

Constitution and Bylaws

Coram Deo Baptist Church

CONSTITUTION

Almighty God and Heavenly Father, Creator of all and to whom all praise, honor, and glory are due, we humbly approach you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We have assembled ourselves together through the help of your Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures to unite as a local church under the name Coram Deo Baptist Church. It is our utmost desire to bring glory to your name as we gather for worship, love one another in fellowship and service, and make disciples as we spread your gospel throughout the world. Help us to uphold it as we reflect the character of Jesus Christ as he has been revealed to us in the Old and New Testaments of your inspired and authoritative Word, the Bible. Amen.

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants to unite here under the name Coram Deo Baptist Church for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and He has sustained and prospered this work to the present day; and

Whereas we, the members of Coram Deo Baptist Church, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Spirit, have recognized the need to constitute ourselves in conformity to His will for the Church in this age;

Now therefore we, the members of Coram Deo Baptist Church, do hereby organize ourselves and adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the statement of faith and covenant of this Church.

BYLAWS

The purpose of these Bylaws is to assist Coram Deo Baptist Church in the task of biblically organizing and conducting its ministries, which have been entrusted to us by our Head, Jesus Christ. We also acknowledge that this document, despite its usefulness and precision, will avail nothing apart from the grace of God, Jesus' work of building His Church, and the Spirit's presence. With this keen awareness of our absolute dependence upon our great God, these bylaws are set forth.

Article 1. Name.

This church shall be known as Coram Deo Baptist Church.

Article 2. Purpose.

Coram Deo Baptist Church exists to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Article 3. Statement of Faith

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for our statement of faith. This church subscribes to the summary of the teachings of Scripture as set forth in the Baptist Faith and Message (2000). 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 the final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For the purposes of church doctrine, practice and polity, and discipline, our congregation, as led by the Elders, serves as the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

The Elders of Coram Deo Baptist Church further subscribe to the summary of the teachings of Scripture as set forth in two historic statements of faith, the Abstract of Principles (1858) and the New Hampshire Confession (1833), and pledge to teach in accordance with and not contrary to these statements.

Article 4. Governance.

4.1 Congregational Governance.

Coram Deo Baptist Church may be described as Congregationally governed, Elder led, and Deacon served. The Congregation is made up of the active covenant members. As a Congregationally governed church, the Members exercise final human authority to discern God's will for the Congregation in areas of governance set forth in the Bylaws. As a whole, the Congregation shall govern the affairs of the church in the following areas:

- Receive and release new Members, having had the final word in issues of church discipline if an issue cannot be resolved by the Elders. (Matt. 16:16-19, 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:6; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 5:11; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; 2 Tim. 3:5; Tit. 3:9-11; and 2 John 10).
- Call qualified men to serve as Elders. (Acts 14:21-23; Tit. 1:5)
- Select qualified Deacons within the church. (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:8-13)
- Send qualified Members out for missions work. (Acts 13:2-3; 15:22)
- Adopt and amend Church constitution and bylaws.
- Approve and amend annual budgets.

4.2 Autonomy and Affiliations.

Coram Deo Baptist Church is an autonomous local church. Yet, as a Baptist church, it recognizes the benefits of cooperation with other churches, associations, networks, and entities. This Church is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Coram Deo Baptist Church agrees to participate in these organizations through elected or appointed messengers and financial support. Coram Deo Baptist Church may also choose to affiliate itself with other associations and networks as deemed beneficial in keeping with the character of the bylaws of Coram Deo Baptist Church. The decision to associate or disassociate with any convention, entity, association, or network shall be determined by a majority vote at a Members' Meeting with at least a 30 day notice (Article 6.2).

Article 5. Membership.

5.1. Qualifications.

To qualify for membership in this church, a person 18 years of age or older must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized by immersion, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each Member must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for confirming the testimony of the candidate regarding his faith in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

5.2. Admission of Members.

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall (1) attend a time of instruction as deemed appropriate by the elders, (2) be recommended to the congregation by the elders for admission, (3) submit to and sign the Church Covenant, and (4) be accepted by vote of the members at a regular members' meeting (Article 6.2). New members shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

5.3. Church Covenant.

Having been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in Jesus Christ and to confess Him as Lord, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and now desiring to be obedient to God's Word, with his gracious aid, we do now before God and this assembly, solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another.

Thus, as members of Coram Deo Baptist Church, we make the following commitments to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ of this local body. We commit to:

Gospel

- Confess, believe, and defend biblical doctrine as summarized in our statement of faith, submitting to the leaders who have been granted authority by the congregation.
- Protect and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, for the church as a whole, her members and partners.
- Seek to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, by devoting ourselves to the study of Scripture and to prayer both privately and corporately.
- Walk with our brothers and sisters in love, exercising affectionate care, watchfulness and church discipline to promote holiness, discipleship, worship, and sound doctrine.

