

# Constitution and Bylaws of Medinah Baptist Church

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**Amended Constitution and Bylaws of Medinah Baptist Church****Approved on October 20, 2013****PREAMBLE**

This church was founded in December, 1956, and was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois on March 17, 1961, as Medinah Baptist Church (“church”). The church previously adopted a Constitution and Bylaws, which now is in need of amendment that includes but is not limited to reflection of current practices and positions and certain changes in church governance.

**Article I****PURPOSE**

Our purpose is to encourage and equip the church body to encounter Jesus Christ by devoting ourselves to ongoing spiritual growth, serving others, and extending the gospel to our community and beyond – all to the glory of God.

**Article II****COVENANT**

We, the members of Medinah Baptist Church, pledge our lives to be lived to the glory of God.

Confident in the truth of God’s Word and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, we will:

Be unified as a church, loving and praying for one another, promoting edification, seeking peace and following those who have the spiritual authority over us.

Strive to please God by growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, being filled with His Spirit and obeying His Word.

Support the ministry of the church by faithfully attending worship services, giving of our finances, and serving others with our abilities and spiritual gifts.

Be God’s ambassadors of reconciliation, following Jesus’ commission to take the Gospel to our families, community and the world.

**Article III****DOCTRINAL STATEMENT**

The church Doctrinal Statement dated January 18, 1984, and as amended from time to time (“Doctrinal Statement”) is incorporated by reference.

**Article IV****MEMBERSHIP****Section 1. Admission Process**

To become a member of the church, individuals must:

1. Make a public confession of faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior;
2. Have been baptized by immersion as a believer;
3. Be in agreement with the Constitution and Bylaws, and Doctrinal Statement;
4. Complete the membership class;
5. Complete the membership application;
6. Meet with an Elder(s) or Elder-appointed representative(s);
7. Receive recommendation for membership from the Elders, with applicants' names published in the church bulletin for two consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting of the Elders, providing opportunity for congregational input to the Elders;
8. Sign the church Membership Responsibilities Agreement, containing the provisions of Section 2 of this Article.

The congregation will be advised of all new members.

**Section 2. Conduct**

Membership is a voluntary identification with the church. Membership conveys privilege, responsibility, and accountability. To this end, members will:

- A. Contribute to the unity of the church (Rom. 14:19; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 1:22)
  1. by loving the church family in words and actions,
  2. by refusing to gossip, and
  3. by following church leadership.
- B. Grow together with the church (1 Cor.14:12; Gal.5:16-17; 1 Pet. 4:10)
  1. by developing gifts and talents,
  2. by displaying fruit of God's Spirit,
  3. by pleasing God with how he/she lives their life, and
  4. by studying God's Word.
- C. Participate in the ministry of the church (Luke 14:23; James 5:16; 1 Thess.1:1-2)
  1. by warmly welcoming those who attend,
  2. by inviting the unchurched to attend, and
  3. by praying for the church family.
- D. Support the work of the church (2 Cor.9:7, 12; Gal.5:13; Heb. 10:25)
  1. by attending faithfully,
  2. by serving selflessly, and
  3. by giving regularly.

- E. Build a culture of peace that reflects God's peace and the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ in our lives (John 13:34–35; Eph. 4:29–32; Col. 3:12–14)
1. by following the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit,
  2. by teaching principles that lead to peace, and
  3. by encouraging one another to active reconciliation.

### **Section 3. Removal from Membership**

- A. **Members' Request:** Members can request removal from or transfer of membership by informing the Elders.
- B. **Elders' Action:** The Elders, after due biblical process of discipline (Matthew 18:15–19; 1 Corinthians 5:2–13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 11–15; Galatians 6:1), may remove from church membership any member who (i) departs from his or her previously expressed agreement with the Doctrinal Statement, (ii) evidences a continued, unrepentant departure from biblical morality, or (iii) clearly manifests disinterest and inactivity in the life of the church. Such members shall be contacted before any removal.

