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# CHURCH CONSTITUTION & BY LAWS

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# **CONSTITUTION OF EXCITING CENTRAL TAMPA BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **PREAMBLE**

We, the membership of Central Tampa Baptist Church, declare and establish this Constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern the Body in an orderly manner; and furthermore, to preserve the liberties of each individual Church Member, and the freedom of this Body in its relation to other churches.

## **ARTICLE I - BAPTIST CHURCH AND IDENTITY**

This congregation, comprised of persons who have made a public profession of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, been baptized by immersion in believer's baptism as commanded by our Lord, declared our purpose to endeavor to walk according to the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, and have been Elected to Church Membership, shall be known as the EXCITING CENTRAL TAMPA BAPTIST CHURCH, INC., which is located in Hillsborough County, Florida.

## **ARTICLE II - CHURCH PURPOSE**

This Church declares its purpose:

- A. To maintain regular services, both for devotional and public worship;
- B. To proclaim earnestly the Gospel message, and to urge its personal acceptance;
- C. To promote systematic Bible study, to train for Christian service and to encourage in every possible way, life enlistment in some form of Christian ministry congruent with everyone's spiritual gift(s);
- D. To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ through the preaching, teaching, and the living out of God's Word by cooperating with our prayers, gifts, and services to missionary and benevolent undertakings, and to establish and promote the Kingdom of Christ throughout the world.

## **ARTICLE III - STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS**

We believe in the Holy Bible as the inspired, inerrant, infallible and complete Word of God; the creation of Man by the direct act of God; the incarnation and virgin birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; His identification as the Son of God; His vicarious atonement for the sins of mankind by the shedding of His blood on the cross; the resurrection of His body from the tomb; His imminent visible return in power and glory; His unique power to save men from sin; the new birth through regeneration by the Holy Spirit; and the gift of eternal life by the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Further, we subscribe to the doctrinal statement of "The Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention.

## **ARTICLE IV - CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in accordance with Holy Scripture, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one Body in Christ.

We commit, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, in holiness and in comfort; to promote its prosperity and its spirituality; to sustain its worship, its ordinances, its discipline and its doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, to the expenses of the Church, to the relief of the poor and to the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also commit to prayerfully seek to identify, and faithfully fill our individual place of ministry in the Church; to maintain family and private devotions; to educate our children in Christian principles; to seek the salvation of our relatives, friends, neighbors and associates; to walk worthy of our calling in the world: being just in our dealings, faithful to our engagements and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid malicious use of the tongue; to keep our testimony above reproach; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

We further commit to watch over each other in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and in distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy; to be courteous in speech; to be slow to take offense and always ready for reconciliation, and to be mindful of the command of our Savior to secure it without delay.

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

## **ARTICLE V - POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Section 1. AUTONOMY**

The government of this Church shall be vested in the Membership. It shall be subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body but shall recognize and shall sustain the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist Churches. Insofar as is practical, this Church shall cooperate with and support the Southern Baptist Convention, the State Convention and the local Southern Baptist Association.

### **Section 2. GOVERNANCE**

This Church confesses the Lord Jesus Christ as its head, both as to the body corporate, and as to individual Members. In relationship to His sovereignty, and to ensure the integrity and purity of this family, the Church shall be:

#### **A. Pastor-Led:**

The Senior Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the Church. In this capacity, he

shall be its chief administrator, and shall provide leadership in all areas of Church Life and Ministries.

B. Deacon-Served:

A Deacon Council, comprised of men full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, shall be sought out and elected by the Membership, to whom they shall be directly responsible. They shall represent and serve the interests and needs of the Church family, and shall, by knowledge and counsel, assure the Membership of the integrity of all the affairs of this Church. Further, this Council shall serve as a forum for the discussion of Church ministries, programs and operations, and as the channel through which proposals are brought before the Membership.

C. Committee-Organized:

Committees shall be elected by the Membership, to facilitate Church business and ministries. Said Committees shall work in cooperation with the Senior Pastor, and shall present periodic reports to the Deacon Council and, as appropriate, the Membership.

D. Membership-Approved:

All official actions of the Church, its Officers, Employees and/or Agents are subject to the implicit or explicit approval of the Membership, which reserves the right to revoke such approval.

## **ARTICLE VI - CHURCH ORDINANCES**

### **Section 1. BAPTISM**

The Ordinance of Believer's Baptism by immersion shall be observed.

### **Section 2. THE LORD'S SUPPER**

The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed.

## **ARTICLE VII - ESTABLISHMENT OF BY-LAWS**

### **Section 1. AUTHORIZATION**

To facilitate the accomplishment of the Church Purpose in an orderly and efficient manner, while providing safeguards against abuse or neglect, the Membership shall formally adopt appropriate By-Laws.

### **Section 2. SUBORDINATION**

Said By-Laws shall in every instance be subordinate to and be interpreted in the light of the provisions of this Constitution.