Community

- Participate regularly and faithfully in worship gatherings, the ordinances, life groups, and members' meetings while supporting the ministry of the church through our time, effort, and money.
- Seek to serve one another as members of one body, using our spiritual gifts, natural abilities, and resources.
- Rejoice at the blessings of others; and as God enables us, care for our brothers and sisters in distress, sickness, and poverty.

Mission

- Pray for and seek the salvation of others through the proclamation of the gospel with gentleness and respect, always ready to give the reason for the hope that is within us.
- Seek to be faithful kingdom witnesses in all areas of life by walking in the fruit of the Spirit and aiding those in need.
- Commit to equip, send, and support one another in loving cooperation for international, national, and local missions efforts.

Should we move from this place, we will unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the teaching of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

5.4. Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each Member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only Members shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Under Christ this congregation is governed by its Members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of Members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

Members shall have access to the principal records of the church including minutes of its governing body and principal financial reports. These privileges shall not include the review or inspection of individual donor records, or personnel files.

5.5 Associate Member

Any person meeting the qualifications for membership aforementioned who is under the age of eighteen (18) or living temporarily in the Triangle area (e.g. students) will be considered eligible for associate membership. The duties and privileges differ with that of full membership in three areas. Associate Members are:

1. Not allowed to vote in Members' Meetings.
2. Not eligible for election to or service in any office of leadership within the Church.
3. Not expected to adhere to the Church Covenant when away from the Triangle area for an extended period of time.

While associate members are encouraged to participate in the life of the church as stated in the Church Covenant, their attendance to Members' Meetings may be restricted at the discretion of the elders. Associate membership may be further understood under these particulars:

- a. Where membership is held in another evangelical church of like faith and practice, a person's membership is to be maintained while under associate member status at Coram Deo Baptist.
- b. A visiting student may request to be an associate member in order to receive benefits pertaining (e.g., recommendations, service opportunities, financial support, etc.)

- c. At the age of eighteen (18) or upon the securing of a permanent local residence, he or she will be encouraged to request the duties and privileges of full membership at the recommendation of the elders.
- d. Associate membership is subject to review by the elders on an annual basis. Elders shall provide a periodic report to the congregation on the status, maturity and projection of each Member, notwithstanding recommendation for removal nor withholding measures of church discipline.
- e. Associate membership will normally terminate upon age of eighteen (18) or the ending of the temporary residence period in the Triangle area at the elders discretion. Should termination be a result of discipline the elders shall notify the home church of the associate member if available.

5.7. Termination of Membership.

Termination of membership shall be recognized by the church following the death or voluntary resignation of any church member. Any member in process of being disciplined by the church will not be allowed to resign his or her membership. Membership may be terminated as an act of the church at the recommendation of the elders and with the vote of two-thirds of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members. The methods of terminating the membership status of a Member shall be as follows:

5.7.1. Written Request. Any member who desires removal from the membership of Coram Deo Baptist Church must submit their request in writing to the actively serving Elders.

- a. A member who desires to join another church shall notify the Elders of Coram Deo Baptist once their membership is complete and request to be removed from the roll. The Elders will provide a summary of their transition at the forthcoming Members' Meeting.
- b. Members who desire removal for personal reasons shall notify the Elders who then will remove the member from the roll and notify the congregation at the forthcoming Members' Meeting.

5.7.2. Recommended Removal. The Elders of Coram Deo Baptist Church shall recommend that the membership status of a Member be terminated by the congregation and removed from the roll on the basis of two scenarios:

- a. Upon receipt of reliable information from a pastoral staff that a member has united with another church.
- b. Having failed to participate in the life of Coram Deo Baptist Church without good cause for a period of one (1) year or more and who has not responded to efforts by the Elders to return to the active Lord's Day gathering (Heb. 10:25).

5.7.3. Church Discipline. Coram Deo Baptist Church, after due notice, may upon majority vote of Church Members, terminate the membership of a Member of this body for reasons it considers sufficient to warrant such actions. This action should be considered only after following the principles found in Scripture (Matt. 18:15-19, 1 Tim. 5:20, Tit. 3:10, 1 Cor. 5:2, 2 Cor. 2:6), and should always be done in the spirit of love and with the hope of restoration.

5.7.3.1. On Exercising Church Discipline.

Any Member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the Church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the Elders or Congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18:15– 17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; 1 Timothy 5:19–20; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5).

The purpose of such discipline should be:

- a. for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined;
- b. for the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them;
- c. for the purity of the church as a whole;
- d. for the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians;
- e. for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.

Article 6. Meetings.