### **Section 4. Non-Member Participation**

Believers in Jesus Christ attending the church, but by reason of conviction do not sense the Lord's leading to join the membership of the church, are welcomed in all public worship, praise, and fellowship. Lack of membership would however limit those persons from (i) holding any elected offices of the church corporately, (ii) contributing to congregational meetings, and (iii) from teaching or leading on a regular basis in roles reserved for members. Non-members participating in ministries shall comply with all guidelines and policies of those ministries. The Elders will determine any other limits based upon the specific situations.

## **Article V**

### **CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

#### **Section 1. Church Leadership Summary**

Jesus Christ is the head of His Church. Under Him, the church is Elder-led, Deacon-served, and congregationally governed. Scripture delineates between two leadership positions in the local church: Elder and Deacon. The notable difference between the qualifications of an Elder and a Deacon is that an Elder must be able to defend the faith, teaching and exhorting with sound doctrine (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9).

Elders shall have the responsibility for the general oversight of the local church in all its various areas and ministries.

Deacons serve the church by filling particular areas of need that will assist and enable the Elders to perform their biblical responsibilities. Under the oversight of the Elders, Deacons provide direct leadership to a wide variety of ministry areas.

The ministerial staff, under the direction of the Elders, shall be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the church, including administration of specific ministry

programs. They shall work with Elders and Deacons to provide leadership and vision for the entire congregation that includes identifying, selecting, and equipping ministry leaders.

### **Section 2. Elders**

The qualifications for Elders are set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

- A. The Biblical Roles of the Elder
  1. Shepherd the flock (I Peter 5:2)
  2. Lead through example (I Peter 5:3)
  3. Teach and exhort (I Timothy 3:2)
  4. Refute those who contradict truth (Titus 1:9)
  5. Oversee the church of God (Acts 20:28)
  6. Pray for the sick (James 5:14-15)
  
- B. The Duties of the Elder

The Elders shall oversee the following:

  1. Examining and instructing prospective members;
  2. Examining and recommending candidates for offices and positions;
  3. The work of the Deacons, Boards, staff, committees, and appointed church agents;
  4. Worship services;
  5. The ordinances of baptism and communion;
  6. Equipping the membership for the work of the ministry;
  7. Maintaining sound doctrine and practice;
  8. Providing vision for the teaching programs;
  9. Admonishing and correcting error, including church discipline;
  10. Coordinating and promoting the ministries of the church;
  11. Affirming of church policies;
  12. Mobilizing the church for world missions;
  13. Visiting the sick and praying for the physical and spiritual well-being of the members;
  14. Reviewing the membership list, at minimum, once per year;
  15. Ensuring that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions;
  16. Assuming the responsibilities of the Senior Pastor in the event of his absence or incapacity, any of which can be delegated;
  17. Conducting an annual review of all paid staff; and
  18. Appointing the church clerk and moderator annually.
  
- C. The Elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities and determine the process in selecting their constituencies.
  
- D. The Elders may also propose changes in staff including new paid positions with the input of the Deacons.