## **ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS**

### **Section 1. CONSTITUTION**

This Constitution may be amended by a three-fourths ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ) affirmative vote of the Members present and voting at a regular or special called Church Conference (Business Meeting), provided the proposed amendment(s) shall have been offered in writing to each Member present at a previous regular meeting of the Church at least four (4), but not more than ten (10) weeks prior to such vote.

### **Section 2. CHURCH BY-LAWS AND ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION**

The Church By-Laws and/or the Articles of Incorporation of EXCITING CENTRAL TAMPA BAPTIST CHURCH, INC., may be amended by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) affirmative vote of the Members present and voting at a regular or special called Church Conference (Business Meeting), provided the proposed amendment(s) shall have been offered in writing to each Member present at a previous regular meeting of the Church at least four (4), but not more than ten (10) weeks prior to such vote.

# **BY-LAWS OF EXCITING CENTRAL TAMPA BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Trusting in our Lord, Jesus Christ to bring us to that oneness of mind to which He has called us, and in accord with the Apostle Paul's revelation of the Church as one functioning "body" comprised of many unique but interdependent parts, each performing its special function for the benefit of the whole, the Membership has endeavored herein:

- A. To define the authority granted to, and the responsibilities required of the various positions and entities within the Church, and to establish safeguards against their abuse or neglect;
- B. To provide authority and resources for innovative, Spirit-led ministry, encouraging our spiritual leaders to seek and follow God's revealed will;
- C. To promote Lay participation in ministry planning and implementation;
- D. To provide for accountability and affirmation throughout, that we may experience the joy and blessing to be known only as The Body functions "in one accord";
- E. To establish rules and procedures to facilitate the decent and orderly conduct of Church business and ministries;
- F. To provide for a reasonable distribution of the burden to be borne in carrying out the Church Mission:

**TO REACH TAMPA AND BEYOND FOR CHRIST**

**BY EXALTING THE SAVIOR, EVANGELIZING THE SINNER,**

**ENLISTING THE SERVANT, EQUIPPING THE SAVED,**

**AND EDIFYING THE SAINTS THROUGH THE POWER OF GOD'S HOLY WORD**

The Membership herein delegates responsibility and authority to its Officers, Committees and others, to facilitate the accomplishment of the Church's Mission and Purpose. Final authority nevertheless continues to reside in the Membership as it seeks to know and follow God's Will as it is revealed in Holy Scripture.



## **ARTICLE 1 - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1: GENERAL**

The New Testament presents a picture of definable groups of people who, once committed to the Lord identified themselves with and committed themselves to a local body (Rom. 16:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 8:1; Phil. 1:1; Acts 11:26). In order to implement the principles of accountability and commitment to the local body of Christ, as defined in the New Testament and practiced in the early churches, EXCITING CENTRAL TAMPA BAPTIST CHURCH, INC. recognizes the need for formal membership. Membership in this Church shall consist of all persons who have met the qualifications for membership and are listed on the membership role.

### **Section 2: CANDIDACY AND MEMBERSHIP**

Any person 16 years of age or older who has personally received Christ as their Savior and Lord, who has received baptism by immersion as a testimony of their salvation, and who desire to be committed to EXCITING CENTRAL TAMPA BAPTIST CHURCH, INC. as a local body of believers may become members of this church through the following procedures:

- A. Approach a pastor, minister, staff member, deacon or other ministry leader, or come forward during one of the worship service altar calls and share your desire to join EXCITING CENTRAL TAMPA BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.
- B. Attendance at New Membership Classes. Periodically membership classes shall be offered to provide, but not limited to, the following:
  1. Introduction of elders and ministerial staff
  2. History of EXCITING CENTRAL TAMPA BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.
  3. Articles of Incorporation
  4. Review of Bylaws
  5. Overview of ministries and insights from selected ministry leaders
  6. Spiritual gift studies
  7. Leadership and membership responsibilities
- C. Personal Interview -Following attendance at New Membership Classes, individuals desiring membership shall meet with a pastor or appointed ministry leader to verbalize their personal testimony, and to determine the integrity of their faith and their desire to be committed to this church as a local body of believers.
- D. Signed Statement of Acknowledgement and Commitment - A signed Member Statement of Acknowledgement and Commitment shall be used as an instrument to affirm one's desire for membership, to agree with the Church's covenant, and to serve as formal record of one's membership.
- E. By Restoration: The Church may restore to Membership any person previously excluded, upon the request of the excluded person, and by affirmative vote of the Church upon evidence of the person's repentance and restoration.

All such candidates shall be presented to this Church and membership by adding their name to the church membership roll and publicizing their name and picture to the membership in the church database.

### Section 3: VOTING RIGHTS OF MEMBERSHIP

- A. Every Active/Resident Member (except those members who are under the process of Church discipline see Article I, Section 6) shall have the right to vote on the following matters:
- Adoption of the annual General Operating Budget of the Church
  - Election of elders and deacons
  - Acquisition of real property
  - Disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the Church
  - Merger or dissolution of the Church
  - Obtaining of any indebtedness
  - Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the Church
  - Calling or removing the Senior Minister
  - Other matters in which the Council of Elders feels led to seek the member's advice and counsel
- B. Each Active/Resident Member 18 years and older is entitled to one vote. Voting by proxy is prohibited.
- C. All members may participate in the Lord's Supper ordinance of the Church administered by the Church.