6.1. Congregational Worship.

Coram Deo Baptist Church shall regularly gather for worship on the Lord's Day at such time as determined by the Elders. These corporate gatherings shall primarily be focused on prayer, the reading and preaching of the Scriptures, giving, singing and the observances of the ordinances (Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper) at the timing and direction of the elders. Other meetings of Coram Deo Baptist Church as a whole gathering, or of authorized groups within the Church, may be set according to the needs of the Congregation at the discretion of the Elders.

6.2. Members' Meetings.

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. There shall be a regular Members' Meeting at least once a quarter, at some time apart from a public worship service.

6.2.1. Regular Meetings. Coram Deo Baptist Church shall hold regular Members' Meetings for the disposition of all business and congregational matters such as to elect officers and lay ministry leaders, to share reports from the various ministries, and to consider other matters essential to the spiritual welfare and prosperity of the Congregation. At any regular or special Members' Meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met. An annual members' meeting shall be held during the last quarter of the church's fiscal year (April-June) for the purpose of approving an annual budget and other matters set before the church as deemed necessary by the Elders.

6.2.2. Moderator. An actively serving elder of the Church designated by the Elders shall preside as moderator at all Members' Meetings of the church. This elder will typically be the actively serving chairman of the Elders. Should the chairman be unable to serve at a particular meeting, another elder will be chosen by the Elders.

6.2.3. Quorum. A quorum shall consist of twenty-five percent (25%) of the number of voting Members of Coram Deo Baptist Church who are present at the meeting.

6.2.4. Notice. Except where otherwise required by these Bylaws, the Elders shall give at least two weeks' notice of the date, time, and location of any and all Members' Meetings and shall be announced by electronic notification and on the Sunday prior to the meeting.

6.2.5. Agenda. The Elders will publish an agenda the Sunday prior to a scheduled Members' Meeting. Members may submit items for consideration to the Elders no later than 10 days prior to a scheduled meeting.

Matters not included on the agenda may be discussed only after the published agenda items have been considered. Any matter declared to be substantive by the Moderator shall be referred to the Elders for consideration. If any member present objects to such characterization of a matter, then it shall be added to the agenda of the forthcoming Members' Meeting only after approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote, without discussion, of the members present and voting.

6.2.6. Voting. Unless otherwise designated, all matters of business shall be decided by a majority vote of the members present in a Members' Meeting. Except as otherwise set forth in these Bylaws, the Elders shall designate the manner of voting except that the members may require, by motion, a written ballot. All votes shall be tallied based on the numbers of votes cast by members present. No proxy or absentee voting will be accepted.

6.2.7. Minutes. The Clerk or a member appointed by the Elders shall keep minutes of each Members' Meeting and shall record the number present and what action the Congregation took as part of a permanent Coram Deo Baptist Church record. A copy of the minutes of the meeting shall be kept at the Coram Deo Baptist Church office.

6.2.8. Procedure and Parliamentary Rules. It shall be the duty of the Moderator to maintain an atmosphere of courtesy, reverence, and good order in all Members' Meetings. The expectations of believers set forth in the Scripture shall be the guide of conduct for Members' Meetings. Except where specific provisions are made, Robert's Rules of Order shall be a general guide for procedure except that the Moderator may, absent objection or with the consent of the majority, deviate from such rules in the interests of full discussion and harmony.

6.3. Special Called Meetings.

Special Members' Meetings may be called by the Elders or twenty-five percent (25%) of the members requesting such in writing. Upon such a request the Elders shall schedule a meeting to be held within thirty (30) days. All standards and procedures of Regular Meetings apply except that no matter shall be considered beyond that for which it was called and previously announced (6.2.5).

Article 7. Church Leadership.

7.1. Summary. The biblical offices of church leadership set forth in the New Testament are Elders and Deacons (1 Timothy 3:1-13). Elders lead the church in setting direction, making decisions, and teaching doctrine. Deacons serve the church by fulfilling specialized ministry roles under the oversight of the elders.

All leadership positions in this article require church membership prior to assuming their responsibilities. The Elders will publish a list of all Elders and Deacons on an annual basis.

7.2. Elders. General Summary.

The Bible teaches that the spiritual leadership of the local church is vested in the office of the Elder (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 5:17; Tit. 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1-5). The terms Elder (*presbuteros*), Overseer (*episkopos*), and Pastor (*poimēn*) refer to the various functions of the same office of Elder (Acts 20:17, 28; Tit. 1; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

When referring to the leaders in the early church, the Bible speaks of elders uniformly in the plural, teaching a plurality of elders (Acts 20:17; Phil. 1:1; 1 Pet. 5:1). Elders provide leadership for the church, exercising their authority as servant leaders (1 Pet. 5:3). Elders are devoted to prayer and the ministry of the Word as well as providing oversight and shepherding the members of the church. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

7.2.1. Elders. General Qualifications.

Elders shall be men who meet the scriptural qualifications for elders stipulated in 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:6-9; and 1 Pet. 5:1-4.