- E. The Senior Pastor automatically is an Elder. Other members of the ministerial staff are not automatically Elders but are not excluded from being considered for the position of Elder. No Elder shall hold the office of Deacon during his tenure.
- F. The Elders shall have general input into the annual budget and must agree with the Deacons on the budget (with the exception of their own salaries and benefits) prior to their presentation to the congregation.
- G. The Elders shall annually elect a chairman, vice-chair, secretary, and other positions as deemed necessary.
- H. **Number**  
The norm for the New Testament church was to have a plurality of Elders in each church (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Titus 1:5). Therefore, the number of Elders shall not be less than three, one of which is the Senior Pastor. Should there be less than three Elders at any time, any remaining Elder(s) and the Deacons will assume leadership of the church. The remaining Elder(s) will train potential Elders. A majority of the Elders shall be non-paid church members.
- I. **Election and Tenure**  
The process of selecting Elders will be as follows:
  - 1. Elders will select men to serve as Elders. They will call for a period of prayer by the church to discern God's men for service. In addition, the congregation can provide written nominations of qualified church members to serve. These written nominations will be given to the Elders stating the reasons why the nominee is qualified to serve as an Elder. The one making the nomination will need to bear in mind the Scriptural qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
  - 2. Candidates must be a member of the church for at least one year and demonstrate an active involvement in the ministry of the church, conforming to the biblical guidelines found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. They must be willing to wholeheartedly endorse, defend, and abide by the Doctrinal Statement of the church.
  - 3. An indication of interest and calling to serve as an Elder will be requested from the nominees.
  - 4. Each nominee (and, if married, his wife) will be screened by (i) completing a questionnaire related to the nominee's scriptural qualifications and doctrine; and (ii) by an interview with the Elders. A nominee may disqualify himself before or during the screening process. The Elders, after consultation and explanation with the nominee, may decide not to recommend him to the church members as listed in Article V, Section 2.I.6.
  - 5. Elder nominees will begin a training process involving doctrine, leadership, personal discipline, and service in ministry. This process will involve times of instruction, interaction, projects, mission activity

and assigned reading as means of preparing the nominee for service as an Elder. The training process will also include a time of examination by the Elders.

6. Approved nominees will be presented to the church members for a two-week waiting period. Anyone having a just reason of why the nominee is not scripturally qualified to serve will need to put this in writing and give it to the Chairman of the Elders. The Chairman and the person concerned will then personally talk with the nominee concerning the questioned area. The Elders will review the matter and make a decision accordingly.
7. Upon completion of the training, the congregation will be asked to affirm the nominees by ballot as God's men to serve the church as Elders. A nominee must receive affirmation by a ballot vote of at least 75% of the ballots cast by the voting church members, in a duly called meeting. An ordination service before the church for the ministry of Elder will initiate the Elder's ministry.
8. Approved Elders will serve two consecutive three-year terms (with a reaffirmation between terms), after which they will be considered inactive for a period of one year. If they are willing, previous Elders can be considered for another set of three-year terms after an inactive period. They must be approved by the Elders and a ballot vote of at least 75% of the ballots cast by the voting church members, in a duly called meeting.
9. The Senior Pastor will continue as a member of the Elders for the duration of his pastoral role with the church.
10. Elders are responsible to keep themselves spiritually accountable. Individual Elders may choose to take a leave from active service due to personal, family, or job-related situations that warrant such a leave. Reinstatement to active service is by mutual agreement between the individual and the Elders.

J. Discipline of Elders

The question of discipline of an Elder is of serious consequence and can do irreparable damage to the witness and ministry of the church in the community. While the goal of discipline is restoration, in the case of persistent, unrepentant sin, maintaining the purity of the church becomes paramount, requiring public rebuke based on 1 Timothy 5:17-21. The Elder must maintain an attitude of servanthood, as one under authority of his fellow Elders, and if asked to leave by the Elders, he should do so without the necessity of a potentially divisive church action demanding his removal. This process is all in addition to biblical reconciliation as found in Matthew 18:15-17.

If the Elders call for a vote of confidence regarding an Elder, the Elder will be reaffirmed by a ballot vote of at least 75% of the ballots cast by the voting church members, in a duly called meeting. In the event the Elders fail to fulfill

this responsibility, the Deacons shall have the right to call for a vote of confidence regarding the Elder.

### **Section 3. Deacons**

The qualifications of the office of Deacon are set out in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and are very similar to those of the Elders, with the exception that Deacons do not have to be able to teach in order to qualify for the office. This does not disqualify a Deacon from teaching (e.g., Stephen, Acts 6:8-7:60). These men are spiritual leaders who provide oversight of the ministries of the church (Acts 6:1-7).