### Section 4: MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Following is the Membership Covenant which generally outlines the responsibilities of membership at ECTBC:

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

- TO commit ourselves as members to honor, esteem, and love our staff and one another;
- TO pray for each other constantly and to manifest tender regard for our reputation;
- TO walk together in Christian love by the aid of the Holy Spirit; to strive for the advancement of this Church and its ministries; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines;
- TO contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the gospel throughout all nations; and to manage all the resources God has entrusted to us in such a way that He is glorified;

- TO encourage family and private devotions; to educate our children religiously; to seek the salvation of our relatives, friends, neighbors and associates;
- TO walk worthy of our calling in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful to engagements and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid malicious use of the tongue; to keep our testimonies above reproach; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior;
- TO seek to identify, develop and utilize my spiritual gift(s) and abilities; and to seek a place of service within the body, with the support and affirmation of the body;
- TO watch over one another in brotherly love; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feelings and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation and, mindful of scriptural guidelines, to secure it without delay; and
- TO pledge that when we move from this place, we will unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.”

#### Section 5. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

The policy of this Church shall be to inactivate the names of Members from the Church Roll only in the following manner:

- A. By Death;
- B. By Letter: Any Member in good standing with the Church shall be granted a Letter of Dismissal to any sister Church of like faith, upon receipt of proper request from said Church;
- C. By Dismissal To Another church: If a Member desires to join with a Church of another denomination, he may at his own request or by action of the Church, receive an appropriate Letter of Dismissal;
- D. By Church Discipline: Should a Member become an offense to the Church by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, the Church may terminate the Membership; but only after due notice and the opportunity of a hearing before Church Officers (including Deacons, when requested), and after faithful, loving efforts to bring the Member to repentance. Procedures for the dismissal of a member shall be in accordance with Section 6 of this Article.
- E. By Erasure:
  - 1. When requested in writing by the Member;
  - 2. If the Church should ever elect to purge or reconcile inactive names from the Membership Roll, it shall occur only when contact with a Member has been lost for 12 months or more, and diligent attempts at renewed contact have proven futile.

## Section 6. DISCIPLINE

- A. Purpose: To provide a standardized procedure for dealing with critical matters of offense that could affect members individually or as a group, or could harm the unity of Exciting Central Tampa Baptist Church.
- B. Intent: It is the intent of the church to take every reasonable measure to assist any troubled member. Should all efforts fail and a member becomes a liability to the witness of the church by reason of teaching heresy, persistent immoral conduct, slander, gossip, or any unacceptable conduct that may cause division among the membership, the church may exclude such a person from membership by church action, but only after reasonable efforts have been made to bring such a member to repentant change. All church discipline shall be redemptive in nature for the purpose of reconciliation and carried out in love. Membership may be restored upon public request, evidence of repentance, and by three-fourths vote of voting members present. Both removal from membership and restoration to membership require a three-fourths vote of voting members present at a regular scheduled business meeting or a special business meeting called for the purpose.

All efforts to resolve conflict or sin within the membership of Central and discussed in this policy shall be in accordance with Scripture according to Matthew 18; Galatians 6:1-2; and the Constitution and By-Laws of Central.

- C. Procedure: Any church member that has a concern that could affect the witness and unity of the church should discuss the issue with the Chairman of the Deacons. Depending on the nature of the concern, one of the following will occur. Should the concern involve a matter of doctrine, the Chairman of the Deacons will discuss the matter with the individual in a non- vindictive manner, straightforward and honest manner. If the individual continues the offense, the Chairman of the Deacons will take the matter to the Deacons who will schedule a meeting with the individual professing the doctrine of concern and the entire deacon body. The Deacon body should honestly express the point of concern with the individual in anon- vindictive manner, straightforward and honest manner. If the individual professing the doctrine of concern refuses to hear them, then the Chairman of the Deacons will call a special business meeting to bring the matter to the church. The objective of any discussion is to be corrective and redemptive. If the individual refuses to hear the church, then the individual should be removed from membership by the appropriate constitutional method.

If the offender is the Chairman of the Deacons, then the process is initiated by the Senior Pastor. If the offender is the Senior Pastor, then the matter is initiated by the Chairman of the Deacons and the Chair of Personnel. Should the concern involve a church member offending someone or refusing to forgive someone, the Chairman of the Deacons will take the following action.

1. Whether the offense is real or perceived, he will ask the offended individual to go and talk to the person he/she thinks has offended them. He will counsel them that the purpose is to discuss the problem in love and with a spirit of reconciliation. The offended individual must have forgiveness as their purpose and not retaliation. This should be private and no one except the individual involved should know about the situation.
2. If reconciliation is not accomplished, then the Chairman of the Deacons will

select two Deacons to meet with both individuals. The restoration of fellowship and forgiveness must be the focus and not any accusatory process.