Each Elder shall affirm the Baptist Faith and Message (2000), the Abstract of Principles (1858) and the New Hampshire Confession (1833) and teach in accordance with and not contrary to these statements without mental reservation or hesitation.

7.2.2. Elders. General Functions.

The Elders oversee and are responsible for the preaching and teaching ministries of the church (Acts 20:31; Tit. 1:9; Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:2, 5:17; Heb. 13:7). All Elders shall be equal in their authority but may be specialized in their function. The Elders shall meet at least once monthly to review matters regarding the members and ministry of the Church.

- The Elders are responsible for praying for the members of the church individually and collectively (Acts 6:4; Jas. 5:14).
- The Elders are responsible for shepherding the Church Members (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2) by providing spiritual nourishment to the congregation through biblical instruction (1 Pet. 2:2; Matt. 4:4) and spiritual protection by watching over their souls (Heb. 13:17; Jas. 5:14).
- The Elders are responsible for providing oversight and directional leadership to the ministries of the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2); as well as assigning Deacons to serve particular ministries.
- The Elders are accountable to each other, as they are to God, for mutual shepherding, encouragement, and oversight, and are bound to appropriately challenge an Elder who strays from the scriptural qualifications of the office (Ps. 90:8; Acts 20:28a; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 4:15; Heb. 13:17).

- The Elders are called to and responsible for training future pastors/elders, Deacons, missionaries and Church Members to do the work of the ministry (2 Tim. 2:2; Eph. 4:12).
- The Elders shall approve in unanimity all candidates for Elders, Deacons, and lay ministry leadership prior to being presented to the congregation.
- The Elders shall oversee the hiring and termination of paid non-pastoral staff and develop and maintain employment policies.
- The Elders shall maintain the membership roll and provide regular reports and recommendations to the Church of new, inactive and outgoing members. The Elders are the custodians of all formal cases of church discipline and are responsible for providing regular reports and recommendations to the Church.
- The Elders are responsible to provide an agenda and proper notice for all Members' Meetings.
- The Elders shall approve and oversee the creation of the annual budget provided by the Stewardship Team along with operational policies and procedures, prior to being presented to the congregation.

7.2.2.1. Board of Directors

In compliance with North Carolina laws concerning non-profit corporations, the Elders shall comprise the board of directors for Coram Deo Baptist Church, carrying out their legal fiduciary responsibilities. However, to avoid conflicts of interest, only the Lay Elders shall give direction to the Stewardship Team in any matters concerning staff compensation and benefits.

The Elders shall select from among the Lay Elders a Corporate President and a Corporate Secretary to serve along with the Treasurer whenever required by law or practice in legal matters, however having only such express powers as are granted by the Congregation and having no power absent such express authorization to bind the corporation in any matter or to act for it. It is further recognized that, consistent with congregational governance, the members shall exercise final authority in all matters specified in these Bylaws.

7.2.3. General Composition

Whereas the body of Elders will be referred to as “the Elders,” this body of men shall include both Staff (vocational) Pastors and Lay (non-vocational) Pastors. Both Staff and Lay Pastors shall minister under the title of “Pastor.” The complete body of these men together shall be called “the Elders.”

The Church will strive to see the elder body having at least one more lay elder than staff elder. Further, with every 50 members added, the Church should pray and search to install an additional elder.

In all matters of direction, decision and doctrine, the Elders shall act as a single body striving for unity in that which pertains to the ministry and witness of Coram Deo Baptist Church. A simple majority vote shall be required for Elder approval unless otherwise specified.

7.3. Staff Pastors (vocational)

Coram Deo Baptist Church recognizes that those of the Elders who labor in preaching and teaching are to be compensated for their ministry, and thus released from civil employment in order to commit their time and abilities to the work of the Church. These men shall be given the title “Pastor.”

Coram Deo Baptist shall have at least (1) staff Pastor serving as their lead Pastor, at a full time rate of ministry, compensation and benefits. This Pastor shall be referred to as the “Lead Pastor” around which a greater elder plurality of staff and lay pastors will be formed.

7.3.1. Lead Pastor.

The Lead Pastor shall be a man qualified as an Elder who is gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. The Lead Pastor is accountable to the Church and to the Elders, of which he functions as first among equals.

The Lead Pastor’s salary and benefits shall be established and reviewed by the Stewardship Team and approved by the lay Elders annually.

7.3.1.1. Functions

In addition to the general functions of Elders, the Lead Pastor shall be responsible to perform the following ministerial functions.

- The Lead Pastor shall have the primary responsibility for all Church services, pulpit ministry, and administering the ordinances.
- The Lead Pastor shall function as the administrative head of the Church.
- The Lead Pastor shall oversee the supervision and evaluation of all other staff Pastors and paid non-pastoral staff.