#### A. The Duties of the Deacon

The Deacons shall oversee the following:

1. Carrying out the physical, ministerial, and social needs of the church;
2. Leading the way in acts of mercy and care, visiting those in need, disbursement of benevolence funds;
3. Maintaining contact with the church family;
4. Supporting the work of the ministerial staff and Elders;
5. Encouraging and supporting those doing ministry;
6. Administering the finances of the church, including budget preparation and oversight of the Financial Team; and
7. Aligning people with opportunities to serve, utilizing their spiritual gifts as applicable.

#### B. Budget

Each year, a general itemized budget shall be constructed by the Deacons and agreed upon by the Elders (with the exception of their own salaries and benefits). It shall be presented to the congregation at least two weeks before the Annual Meeting. The budget will be approved by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the Deacons and Elders.

#### C. The Deacons may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities.

#### D. The Deacons shall annually elect a chairman, vice-chair, secretary, and other positions as deemed necessary.

#### E. Number

The number of Deacons shall be determined by the Deacons on a needs basis and the number of qualified men available. This number however shall not be less than nine.

#### F. Election and Tenure

1. The Elders, with input from the Deacons and congregation, will nominate men to serve as Deacons. Those nominated must be a



- member of the church for at least one year, and have demonstrated an active involvement in the ministry of church.
  2. Screening of the nominee will take place by means of an interview by the Elders. A nominee may disqualify himself before or during the screening process. The Elders, after consultation and explanation with the nominee, may decide not to recommend him to the church members.
  3. Nominees will be presented to the Deacons for approval as soon as the Elders have approved them.
  4. Nominees will be presented to the church members by the Elders for a two-week period in which any member can formally object in writing to the Elders regarding a nominee serving as Deacon due to lack of adherence to scriptural qualifications. The same process as that of Elder nominees will be followed in this regard (See Section 2.I.6).
  5. The congregation will be asked to affirm the nominees by ballot as God's men to serve the church as Deacons. A nominee must receive affirmation by a ballot vote of at least 75% of the ballots cast by the voting church members, in a duly called meeting.
  6. Deacons shall be affirmed at the Annual Meeting, with a term of three years, and be eligible for a second term. After two consecutive terms, he will be required to take at least one year off, subject to the nomination process.
  7. Deacons are responsible to keep themselves spiritually accountable. At times, spiritual accountability may involve Elder participation. Individual Deacons may choose to take a leave from active service due to personal, family, or job-related situations that warrant such a leave. Reinstatement to active service is by mutual agreement between the individual and the Deacons.
  8. Subject to the other requirements for Deacons, any vacancy in the Deacons may be appointed by the Deacons for the duration of the current fiscal year, subject to the approval of the Elders.
- G. Discipline of Deacons
- While the goal of discipline is restoration, the Elders, after due biblical process of discipline (Matthew 18:15–19; 1 Corinthians 5:2–13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 11-15; Galatians 6:1), may remove a Deacon who (i) departs from his previously expressed agreement with the Doctrinal Statement, (ii) evidences a continued, unrepentant departure from biblical morality, or (iii) clearly manifests disinterest and inactivity in the life of the church. If determined that a dismissal is necessary, the issue will be brought before the Deacons by the Elders. A Deacon may be dismissed by a majority vote of the Deacons. The Elders will then determine if the case warrants the information to be brought before the church.

#### **Section 4. Senior Pastor**

##### **A. Duties**

1. The Senior Pastor is an Elder; the first among equals leading in the biblical roles and duties of the Elders (Article 5, Section 2.A. & B.).
2. He shall have primary responsibility for the biblical preaching and teaching in all services through prayer, preparation, and study.
3. The Senior Pastor shall serve ex-officio on all boards and committees or delegate that right to another Elder. He shall have the privilege of choosing which boards or committee functions he desires to attend. He is given full voice, but not required to vote.

