community.

**Section 13 – 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. This act of obedience is symbolic of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The Lord’s Supper (Communion) is open to all believers. We do this in remembrance of Jesus’ sacrificial death for us.

**Section 14 – The Lord’s Day**

The first day of the week, Sunday, is the Lord’s Day. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and we should be engaged in worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private.

**Section 15 – Resurrection**

The Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples and others in convincing manifestations. He now exists in His glorified body at God’s right hand.

**Section 16 – The Return of the Lord**

The New Testament teaches the return of Jesus to this earth. The time of His coming is not revealed. All believers should live in readiness for His coming and live to make known to all men the Good News of the Gospel and of their hope in Christ.

**Section 17 – Religious Liberty**

Physically, we live in the world and abide by the laws of the state, as long as civil law doesn’t conflict with God’s law. Spiritually, we are under no law and live by faith under grace of God through Jesus Christ.

**Section 18 – Peace**

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. This can be accomplished by living out the pure gospel of our Lord.

### **Section 19 – Education**

In accordance with the Great Commission, we should implement discipleship programs to teach obedience to the commandments of Christ and mission programs to teach beyond the church.

### **Section 20 – The Christian and the Social Order**

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in their own lives and in human society. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, the widowed, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian 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.

### **Section 21 – Family and Marriage**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband, even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband, and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

### **Section 22 – Cooperation**

Unity is essential among believers to be able to do God's work and should be demonstrated within the church, as well as, between other believing churches.

### **Section 23- Evangelism**

Every member should share the good news of Jesus Christ with as many people as possible in our community and throughout the world so that others might believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

### **Section 24 – Ministry/Missions**

Every member should serve unselfishly in Jesus' name, meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those in our church, community, and in the world.

### **Section 25 – Stewardship**

All that exists belongs to Christ. We are to become responsible stewards of our Lord's resources entrusted in our care and manage everything to the best of our abilities for His Glory including money, property,

relationships, talents, time and our lives. Christians should proportionally and unselfishly give of their means to advance Christ's cause on earth.

### **Section 26 - The Kingdom**

The Kingdom of God is the reign of God in the heart and life of the individual in every human relationship, and in every form and institution of organized human society. The chief means for promoting the Kingdom of God on earth are preaching the gospel of Christ, and teaching the principles of righteousness contained therein. The Kingdom of God will be complete when every thought and will of man shall be brought into captivity to the will of Christ. And it is the duty of all Christ's people to pray and labor continually that His Kingdom may come and His will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven.

### **Section C - Biblical Obligations of All Church Members**

1. Salvation and Baptism. (Jn 1:11,12, Matt. 28:19, 20)
2. Duties to the Church.
  - a. To walk together in Christian love. (Jn. 13:34, 35)
  - b. To strive for the advancement of the Lord's Church and to promote the prosperity and spirituality of this Church. (Phil. 1:27, 2:15, 2 Cor. 7:1; and 2 Pet. 3:11)
  - c. To sustain this Church's worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines. (Heb. 10:25, Matt. 28:19 I Cor. 11:23-26, and Jude 3.)
  - d. To give the Lord's Church Pre-eminence in daily life. (Matt. 6:33 )
  - e. To contribute cheerfully and regularly. (1 Cor. 16:2, and 9:7)
  - f. To transfer membership when moving and be active in church work where living. (Acts 11:19-21, and Acts 18:24-28)
3. Duties in Personal Christian Living
  - a. To maintain family and secret devotions. (1 Th. 5:17 and Acts 17:11)
  - b. To religiously educate the children. (2 Tim. 3:15 and Deut. 6:4-7)
  - c. To seek the salvation of the lost. (Acts 1:8, Matt.4:19, and Psalm 126:4-6)
  - d. To walk circumspectly in the world and to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment. (Eph. 5:15, Phil. 2:14, 15, I Pet. 2:21, Col. 3:8, and James 3:14)
  - e. To abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages and any other illegal substance. (Eph. 5:18)
  - f. To be zealous in our efforts for Jesus. (Tit. 2:14)
4. Duties to Fellow Members
  - a. To watch over one another in love. (I Pet. 1:22)
  - b. To pray for one another (James 5:16)
  - c. To aid in sickness and distress. (Gal. 6:2)
  - d. To cultivate sympathy and courtesy. (1 Pet. 3:8)
  - e. To be slow to take offense, always ready for reconciliation. (Eph. 4:30, 32)

***Section D - Statement of Standards***

1. In order to maintain the highest efficiency in the work of our Lord and realizing that Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for it and that he gave His all to establish the work in which we are engaged, the following standards are established for all Staff, Deacons, Officers, Teachers, and all other Leaders and Workers in this Church
  - a. All will be members of this Church and their membership will be in good standing
  - b. All those in places of leadership in any department and ministry of this Church in order to set the highest standard and most ideal example possible for those they lead will be expected to, unless providentially hindered:
    - (1) Attend both morning and evening worship services.
    - (2) Attend the mid-week Bible study
    - (3) Give moral support to all departments of this Church and if possible be a member of other organizations even though they do not hold office in them.
    - (4) Attend all promotional and training meetings of their respective ministries and give the best possible support to all general meetings.
  - c. Realizing that stewardship is a spiritual and biblical basic of the believer and the only means whereby we achieve the work of the ministry, each leader is expected to set the example in being good stewards of everything including the tithe.
  - d. Leaders are expected to be in faithful support of all church ministries, the Pastor and all staff and to the cause of Jesus Christ our Lord. The leaders of this Church will be the best picture that this community gets of this Church so may the Lord give each leader the faith, strength and zeal to live for Him before the world.
2. Any persistent failure of those listed in Paragraph 1 of Section C of ARTICLE X to fulfill in attitude and/or action their Christian responsibilities as set forth in ARTICLE X of the By-Laws shall be considered just cause to be removed from place of service. Such removal from place of service will be implemented by the Pastor when three-fourths of the Deacons agree.

***Section E - Statement Of Belief On Marriage And Sexuality***

1. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person.
2. We believe that term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. Marriages outside of these parameters will not be performed by church ministers or on church property.
3. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, and attempting to change one's biological sex or otherwise acting upon any disagreement with one's biological sex) is sinful and offensive to God.
4. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.
5. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

6. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church.

**ARTICLE XI ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT**

***Section A - Adoption***

1. The adoption of this Constitution and By-Laws will be effected when it receives two-thirds of the votes cast by this church in any legal Business Meeting provided this document has been given in writing at a Regular Service at least thirty days prior to and at the Sunday Morning and the Sunday Evening Services immediately prior to the legal Business Meeting in which this Constitution and By-Laws will be adopted.

***Section B - Amendment***

1. Any part of this Constitution and By-Laws may be amended, altered, added to or repealed if such change receives two thirds of the votes cast at any regular business meeting; provided that notice of such change has been given in writing at the previous regular business meeting of this Church and in at least the Sunday morning and the Sunday evening worship services immediately prior to the regular business meeting in which changes will be made.

***Section C - Effect of Adoption or Amendment***

1. The Adoption or Amendment of this Constitution and By-Laws shall affect a repeal of all previously adopted rules and all rules of previous precedents that contradict any portion of this Constitution and By-Laws.

***Section D - Certification***

We hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of New Salem Baptist Church of Limestone, Tennessee, adopted this date.

Adoption Date: **October 7, 2015**

**Rev. Craig Ponder**  
**Pastor**

**Roy Gillis**  
**Deacon Chairman**

**David Holley**  
**Church Clerk**