7.3.1.2. Calling.

Should there be a vacancy in the Lead Pastor position the Elders, along with at least three (3) other Church members recommended by the Elders and affirmed by the Members at a Members’ Meeting, shall become the *ad hoc* search team for the next Lead Pastor. Until the position is filled, the Elders shall ensure that all Lead

Pastor duties are filled by appropriate personnel, including calling interim Lead Pastor(s) as needed.

The search team shall review, interview, and select candidates to be presented to the congregation one at a time. A ninety percent (90%) approval vote by the search team shall be required to present a candidate to the congregation. Any Church member may recommend a candidate to the search team during the search process. Affirmation to call a new Lead Pastor shall be by ballot vote at a special Members' Meeting called for that purpose.

An affirmative vote of ninety percent (90%) of those voting is necessary for extending a call. If the candidate fails to receive the required vote, the Moderator shall declare the nominee not called and shall refer the matter, without debate, to the search team for further recommendations as per procedures above. The Search team shall dissolve upon the extension of a call per the procedure outlined in this subsection.

Coram Deo Baptist Church shall provide reasonable relocation expenses for a called Lead Pastor, as determined by the Stewardship Team.

7.3.1.3. Term and Sabbatical.

There shall be no term limits imposed on the Lead Pastor. Should he wish to resign his pastorate, his resignation must be submitted in writing to the Elders and the Church and approved, no less than 30 days before his intended resignation date.

Following every five (5) years of ministry at Coram Deo Baptist Church, the Lead Pastor may request a paid sabbatical of up to four (4) weeks in accordance with the parameters and preparations outlined in the sabbatical policy.

7.3.2. Other Staff Pastors

Other Staff (vocational) Pastors shall be men who are qualified as elders and gifted for the vocational ministry of shepherding. The need for Staff Pastor positions shall be determined by the Elders and approved by the Church members at a Members' Meeting. The job description for each Staff Pastor will be created and reviewed by the Elders. Staff Pastors will be accountable to the Lead Pastor.

Newly installed men joining the body Elders from outside the membership of Coram Deo Baptist Church shall become Members of the Church upon installation. If applicable,

wives and children will undergo the membership process of the Church during the time of elder assessment, and will be presented as a Member(s) at a forthcoming Members' Meeting.

7.3.2.1. Functions.

In addition to the general responsibilities of the Elders, the specific responsibilities for each Staff Pastor shall be defined in his job description.

The procedures to call a Staff Pastor along with his terms, sabbaticals and instructions for mediating vacancies are identical to that listed for the Lead Pastor.

7.4. Lay Pastor (non-vocational)

The Church shall strive to have at least one more Lay Pastor than Staff Pastor provided there are qualified candidates.

Lay Pastors serve as members of the Elders alongside the Staff Pastors but receive no compensation for their service as a Lay Pastor (neither monetary nor in-kind). Lay Pastors expand the shepherding role of the Staff Pastors as well as add wisdom to the overseer function. Lay Pastors provide continuity and stability during times of pastoral transition.

Lay Pastors must be members of Coram Deo Baptist Church for at least the 12-month period immediately preceding the date they are selected for service.

7.4.1. Functions.

In addition to the general responsibilities of Elders, the Lay Pastors take a leading role in guiding the Stewardship Team in matters of vocational staff benefits and compensation.

7.4.2. Calling.

The Elders shall annually review the current composition of the Elders and the needs of the congregation. If a need is determined, the Elders shall invite the congregation to recommend candidates for the office of Lay Pastor.

Candidates shall be prayerfully examined by the Elders and undergo an assessment process created and facilitated by the Elders. Should a candidate be found qualified for service, the Elders shall present the candidate(s) to the Church at least four (4) weeks before a Members' Meeting. Any concerns regarding such candidates should be submitted to the Elders within this time.

Affirmation to call a candidate shall be by ballot. To be valid, the number of ballots cast must be a quorum. An affirmative vote of ninety percent (90%) of those voting shall be

necessary for extending a call. If a candidate fails to receive the required votes, the Moderator shall declare the candidate not called and shall refer the matter, without debate, to the Elders for further recommendations as per procedures above.

New Lay Pastors shall be formally installed at a Sunday morning service no more than one month following their affirmative vote by the Church.

7.4.3. Term.

Lay Pastors shall serve for three (3) year terms. Ideally these terms will follow the calendar year. Lay Pastors must be reaffirmed after each term in order to continue to serve. Reaffirmation will typically take place in the latter months of a Pastor's third or sixth year. Lay Pastors may serve a maximum of two full consecutive terms at a time and then must take at least a one (1) year sabbatical before being eligible for renomination.

7.4.4. Vacancy.

If a Lay Pastor position is vacated before expiration of his term, the Elders may fill the position according to normal procedures.

7.5. Dismissal of an Elder.

The dismissal of an elder can be recommended to the church by a majority vote of the elders. Matters requiring church discipline of an elder are to be carried out in keeping with biblical procedure (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Timothy 5:19-21).