##### **B. Calling Procedures**

1. The Elders shall call a group of qualified members to function as the search committee. At least one Elder will function as a member of the committee.
2. Candidates shall be presented to the Elders by the search committee and interviewed. If approved unanimously, he will be recommended to the Deacons. Upon unanimous approval by both the Elders and Deacons, he will be presented to the church members. One man will be presented at a time.
3. The candidate must also fill the pulpit at least two services before he can be recommended to the church as a candidate.
4. The candidate may be extended a call to the pastorate if he has received affirmation by a ballot vote of at least 75% of the ballots cast by the voting church members, in a duly called meeting.
5. Upon accepting the call, the Senior Pastor and his wife become church members.

##### **C. Tenure**

The Senior Pastor, unlike other members of the Elders, is called for an indefinite term of service.

If the Elders call for a vote of confidence regarding the Senior Pastor, he will be reaffirmed by a ballot vote of at least 75% of the ballots cast by the voting church members, in a duly called meeting. In the event the Elders fail to fulfill this responsibility, the Deacons shall have the right to call for a vote of confidence regarding the Senior Pastor.

The Senior Pastor is held to the same standards of discipline as the other Elders.

#### **Section 5. Congregation**

Though led by Elders and served by Deacons, the church members, subject to the other provisions in this Constitution and Bylaws, shall govern in the following

church matters requiring a ballot vote of at least 75% of the ballots cast by the voting church members, in a duly called meeting:

- A. Affirmation of Senior Pastor, Elders, Deacons, Financial Administrator, other paid pastoral positions, Directors, School Administrator, and Deaconesses;
- B. Participation in church discipline as directed by the Elders; and
- C. Participation in financial matters: budget, non-budgeted expenditures over \$5,000, the selling of property/assets, acquiring debt, the distribution of assets in the event of dissolution, and amendment of this Constitution and Bylaws.

### **Section 6. Financial Team**

The financial team shall administer the financial matters of the church, under the oversight of the Deacons. The team shall consist of at least a staff member, Deacon liaison, Financial Administrator, church financial secretary, church treasurer, and Medinah Christian School (“MCS”) financial secretary, all to be appointed by the Deacons except for the Financial Administrator and subject to the approval by the Elders. The Deacons shall adopt specific duties, including without limitation, independent bi-annual church and MCS reviews and reports to the congregation, and adopt policies for the team.

### **Section 7. Boards**

- A. General Guidelines
 

Each board shall be governed by the Elders and no such board shall supersede the authority of the Elders. Each board shall operate according to its own procedural handbook approved by the Elders. Each board member must be a member of the church. Vacancies may be filled by the Elders. Minutes will be taken for each board meeting and submitted to the Elders.
- B. Missions Board
  - 1. The board shall consist of no less than seven members. Candidates shall be submitted by the Missions Board and congregation for the Elders’ approval. The board shall then select members from the Elder-approved candidate list. The board shall annually elect the chair, vice-chair, secretary, and other positions as deemed necessary.
  - 2. A missions treasurer shall be a member of the board and be responsible to the Financial Team.
  - 3. The term of office for board members shall be three years. After two consecutive terms, members will be required to take at least one year off, subject to the nomination process.
  - 4. The responsibilities of this board shall include, but not be limited to:
    - a. Promote missions within the church in a variety of forms,
    - b. Preparation of a missions budget that will be incorporated into the annual budget,

- c. Selection and evaluation of missionaries and missions agencies, subject to Elder approval, and
- d. Communication with missionaries and missions agencies.

C. School Board

1. The board shall consist of no less than nine members, including two Deacons who are appointed annually by the Deacons. Candidates shall be submitted by the board, congregation, and school staff and parents for the Elders' approval. The board shall then select members from the Elder-approved candidate list. The board shall annually elect the chair, vice-chair, secretary, and other positions as deemed necessary.
2. The board financial secretary shall be responsible to the Financial Team.
3. The term of office for board members, not including Deacons, shall be three years. Members may be approved for a second term and will be required to take one year off prior to becoming eligible for reaffirmation after two terms.
4. The responsibilities of this board shall be, but not be limited to:
  - a. To provide oversight of all operations of the school ministry, including but not limited to, vision casting, financial, legal, curriculum, and co-curricular activities in order to support a mission designed to provide an academically superior education founded and centered upon the truth of God's Word,
  - b. Provide direct supervision of the school administrator and indirect supervision of all teachers and staff,
  - c. Ensure compliance with all applicable State and Federal educational institution requirements, and
  - d. Administrate all grievances and disputes brought against the school, including but not limited to, student/family relations, discipline, and employee and staff labor relations.