3. If reconciliation is not accomplished, then the Deacon team that met with the individuals will report to the Deacon body. If the issue is one that can and will cause conflict in the church and the offending individual adamantly refuses to reconcile, then the Deacon body will determine to bring the issue to the church.
4. The Chairman of the Deacons will call a special business meeting for this purpose. If the offending individual refuses to hear the plea of the church body and reconciliation is not accomplished, then the offending individual should be removed from any positions of leadership in which they are involved.
5. If the situation continues to be a problem, the Deacons may initiate disciplinary action as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws of Central.

Should the concern involve persistent immoral conduct, a course of slander and gossip, or other-wise causing division among the membership the Chairman of the Deacons will discuss the matter with the Deacon body and the Pastoral Leadership Team. If the concern expressed appears to be a legitimate concern, then the Chairman of the Deacons will schedule a meeting with the individual(s) involved in the matter of concern. The Deacon body should honestly express the point of concern with the individual. This must not be done with a vindictive approach, but it must be done with straightforward honesty, remembering the objective of any discussion is to be corrective and redemptive. If the matter of concern is legitimate and the individual(s) repent, then the individual(s) will remain members in good standing.

If the individual(s) involved in the matter of concern refuses to hear them, or refuses to repent and cease the action(s) causing the concern, or refuses to meet with the deacons to discuss the matter, then the Chairman of the Deacons may initiate disciplinary action as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws of Central.

- D. Restoration to Good Standing: The member can be restored upon public request and evidence of repentance. This requires a three-fourths vote of members present at a regular business meeting or special business meeting called for the purpose.

## **ARTICLE 2 - CHURCH MEETINGS**

### **Section 1. PLACE OF MEETINGS**

All meetings shall be held in the Central Tampa Baptist Church, located in Hillsborough County, Florida, unless otherwise announced with proper notice.

### **Section 2. THE LORD'S DAY SERVICES**

The Church shall have a Bible Study and Sunday Worship Service weekly. Exceptions shall be announced with proper notice.

### Section 3. MIDWEEK SERVICE

A Midweek Worship Service shall be held each Wednesday. Exceptions shall be announced with proper notice.

### Section 4. CHURCH CONFERENCE (BUSINESS MEETING)

- A. Regular Church Conferences for the transaction of Church business shall be held at least quarterly in the months of January, April, July, October, and additional months as necessary. The minutes of the previous meeting shall be read, and/or readily available, and subsequent Church-wide action reported. With at least ten (10) days' notice, the Senior Pastor or Deacon Officers may re-schedule a Church Conference to another service during the month.
- B. Notice of a regular Church Conference shall be announced at a regular Sunday Worship Service at least seven (7) days prior to the Conference.

### Section 5. SPECIAL CHURCH CONFERENCE (BUSINESS MEETING)

- A. A Special Conference for the transaction of special Church business may be called for any regularly scheduled Worship Service by either the Senior Pastor, the Deacon Officers or by request of a majority or the active membership.
- B. Notice of a called Special Church Conference shall be announced at a regular Worship Service at least seven (7) days prior to the Special Conference, declaring the Conference's time and purpose. Diligent effort shall be made to effectively notify the Membership.
- C. Discussion and action at a Special Church Conference shall be limited to the purpose for which the Conference was called.
- D. Projected or printed information and documentation regarding special business matters on which a vote is required, shall be available prior to balloting, to any Member requesting it.

### Section 6. ROUTINE BUSINESS

At any regularly scheduled Worship Service, the Church in Conference may act upon receiving Members, granting letters, electing Members to Conventions, or endorsing persons for attendance at Educational Institutions.

### Section 7. QUORUM

- A. A quorum for the transaction of Church business shall be those Members in attendance at a regularly scheduled or properly called Church Conference. Quorum will be set at one time at the beginning of the meeting.
- B. A quorum of the Deacon Council and all Committees shall be a simple majority of the members.

## Section 8. CHURCH ACTION

- A. Except as specifically provided otherwise in these By-Laws or in the Church Constitution, Church action shall be by concurrence of a simple majority of Members present and voting.
- B. All voting shall be by those physically present at the Church Conference at which the vote is taken, with no proxy votes.

## Section 9. MULTIPLE SESSION RULE

- A. When any one (1) Church service is held in more than one (1) session (i.e., two [2] morning Worship Services), all multiple sessions of each service (inclusive) shall count as a single service.
- B. When announcement of Church business is required to be made prior to any Church Conference, the announcement shall be made at all sessions of all Worship Services.
- C. When a Church vote is subject to this "Multiple Sessions" rule, Church action shall be determined by the cumulative total vote of those Members present and voting at all sessions.

## Section 10. RULES OF ORDER

- A. Except as otherwise specifically provided in these By-Laws, **Robert's Rules of Order, Revised** shall be the accepted guide for the transaction of all Church business. The Senior Pastor shall have the option of appointing a Parliamentarian to assist in all Church Conferences.
- B. The Moderator for all Church meetings shall be the Chairman of the Deacon Council. In the absence of the Chairman of the Deacon Council, the Vice chairman will serve as the Moderator. The Senior Pastor will always be allowed to speak in Church meetings if he so elects. The Corporate Secretary will be responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting. The minutes shall include who presided over the meeting; quorum of members, summary of actions taken at the meeting but in sufficient detail to clearly describe what was discussed and agreed upon to avoid any subsequent disputes. Church meetings are open to any Church member desiring to attend. Visitors and nonmembers will be dismissed before meetings commence.
- C. The person serving as Moderator of a meeting for the transaction of Church business shall be expected to understand, and be prepared to apply, **Robert's Rules of Order, Revised**.