At least three (3) members of the congregation with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the other elders. The dismissal of an elder shall be by a 75% majority vote of those voting at a members' meeting, for which at least two (2) weeks' notice must be given.

A dismissed Staff Pastor shall receive thirty (30) days' compensation upon a vote to remove. Additional severance may be determined by the Elders in counsel with the Stewardship Team.

7.6. Deacons. General Summary.

The English word "deacon" is a transliteration of the Greek word (*diakonos*) which means "servant." When the context points to an official service role of the church, the word is translated "deacon" which occurs in the English New Testament in two places: Phil. 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13 (cf., Romans 16:1).

Whereas the Pastors (i.e. overseers/elders) serve by leading, the Deacons lead the church by serving. Deacons are the lead servants of the Church.

7.6.1. Qualifications.

Deacons shall be men and women who meet the scriptural qualifications stipulated in Acts 6:3 and 1 Tim. 3:8-13.

Coram Deo Baptist Church holds 1 Timothy 3:11 to read “women likewise,” and is thus free to designate women to serve as deacons (or “deaconesses,” Romans 16:1) should they meet the qualifications set forth in Scripture.

Deacons shall affirm the Baptist Faith and Message (2000), the Abstract of Principles (1858) and the New Hampshire Confession (1833).

7.6.2. Function

The office of Deacon does not entail governing, decision-making or teaching authority. As used in Scripture, the term deacon means “servant.” The Deacons of the Church do not function as a separate deliberative body within the church alongside the elders. Rather, Deacons operate as individual ministers (servants) and are responsible for carrying out the particular ministry or service to which they have been assigned by the Elders.

Under the direction and assignment of the Elders, deacons therefore serve as particular leading points of contact for select ministries of the church (e.g., Deacon of children’s ministry). Deacons may lead a ministry, but will most often support their assigned ministries by offering various services including but not limited to, administrative help, specialized skill, volunteer coordination, and physical presence.

As certain needs arise within the church, Deacons may also care for the temporal needs of Members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage those with gifts of administration. Most of all, Deacons are members of the Church who model an exemplary spiritual maturity, wisdom and a servant spirit.

7.6.3. Selection

As the need for Deacons arises, there will be an active search initiated by the Elders for men and women who meet the biblical qualifications of Deacon. Those candidates will then be presented to the church and must be approved by a 75% majority vote of those voting at a members’ meeting, for which at least two (2) weeks’ notice must be given. Deacon candidates must be Members of Coram Deo Baptist Church for at least the 12-month period immediately preceding the date they are selected for service.

7.6.4. Terms.

Each deacon will serve for two (2) years and then may be asked to serve for an additional two (2) years. After two (2) years of service, the deacon must be reaffirmed by the elders and approved by the congregation with a 75% majority vote at a Members' Meeting in order to continue serving. After four (4) years of service, the deacon will take a one (1) year sabbatical and then will be eligible to be renewed back to the office based on elder recommendation and church approval at a Members' Meeting with 75% majority approval.

A Deacon may resign at any time by written request with the majority approval of the Elders. The dismissal of a Deacon can be recommended to the church by a majority vote of the Elders and must be approved by a 75% majority vote of those voting at a Members' Meeting, for which at least two (2) weeks' notice must be given.

If a Deacon position is vacated midterm and the Elders determine there is a need to fill the vacancy, they shall follow the steps outlined in the aforementioned deacon selection process.

Article 8. Staff and Administration.

8.1. Summary.

In addition to the scriptural offices of Elder and Deacon, Coram Deo Baptist Church recognizes certain non-pastoral staff, administrative officers, and ministry teams that facilitate the necessary functions of the Church.

Paid, non-pastoral staff support the leadership of Coram Deo Baptist Church at the direction and approval of the Elders. The Clerk and the Treasurer shall be the two standing administrative officers of the Church. The only standing administrative team shall be Stewardship.

8.2. Paid Non-pastoral Staff.

8.2.1. Summary.

Coram Deo Baptist Church recognizes the need to hire personnel to fill non-pastoral clerical, administrative, intern, and ministry leadership roles.

The positions to be filled shall be determined by the Elders, with funding approved through the Church budget process or as a separate action of a scheduled Members' Meeting.

8.2.2. Qualifications.

The qualifications for a paid non-pastoral staff member shall be determined by the job description for the position written by the Elders. Some non-pastoral staff members may not be required to be Members of Coram Deo Baptist Church.

A job review shall be conducted by the Lead Pastor (or a designated Pastor) annually for each paid non-pastoral staff member in accordance with the Church's Policies and Procedures Manual.

8.2.3. Responsibilities.

The responsibilities of each paid non-pastoral staff member shall be specified in a job description created and approved by the Elders.

