



Constitution and By-Laws
Living Proof Baptist Church
Williamsburg, VA
April 12, 2015

MISSION

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20

PURPOSE

Living Proof Baptist Church is a body of believers united to magnify God’s name by leading people to Jesus Christ through evangelism, discipleship, ministry, worship, and fellowship.

DOCTRINE AND AFFILIATION

Living Proof Baptist Church is autonomous and accepts the Holy Bible as the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God to man. It is our sole authority in faith and practice. All decisions will be made by this body of believers as led by the Holy Spirit and based on the teachings of Holy Scripture.

The church affiliates with the Southern Baptist Convention, subscribing to the Baptist Faith and Message (2000) and the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, subscribing to its doctrinal position. We recognize and sustain the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist churches.

ORGANIZATION

The church will operate under the direction of the pastor and through the services of the elders and deacons. The pastor, elders and deacons will obtain counsel, according to scripture, of the Lord (Psalm. 33:11, 73:24; Proverbs 19:21, Isaiah 47:10b), or of Christian leadership within or outside the church as needed (Proverbs 11:14, 15:22).

All committees and ministry teams created and empowered by the church will report to and be accountable to the church.

ARTICLE I CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

General

The membership of Living Proof Baptist Church retains the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of spiritual and temporal life of this body of believers. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who will be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Active Membership

Any person may request membership in Living Proof Baptist Church. A person can become a candidate by:

1. profession of faith in Jesus Christ and by being baptized according to the example set by Christ
2. statement of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion
3. statement of prior conversion experience and as a candidate for baptism by immersion
4. promise of a letter of transfer from another Baptist church and prior baptism by immersion

Additionally, a candidate must complete the offered membership class, give personal testimony of trust in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life, commit to live a Christian lifestyle, and agree to abide by the covenant of membership.

Upon completion of the above, the candidate will be submitted to the church body for a vote at the end of any regular worship

service. In special cases, as may be determined by the pastor and elders (i.e., prohibitive physical or mental condition), the requirement of baptism by immersion may be waived.

Dual Membership

An individual who, for valid reasons (i.e., student or military status), wishes to affiliate with Living Proof Baptist Church without terminating membership in their home church may request dual membership. After review by the pastor and elders of the church, and with the consent of their home church pastor, they will be considered for dual membership pending approval by the church. They will have all the rights and privileges of membership except participation in votes of the church body or service in a church office.

Inactive Membership

An inactive member is defined as one who has neither attended services nor communicated with the church during a six month period, unless providentially prevented from doing so or by virtue of attending school out of the area, or military deployment, or being called to an active duty military status out of the area.

A member identified as inactive will be moved to the inactive roll and contacted periodically. Members on the inactive roll will not be allowed to vote on matters brought before the church in any regular or specially called business meeting. An inactive member may return to active status by restoring themselves to active participation in the life of the church. If they have been inactive for more than a year they will be required to retake Life 101 (Discovering Church Membership) and sign a new covenant of membership.

Membership Termination

Membership may be terminated in the following ways:

1. by transfer of letter to a Southern Baptist Church
2. by request of the member for termination
3. upon proof of membership in another church
4. upon the death of the member
5. by vote of the church as the final disciplinary step in the application of Matthew 18. Every scriptural and reasonable effort will be made by the pastor, elders, deacons and the church to resolve these issues before recommending termination of an individual's membership.

ARTICLE II CHURCH MINISTERS, OFFICERS, ELDERS, AND DEACONS

Chief Shepherd

Jesus Christ is the head of Living Proof Baptist Church. All human leaders must humbly submit themselves in obedience to Him. He communicates His will for the church through his Word, the Holy Bible, and guides the church through the Holy Spirit who indwells each believer. He provides under-shepherds to lead His churches. "And he gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-13.

Pastor

The pastor is directly accountable to God, in the person of Jesus Christ the Son, the head of His Church. He is the primary preaching and teaching elder of the church. He is to preach and teach the Word of God with the goal of equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ. The pastor is to lead the elders in administering spiritual oversight and care to the church body through its various ministries. He is expected to lead the church to fulfill its evangelistic mandate - The Great Commission as given in Matthew 28:19-20.

Qualifications: He must fulfill the qualifications of elder and pastor as stated in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-8, and I Peter 5:1-4. He is to exemplify a strong prayer life, a consistent Christian walk, a humble commitment to the authority of Holy Scripture, and a witnessing lifestyle.

Selection: To fill a vacancy in the office of pastor the church will select and charge a pastor search committee. Their purpose will be to find the man whom Christ has selected to lead Living Proof Baptist Church and present him to the church for consideration of a call to this office. A vote of three-fourths of the church members present will constitute a call.

Length of service: The pastor will serve until the relationship is severed by either party.

Voluntary termination: The pastor may terminate the relationship by retirement or resignation letter presented to the elders at a specially called meeting of the Body of Elders.

Involuntary termination: The church may terminate the relationship. The termination process must begin with a specially called

meeting of the Body of Elders. The pastor must be notified and invited to attend. If he chooses not to attend, the meeting will be conducted without him. All current members of the Body of Elders, except the pastor, must be present to entertain a motion. A motion to terminate the pastor's services must include a statement as to the cause for termination, supported by two or three witnesses, and insure that all reasonable efforts, in love and according to Matthew 18, have been unable to bring about resolution. The motion must be seconded by an elder who is neither the person making the motion nor a witness in the matter. A unanimous vote, except for the pastor's, is required to pass. If the motion passes it will be presented to the church in a specially called business meeting. A quorum of three-fourths of the active church members must be present to entertain a motion. A vote of three-fourths of the active members present is required to pass. The vote to terminate will be by secret ballot.