## **ARTICLE 3 - MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS**

### Section 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF MINISTRY ORGANIZATION

- A. Ministry Organizations are those ministries and programs through which the Church has chosen to carry out its Mission and Purpose.
- B. All Ministry Organizations shall be under Church control.
- C. Ministry Organizations in addition to those listed herein may be established upon

recommendation by the Senior Pastor and Deacon Officers, and approval by the Membership.

## Section 2. MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS

- A. The Church shall maintain a Ministry Organizations Chart, as well as appropriate documentation defining each approved Ministry Organization's Statement of Purpose, funding requirements, staffing needs, facility and equipment needs, a detailed methods statement, and the means of measuring the effectiveness of that ministry. Reports shall be made to the Deacon Council and Membership as appropriate.

## **ARTICLE 4 - CHURCH OFFICERS**

### Section 1. OFFICERS AND QUALIFICATIONS

- A. The Officers of this Church shall be:
  - 1. Senior Pastor
  - 2. Pastoral Staff
  - 3. Deacon Council
  - 4. Trustees
  - 5. Church Clerk
  - 6. Treasurer
- B. GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS  
The Officers of this Church shall:
  - 1. Have a good report within and without the Church;
  - 2. Attend regularly the services of the Church;
  - 3. Demonstrate a willingness to cooperate with other Church Officers in the execution of its ministries.
  - 4. Regularly and systematically support the ministries of the Church through biblical stewardship.

### Section 2. SENIOR PASTOR

- A. Confirmation of Position
  - 1. A Pulpit Committee of no fewer than five (5) and no more than (7) members shall be recommended by the Pastoral Staff and Deacon Council to the Membership for approval. At least one (1) Committee member shall be a member of the Deacon Council.
  - 2. The Pulpit Committee shall report its recommendations, including a compensation package approved by the Personnel Committee, to the Church Membership at a regular or properly called Special Church Conference, notice of which shall be given at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the meeting.
  - 3. To be called as Senior Pastor, a candidate must receive an affirmative vote of at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the Members present and voting.



B. Compensation of Position

1. The compensation of the Senior Pastor, including the areas of Salary, Protection Benefits and Service Expenses, shall be administered by the Personnel Committee within the guidelines of the Church-approved Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.
2. Vacation, other leave and outside engagements shall also be monitored by the Personnel Committee, as provided in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

C. Continuation of Position

1. If either the Senior Pastor or the Church desires to terminate the services of the Senior Pastor, either party shall give at least thirty (30) days notice in writing to the other party.
2. If the Senior Pastor is incapacitated for an extended period of time, the Membership may declare the Office vacant, by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote in a Church Conference following announcement in three (3) regularly-scheduled Church services.

Alternatively, in the vacancy of the Senior Pastor, the Deacon Officers and Pastoral Staff may recommend to the Membership an interim chief Administrator.

D. Communication of Position

1. The Senior Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the Church. In this capacity, he shall be its chief administrator, and shall provide leadership in all areas of Church Life and Ministries. He shall be Moderator at Church Conferences (subject to permitted exceptions as described in Article 2, Section 10. B.), and an *ex officio* member of all Organizations and Committees.
2. He shall preach, teach and lead the Church in the fulfillment of its Mission. He shall see that the Church Ordinances are administered and shall fulfill other duties as may be incumbent upon his office.
3. He shall serve as an *ex officio* member of TRUSTEES CENTRAL TAMPA BAPTIST CHURCH CO., INC., and as a voting member of the Personnel Committee.

Section 3. PASTORAL STAFF

A. Creation of Position

1. As required by ministry demands or needed to facilitate continued growth and fulfillment of the Church's Mission Statement, the Church may create and fill additional Pastoral Staff positions.
2. The creation of an additional Pastoral Staff position shall require the recommendation of the Senior Pastor, the Personnel Committee and the Deacon Officers, and an affirmative vote of the Membership.

B. Confirmation of Position

1. A Search Committee shall be approved by the Membership, and shall be comprised of the Senior Pastor and/or his designee, one (1) member of the Personnel Committee, at least one (1) member of the Deacon Council, and at least one (1) lay member selected at large from within the ministry being

considered for staffing.

2. The Search Committee shall report its recommendations to the Church Membership at a regular or properly called Special Church Conference, notice of which shall be given at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the meeting.
3. To be called as a Staff Pastor, a candidate must receive an affirmative vote of at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the Members present and voting.