The compensation and benefits for each paid non-pastoral staff member shall be determined by the Elders and reviewed by the Stewardship Team.

8.2.4. Selection/Hiring.

The selection of non-pastoral paid staff shall be a function of the Elders along with other active covenant members selected by the Elders, as needed.

8.2.5. Resignation or Termination.

A paid non-pastoral staff member may leave a position by resignation submitted in writing to the Elders. If the paid non-pastoral staff member is considered unfit to continue on staff, a majority of the Elders may vote to remove the person from the position in agreement with the Lead Pastor.

8.3. Clerk.

The Clerk serves to preserve and secure a written record of Coram Deo Baptist Church meetings and proceedings and shall act as the Church historian.

8.3.1. Responsibilities.

- The Clerk shall attend or be represented at all Coram Deo Baptist Church Members' Meetings.
- The Clerk shall keep accurate records of all meeting minutes. Assisted by any Coram Deo Baptist Church clerical staff, the Clerk shall preserve all papers and valuable letters and records that belong to Coram Deo Baptist Church.
- The Clerk shall preserve the written administrative history of Coram Deo Baptist Church.
- For the purpose of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of North Carolina, the clerk shall serve as the secretary of the corporation.

8.3.2. Selection.

The Clerk shall be a member of Coram Deo Baptist Church, selected by the Elders considering the person's training and experience and affirmed by the members by majority vote at a Members' Meeting. The Clerk shall serve (1) year renewable terms and must be reaffirmed each term to continue to serve. There shall be no limit to the number of terms a Clerk may serve.

8.3.3. Resignation and Removal

The Clerk may leave the office by resignation submitted in writing to the Elders. If the Clerk is considered unfit for the office, a majority of the Elders may vote to remove the Clerk from office. Members who have concerns about the fitness of the Clerk may recommend to the Elders to consider removing the Clerk. In the event of a Clerk vacancy, the Elders may appoint an interim Clerk for a term not to exceed 1 year.

8.4. Treasurer.

The Treasurer functions as the Corporate Treasurer and shall perform all responsibilities in line with the Coram Deo Baptist Church's financial policies. The Treasurer shall not be an active Elder, Deacon, or paid church staff member, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate.

8.4.1. Responsibilities

- The Treasurer shall receive, preserve, and pay out all money or things of value paid or given to Coram Deo Baptist Church in a manner prescribed by the Elders.
- The Treasurer shall keep an itemized account of all receipts and disbursement in accordance with Coram Deo Baptist Church's financial section of the Policies and Procedures Manual.
- The Treasurer or a designated representative shall present financial reports to the Church in Members' Meetings.

8.4.2. Selection

The Treasurer shall be a member of Coram Deo Baptist Church, selected by the Elders considering the person's training and experience and affirmed by the members by majority vote at a Members' Meeting. The Treasurer shall serve (1) year renewable terms and must be reaffirmed each term to continue to serve. There shall be no limit to the number of terms a Treasurer may serve.

8.4.3. Resignation and Removal

The Treasurer may leave the office by resignation submitted in writing to the Elders. If the Treasurer is considered unfit for the office, a majority of the Elders may vote to

remove the Treasurer from office. Members who have concerns about the fitness of the Treasurer may recommend to the Elders to consider removing the Treasurer. In the event of a Treasurer vacancy, the Elders may appoint an interim Treasurer for a term not to exceed 1 year.

8.5. Administrative Teams.

The Elders shall create, approve, and direct ministry teams to accomplish the mission of the Church. The Stewardship Team shall be the only standing team and will function as an administrative body appointed by and in support of the Elders as approved by the congregation. Elders reserve the privilege to form and dissolve *ad hoc* teams for the purpose of ministry and administration in various seasons of the church. All such teams should be formed and dissolved with wisdom and prudence, and appropriately communicated to the Church in a timely manner.

The congregation entrusts the Elders to remove, either temporarily or permanently, anyone from a position of lay leadership, elected or not, if it is deemed necessary for the general welfare of the Church. The ministry year of Coram Deo Baptist Church shall be January 1 - December 31.

8.5.1. Stewardship Team.

8.5.1.1. Summary. The Stewardship Team exists to provide financial accountability to the leaders of the Church. Moreover this team is to assist the Elders in properly leading the Church and managing its assets with utmost fiduciary responsibility.

8.5.1.2. Membership.

Members of the Stewardship Team shall be approved by the congregation at the beginning of each calendar year. Members shall consist of the following:

- Two (2) lay Pastors, selected by the Elders, two (2) Deacons, one of whom shall function as the team chairman (i.e. Deacon of Stewardship) selected by the Elders.
- The church Treasurer.
- Two (2) members at large, selected by the Elders with recommendation by the congregation. Each at large member shall serve staggered terms lasting for two (2) consecutive years with no term limit.
- The total composition of the Stewardship Team shall be approved by the Church in a regular scheduled Members' Meeting.