D. Deaconess Board

1. The board shall consist of no less than twelve members. Candidates shall be submitted by the Deaconesses and congregation for the Elders' approval. The board shall then select members from the approved candidate list. The board shall annually elect the chair, vice-chair, secretary, and other positions as deemed necessary. The term of office for board members shall be one year. After serving six consecutive terms, she will be required to take at least one year off, subject to the nomination process.
2. The responsibilities of this board shall include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Communion preparation,
  - b. Ministry to the sick and needy by visitation, taking of flowers and gifts, and sending of cards,

- c. Assisting in baptism services,
- d. Assisting in funeral and church receptions, and
- e. Praying for staff and the church body.

**Article VI**

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

**Section 1. Time**

- A. The Annual Meeting shall be held in July on a date determined by the Elders at which time the annual budget will be approved; Deacons, Deaconesses, and Financial Administrator will be affirmed by a ballot vote of at least 75% of the ballots cast by the voting church members, in a duly called meeting; an annual report will be presented; and conduct of other business as determined by the Elders.
- B. Quarterly meetings will be held each year in October, January, and April for the purpose of communicating financial, congregational, and ministry updates.
- C. Special meetings may be called by the Elders and/or Deacons.

**Section 2. Governance**

- A. All meetings will be announced two Sundays preceding.
- B. “Robert’s Rules of Order” may be used as the authority in all questions of parliamentary procedure, except to the extent such rules conflict with this Constitution and Bylaws or applicable law.
- C. In the absence of the moderator, the Elders shall appoint a temporary moderator.
- D. Twenty-five percent of the then current voting membership shall constitute a quorum for transaction of business at congregational meetings of the church.
- E. Only members who have attained the age of seventeen shall be entitled to vote.
- F. Absentee ballots will be made available, subject to the discretion of the Elders.
- G. The church clerk shall record minutes of all meetings and submit them to the Chairman of the Elders.

**Article VII****LEGAL ORGANIZATION AND RELATED GUIDELINES****Section 1. Legal Organization and Tax-Exempt Status**

The church (including MCS) was incorporated under and is subject to the Illinois General Not-For-Profit Act of 1986 ("Act"). A minimum of three Elders shall constitute the Board of Directors and shall manage the church for purposes of the Act and as provided herein; provided that in the event there are less than three Elders, the existing Elders plus additional Deacons as necessary to provide three Directors shall constitute the Board of Directors, said Deacon Directors to be appointed by the Deacons. The church is organized and operated exclusively for religious and charitable purposes in accordance with Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 ("Code"). (or a corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law)

**Section 2. Inurement of Income**

No part of the assets or property of the Church shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its Members, or other private persons except that the Church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to provide assistance to needy individuals from the Church's benevolence fund.

**Section 3. Legislative or Political Activities**

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

**Section 4. Operational Limitations**

Notwithstanding any other provisions of the Constitution, the Church shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on: (a) by a corporation exempt from Federal Income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law); or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Code (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law).

**Section 5. Dissolution**

In the event of the dissolution of the church, the Elders and Deacons shall, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all of the liabilities of the church, jointly dispose of all of the assets of the church exclusively for the purposes of the church in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law), as the Elders and Deacons jointly shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Circuit Court of the county in which the principal office of the church is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or

organizations, as said court shall determine, that are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

**Section 6. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the church shall be from August 1 to July 31. Terms of office shall coincide with the fiscal year, with the exception of the Elders.

**Article VIII**

**Amendments**

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended by a ballot vote of at least 75% of the ballots cast by the voting church members, in a duly called meeting.