C. Compensation of Position

1. The compensation of the Pastoral Staff, including the areas of Salary, Protection Benefits and Service Expenses, shall be administered by the Personnel Committee within the guidelines of the Church-approved Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.
2. Vacation, other leave and outside engagements shall also be monitored by the Personnel Committee, as provided in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

D. Continuation of Position

In the event that termination becomes necessary, the Senior Pastor shall work closely with the Personnel Committee in following the termination procedures adopted in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

E. Communication of Position

1. Each member of the Pastoral Staff shall be under the supervision of the Senior Pastor or his designee, and under this supervision shall carry out the duties of his Ministry Description, which shall be provided him by the Senior Pastor and the Personnel Committee at or prior to the time of his employment (and subject to revision from time-to-time).
2. To the extent his ministry networks with the respective responsibilities of other Officers, the various Committees or the Deacon Council, he shall keep these entities fully apprised of his activities, and shall work in full cooperation with those responsible, to ensure harmony and good communication to the Church Family.

#### Section 4. DEACON COUNCIL

A. Qualifications

Each Deacon shall meet the New Testament qualifications as listed in I Timothy 3:8-13, and shall have been a member of this Church for a period of at least one (1) year. He shall have been ordained to this ministry by this or another Church of like faith and order.

B. Election and Term of Service

1. The Senior Pastor, together with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary of Deacons, and at least two (2) additional Deacons, with the advice of the Deacon Council, shall present nominees for the Deacon Council to the Membership at a December Church Conference.
2. There shall be no fewer than seven (7) Deacons, and more may be elected at the discretion of the Church.

3. Each Deacon shall be elected for a term of three (3) years, beginning January 1. Terms of service shall be separated by a period of at least one (1) year.
4. A Deacon shall be an Officer of the Church only while serving his elected term; references to "Deacon" herein likewise apply specifically to those actively serving on the Deacon Council.

C. Life Deacons

The Church may, upon recommendation of the Senior Pastor and Deacon Officers, with the advice of the Deacon Council, and by affirmative vote at a Church Conference, elect to the office of Life Deacon a Deacon who has rendered outstanding Christian service. Life Deacons shall enjoy all privileges of the Deacon Council for Life, so long as they meet the Scriptural qualifications.

D. Organization and Duties

1. The Deacons shall annually elect a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary, and any other necessary officers at their first meeting of the Church Year. These officers shall be selected by separate written ballot for each position in the order listed.
2. They shall meet monthly, and more often when necessary.
3. The Deacons shall be charged as the Senior Pastor's advisory counsel. With the Pastor, they shall seek the highest spiritual good of the Church, and under his leadership they shall exercise its general oversight, and shall assure the Membership of the integrity and effectiveness of its affairs.
4. They shall be attentive to the needs of the Church Family, providing leadership in benevolence ministries.
5. They shall assist in the observance of the Lord's Supper, and in such other duties as in general apply to the office, or hereafter may be specifically provided.
6. The Deacon Council shall review, provide counsel, and communicate their recommendation regarding all proposals (other than Routine Business) for Church action.
7. As men of prayer, the Deacons should pray regularly for the Church and the Pastor and seek to win people to Christ and to this Church.
8. At least three (3) Deacons shall serve on the Personnel Committee, and at least three (3) on the Finance Committee. If caused by non-concurrent rotation schedules, and approved by the Senior Pastor and Deacon Council, the number may temporarily be as few as one (1). All other Standing Committees shall include at least one (1) Deacon.
9. The Senior Pastor or Deacon Officers may call a special Deacon meeting at any time when notice is given to the Senior Pastor, Pastoral Staff and all Deacons.
10. A majority of the Deacon Council must be present to constitute a quorum at official meetings.
11. A written ballot on any matter of business shall be taken, upon the request of the Senior Pastor, the Chairman or any three (3) Deacons.

12. In addition to their other responsibilities:
  - a. The Deacon Chairman shall be Moderator of meetings of the Deacon Council, and Vice-Moderator of Church Conferences. He shall be an *ex officio* member of all Committees, and may, in his absence, selectively extend this status to the Vice Chairman or Secretary.
  - b. The Vice-Chairman shall assist the Chairman, and substitute in his absence. He shall also respond to questions regarding compliance with the Church Constitution and these By-Laws.
  - c. The Secretary shall faithfully record the minutes of all official meetings of the Deacon Council, which records shall be kept on file in the Church Office. With the advice of the Vice-Chairman, he shall annually prepare a report, by June 30, on any issues concerning compliance with the Church Constitution and these By-Laws.
13. The Chairman, with the concurrence of another Deacon Officer and the knowledge of the Senior Pastor, shall have immediate access to any and all information having to do with Church business (exclusive of individual giving records).
14. Any Deacon Officer can be recalled (and replaced) by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of a quorum present at any regular or special called meeting of the Deacon Council.