8.5.1.3. Duties.

- The Stewardship Team shall administer all financial matters of Coram Deo Baptist Church, approve all expenditures, and shall oversee the accounting work

of Church. This team reserves the liberty to outsource the bookkeeping of the Church to a third party vendor while yet maintaining oversight over their services.

- Under the leadership of the Elders, the Stewardship Team shall create an annual budget for approval by the Congregation no later than May 30, and thus exert financial discipline in line with the annual budget and available resources.
- The lay Pastor members of this team, with recommendations from the Lead Pastor (except in matters of his remuneration) shall advise the team on matters of pastoral and non-pastoral staff salaries and benefits.
- The Stewardship Team shall oversee and facilitate all administrative matters pertaining to employment (i.e., insurance, retirement, etc.).

8.5.1.4. Meetings.

The Stewardship Team shall meet monthly to review the finances of the Church and more often as needed for budget planning and financial considerations throughout the year.

8.6. Budget.

The Stewardship Team shall have the administrative responsibility to prepare and submit an annual budget to the Elders for review and to the church for approval at a Members' Meeting no later than May 30. The fiscal year of Coram Deo Baptist Church shall be from July 1 to June 30.

8.6.1. Accounting Procedures.

The Stewardship Team under the leadership of the Elders shall establish policies and procedures for the handling of all Coram Deo Baptist Church funds. All funds for any and all purposes shall be handled in accordance with these set policies to be maintained in the Coram Deo Baptist Church Policy and Procedures Manual.

8.6.2. Solicitation and Fundraising.

Fundraising in the name of Coram Deo Baptist Church shall not be permitted unless submitted to the Elders for approval. The Elders shall, within thirty (30) days, present their decision to the requestor.

8.6.3. Guidelines for Expenditures and Receipts of Funds.

- Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws, funds may only be disbursed with express approval of the Church via the annual budget or separate authorization via a Members' Meeting.
- The Stewardship Team may authorize additional expenditures up to one-half of one percent (0.5%) of the annual budget, per instance.
- The Elders in counsel with the Stewardship Team may authorize additional expenditures up to one percent (1%) of the annual budget, per instance.

- Any expenditures authorized by the Elders or Stewardship Team exceeding annually budgeted amounts shall be communicated to the Church at regularly scheduled Members' Meeting.
- Gifts of money or other items shall not be received except where the members or Stewardship Team has approved the receipt for the designated cause. Separate accounting shall be maintained for all designated gifts and funds.
- The receipt of all non-cash assets (included but not limited to stock, real property, personal property, etc.) shall be at the discretion of and handled by the Stewardship Team.
- All gifts shall be used solely at the discretion of the Church members. The use of gifts are also subject to the restrictions designated to a church-approved fund at the time of their receipt.

8.7. Church Policy and Procedures Manual.

The Elders, Deacons, non-pastoral staff, and teams shall assure the creation and maintenance of the Policies and Procedures Manual in accordance with these Bylaws. The Manual shall contain all currently controlling policies and procedures governing any aspect of Church's affairs including but not limited to the handling of funds, use of facilities, Sunday operations, and employment.

All policies must be approved by the Elders and communicated to the Church but are not subject to congregational vote.

Article 9. Amendments.

9.1. Process.

The Church Statement of Faith, Covenant and Bylaws may be amended, altered, or repealed by a two-thirds favorable vote of a quorum of Church members present at a Members' Meeting at which such action is considered. The proposed amendment shall be offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced and read from the pulpit at church services for two successive Sundays.

No vote shall be taken to amend, alter, or repeal these documents before thirty (30) days' notice has been given at a Sunday gathering and by electronic notification to all Church members, that a meeting shall be held on a specific date for the purpose of presenting the proposed amendment, alteration, or repeal.

9.2. Copies.

A copy of any amendments thereto shall be maintained by the clerk and copies made available online or at the Coram Deo Baptist Church office.

Article 10. Indemnification.

10.1. Mandatory Indemnification

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

10.2. Permissive Indemnification

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

10.3. Procedure

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

Article 11. Dispute Resolution.

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18:15–20; 1 Corinthians 6:1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically-based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles and the avoidance of suits of law or equity to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities. The Elders shall adopt policies and procedures to effect these requirements and aspirations.

Article 12. Dissolution.

The Church shall dissolve at the vote of 75% of the members of the organization at a Members' Meeting called for that purpose. That meeting must be announced at least one month prior and announced from the pulpit for at least the two weeks preceding.

All assets of the church shall be given and/or sold, with the proceeds given to one or more local churches of like faith and practice, as designated by the Elders.

Soli Deo Gloria.

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Approved by Coram Deo Baptist Church Charter Members on August 3, 2025.