Elders

Elders are recognized, selected, and serve in accordance with the document, "A Vision for Leadership at LPBC." An electronic copy of this document may be found on the church website while a hard copy can be requested at any time from the church office.

Deacons

Deacons are recognized, selected, and serve in accordance with the document, "A Vision for Service at LPBC." An electronic copy of this document may be found on the church website while a hard copy can be requested at any time from the church office.

Trustees

A board of three trustees will be established.

Qualifications: Candidates must meet the scriptural qualifications in I Timothy 3:8-13. Trustees must be members of the church for at least one year unless an exception is approved by the elders. Trustees will be elders or deacons of the church.

Term: Trustees will be elected to serve three year rotating terms, at the will of the church. On election of the first full three member trustee board one trustee will be elected to serve for one year, one to serve for two years and one to serve for three years. Elections may be conducted at any regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting.

Responsibilities: The trustees will serve as the legal officers of the church. They will hold, in trust, the property of the church. Upon a specific vote of the church they will have the power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any church property. They will have signature authority for all business matters as approved by a specific vote of the church.

Moderator

The church moderator will preside over all regular and specially called business meetings, maintaining fellowship and unity in the church and conducting the meetings of the church according to biblical principles.

The moderator will be elected annually by a three-fourths vote of the church members present at a regular or specially called business meeting.

Treasurer

The treasurer will serve as the financial officer of the church and will oversee the receiving, preserving and paying of bills or vouchers submitted by authorized members or personnel of the church. The treasurer will keep, or cause to be kept, a complete itemized record of all transactions involving all monies or property of value given to the church and the disposition of all such items. The treasurer will be prepared to make a report of all current or historic data to the church as directed or requested by the elders. The treasurer's records will be audited annually by an auditing committee or a public accountant as determined by the elders.

The church will elect the treasurer by a vote of three-fourths of members present and for a term of three years. The church will purchase a fidelity bond to be in effect as soon as possible after election to the office.

Interim Treasurer

An interim treasurer may be installed without the formal approval of the church members should a vacancy occur. The interim treasurer will be selected by unanimous approval of the church elders. The church members will be given notice of an appointment at the earliest scheduled members' meeting. An interim treasurer will serve an initial term of six months, and may serve a maximum term of twelve months. After twelve months, a treasurer must be installed or another interim treasurer appointed by the church elders.

Recording Clerk

The recording clerk will keep, or cause to be kept, a complete and accurate record of all church business which takes place at regularly scheduled or specially called business meetings. At each regularly scheduled business meeting a report of business conducted since the last business meeting will be made.

The recording clerk will maintain an up-to-date record of the church's active and inactive membership rolls including the date and manner of admission or termination of membership.

The recording clerk will request letters of transfer from other churches when individuals have requested membership by virtue of professed belief and baptism recorded at a previous church.

On approval by the church at a regularly scheduled business meeting the recording clerk will prepare and mail letters of transfer on request from another church. Requests for letters of transfer will be signed by the pastor.

Term: The recording clerk will be elected annually by the church. This election may take place at any regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting.

ARTICLE III COMMITTEES AND MINISTRY TEAMS

The church will establish such committees and ministry teams as necessary to fulfill the mission of the church. The church will charge the committee or ministry team with their purpose and responsibilities. Once established, the church may elect the chairperson or permit the committee or ministry team to elect their own chairperson. All committee members including the chairperson must be members of the church. All ministry team leaders must be members of the church. The committees and ministry teams will report to the pastor and to the church as needed.

Finance Committee: The finance committee will consist of the treasurer and two to four at-large members elected by the church. A member of the church elders will serve as the finance committee liaison. The liaison will be selected internally by the church elders. The financial business of the church will be conducted on a calendar year basis. The finance committee will be responsible for overseeing the audit, budget, and teller activities.

Personnel Committee: The personnel committee will be chaired by an elder of the church and will be composed of the elder, pastor, and three at-large members elected by the church.

Ad Hoc Committees and Ministry Teams

From time to time ad hoc committees and ministry teams will be established to fulfill specific needs of the church. Ad hoc committees and ministry teams will cease to exist as soon as their purpose has been accomplished. The chairperson or team leader may be named by the church when a committee or ministry team is established or may be permitted to select its own leader.

ARTICLE IV BUSINESS MEETINGS

Regularly scheduled business meetings will be held on a frequency set by the church. A scheduled business meeting may be postponed for one week. The postponement must be announced and posted in the worship service program at least one week prior to the scheduled date.

Specially called business meetings may be called by announcement and posting in the worship service program at least one week prior to the date to be held. The purpose of a specially called business meeting must be stated in all announcements and postings for the meeting.

A quorum will be accepted as the members in attendance.

ARTICLE V AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be revised or amended by a three-fourths vote of the members present and voting at a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting with a stated purpose of revising or amending church bylaws.

The Mission, Purpose, Doctrine and Affiliation, and Organization sections of this constitution can only be amended by the following procedure. The pastor will present proposed amendments to the Body of Elders. Upon unanimous approval by the Body of Elders the proposed amendments will be presented to the church at a regularly scheduled or specially called business meeting. The proposed amendments will be published, including the current and proposed wording. Amendment changes must have a three-fourths vote of the members present to pass.

NOTE

All references cited in this constitution are from the New American Standard Bible.