## Section 5. TRUSTEES

- A. Election and Term of Office
  1. The Church shall annually elect three (3) Trustees, in addition to the Church Treasurer and Church Clerk. These three (3) shall be elected to staggered three-year terms, with one (1) member rotating off each year. A Trustee rotating off shall be ineligible to serve again, until one (1) year has elapsed.
  2. Candidates shall be nominated by the Senior Pastor and Deacon Officers, with the advice of the Deacon Council.
  3. The Church Treasurer and Church Clerk shall always serve as Trustees, by virtue of their Offices.
  4. The Senior Pastor shall serve as an *ex officio* member.
- B. Organization

They shall annually elect a President and any Vice Presidents as deemed necessary. The Church Clerk shall serve as secretary.
- C. Duties
  1. The Board of Trustees, acting within their capacity as Trustees of EXCITING CENTRAL TAMPA BAPTIST CHURCH CO., INC., is delegated the authority to hold in trust the title to all the real estate of the Church, but they shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer this real estate except by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Membership at a properly called Church Conference for this purpose.
  3. They shall execute any and all contracts, deeds, negotiable instruments,

and/or other legal indentures which require such action of TRUSTEES CENTRAL TAMPA BAPTIST CHURCH CO., INC., but only when so directed by action of the Church.

#### Section 6. CLERK

- A. Election
  - 1. The Church shall annually elect a Clerk of the Church.
  - 2. Nomination shall be by the Senior Pastor and Deacon Officers.
- B. Duties
  - 1. The Church Clerk shall faithfully record the minutes of all Church Conferences and shall keep in a suitable book an accurate record of all the actions of the Church, except as otherwise herein provided. He or she shall be responsible for keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of admission and termination, together with a record of baptisms. The Clerk shall issue Letters of Dismissal voted by the Church and preserve on file all written communications where such notice is prescribed by the Church Constitution or these By-Laws. The Clerk may delegate some clerical responsibilities to the Church support staff.

All Church records are Church property and shall be securely filed in the Church office.
  - 2. The Church Clerk shall, by virtue of the Office, serve on the Board of EXCITING CENTRAL TAMPA BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.

#### Section 7. TREASURER

- A. Election
  - 1. The Church shall annually elect a Church Treasurer.
  - 2. Nomination shall be by the Senior Pastor and Deacon Officers.
- B. Duties
  - 1. The Treasurer shall receive, preserve and pay out upon receipt of vouchers, approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money or things of value paid or given to the Church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements.
  - 2. He shall render (or have rendered) to the Church at each regular Church Conference a summary of the receipts and disbursements since the preceding Conference. Detailed reports shall be provided to the Deacon Council and shall be available upon specific request.
  - 3. The Treasurer shall be appropriately Bonded.
  - 4. Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year, and its acceptance and approval by the Church, the records shall be delivered by the Treasurer to the Church Clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent record of the Church.
  - 5. The Treasurer's Report shall be audited periodically by the Special Audit Committee or a public accountant.
  - 6. The Treasurer shall, by virtue of the Office, serve on the Board of EXCITING CENTRAL TAMPA BAPTIST CHURCH, INC., the Finance Committee, and shall be an *ex officio* member of the Personnel Committee.

## ARTICLE 5 - COMMITTEES

### Section 1. INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL PROVISIONS

To assist the Church in the execution of its many responsibilities and to actively involve the Membership in manifesting its gifts, committees, both Standing and Special, are created.

- A. A committee is a group of persons assigned a specific area of ministry service or administrative responsibility by the Membership. A committee shall be established when it is determined that it is the most effective method of accomplishing the mission of the Church.
- B. Committees, in addition to those established by or existing at the time of the adoption of these By-Laws, may be established or dissolved upon recommendation by the Committee on Committees, after review by the Senior Pastor and the Deacon Council, and upon approval by the Church Membership.
- C. Two types of Committees are established by these By-Laws to carry out continuing and temporary assignments.
  - 1. Standing Committee: This Committee functions throughout the year and carries out its responsibilities from year to year. The Standing Committee has a defined mission and objectives which require on-going activity.
  - 2. Special Committee: This Committee is convened for a unique, temporary assignment and shall be dissolved when its assignment is completed.

### Section 2. STANDING COMMITTEES

The following Standing Committees are created in recognition of their importance in maintaining the integrity of the Church Constitution.

- A. Committee on Committees
  - 1. Membership  
This Committee shall consist of not less than five (5) members, in addition to a Staff Pastor. At least one (1) member shall be from the Deacon Council. Chairmen of all other Standing Committees shall be *ex officio* members of this Committee, for the purpose of selecting and nominating their respective Committee members.
  - 2. Duties  
In cooperation with the Senior Pastor and Pastoral Staff, this Committee shall ensure the integrity of the Church's Committee structure and shall coordinate the staffing of all Committees. Through the Pastoral Staff it shall review current ministry departments, assess the need for additional Committees and recommend procedures for the dissolution of obsolete Committees. It shall develop Standing and Special Committee operating guidelines and procedures, and shall facilitate each Committee's fulfillment of its mission, reporting in accord with these By-Laws.
- B. Finance Committee
  - 1. Membership  
This committee shall, in addition to the Church Treasurer, consist of a Staff Pastor and at least five (5) other members, at least one (1) of whom

shall be Deacons.

2. Duties

This Committee shall, on a timely basis, prepare and submit to the Church for approval an inclusive Fiscal Year Budget, indicating by line item the amount needed and sought for all local and world-wide expenses. The Fiscal Year of the Church shall run concurrently with the Church Year, which begins January 1, and ends December 31.

This Committee shall have the general oversight of the financial affairs of the Church and shall compile and maintain a Manual of Financial Practices and Procedures. Said manual shall include procedures, including bonding, for the handling, safekeeping and transportation of funds, providing for both the maximum security of the funds and the safety of those in possession of them. It shall set forth procedures to ensure confidentiality of the contribution records of individuals.

The Finance Committee shall annually, not later than its May meeting, cause there to be initiated by an independent certified public accounting firm a general audit of the Financial Statements of the Church. This audit shall be done annually, shall be reviewed by the Finance Committee upon its completion, and shall be communicated to the Deacon Council at its next meeting.

The Committee shall report in accord with these By-Laws.

C. Personnel Committee

1. Membership

This Committee shall consist of the Senior Pastor, a non-voting Staff Pastor, and at least five (5) other members, at least one (1) of whom shall be Deacons. Other than the Senior Pastor, no Employee shall serve as a voting member of this Committee. The Treasurer shall be an *ex officio* member of this Committee.

2. Duties

This Committee shall assist the Church in matters relating to employed personnel. Its work shall include such areas as determining staffing needs, employment, salaries, benefits, and personnel services. All members of this Committee shall have ready access to all personnel records of the Church.

This Committee shall compile and maintain a Manual of Personnel Policies and Procedures and shall report in accord with these By-Laws.

D. Missions Committee

1. Membership

This Committee shall consist of at least five (5) members and a Staff Pastor.

2. Duties

This Committee shall facilitate fulfillment of the Church's Mission Statement, through inspiration, information and involvement. It shall supervise, direct and oversee the current missions' programs and activities of the church; it shall evaluate other opportunities for mission ministry and advise the Staff of the feasibility of the work; it shall assist in formulating a missions budget each fiscal year.

The Committee shall prepare a Missions Policies and Procedures Manual which shall guide the Committee's operations and strategy and shall report in accord with these By-Laws.

### Section 3. COMMITTEE CHARTER AND OVERSIGHT

Each Committee shall be given a charter which describes its ministry, mission, manpower requirements, methods of administration, money, materials and measurements of effectiveness.

- B. The Committee on Committees shall have general oversight responsibility to ensure the viability of the committee process to achieve effective ministry implementation but shall have no supervisory authority over the work of any other Committee.
- C. All Committees shall include a Staff Pastor who is administratively responsible for the Committee's defined ministry area. He shall be a voting member with the exception of the Personnel Committee.

### Section 4. SPECIAL COMMITTEES

- A. Special Committees shall be created to meet unique needs of the Church not requiring sustained service by a Committee.
- B. Each Committee shall be given a specific mission and time frame of performance.
- C. The Committee shall make recommendations to the Pastoral staff, Deacon Council or Church, as appropriate to its purpose.
- D. Unless otherwise prescribed in these By-Laws, the Committee members shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor and Deacon Council.

### Section 5. EXCEPTIONS

- A. Individual rules may be waived in special circumstances that may apply to an individual, including allowance for non-concurrent rotation schedules of Deacons.
- B. Approval of a waiver must be by concurrence of the Senior Pastor, Deacon Officers, the Staff Pastor Member, and the Committee on Committees.
- C. The Senior Pastor, Staff Pastor Member or the Deacon Chairman may present other items for consideration as exceptions.

### **ARTICLE 6 - SUPPORT STAFF**

- A. This Church shall employ such Support Staff as the Church shall need, by action of the Personnel Committee.
- B. All Employees shall work in cooperation with the Senior Pastor and/or his designated overseer.
- C. The Manual of Personnel Policies and Procedures shall apply to all employed personnel.



## **ARTICLE 7 - LAY VOLUNTEERS**

### **Section 1. OPPORTUNITY AND OPTIMIZATION**

Ministry and training opportunities shall be provided for the special gifts, callings and talents of lay Members of the Church, as deemed appropriate by the Senior Pastor.

### **Section 2. RECRUITMENT AND ORIENTATION**

Unless otherwise provided elsewhere herein, these volunteers shall be appointed and supervised by the appropriate Staff Pastor designated by the Senior Pastor.

## **ARTICLE 8 - LICENSING AND ORDAINING**

### **Section 1. ELIGIBILITY**

Any present Member of this Church or former Member now serving in ministry at another location who by his piety, zeal and aptness to preach and teach, gives evidence that he is called of God to the work of the Ministry, may, by an affirmative vote of a majority of the Members present at any regular Church Conference, and after examination by the Senior Pastor and Deacon Council as to his Christian experience, be licensed by the Church to the Christian Ministry.

### **Section 2. PASTORAL ORDINATION**

When a Church of like faith and order shall have called a Member of this Church to its Staff and shall have requested in writing that he be ordained, this Church shall consider the request. If the Church by vote of a majority of the Members present at a regular Church Conference approves the request, it shall authorize and direct the Senior Pastor to assemble an Ordination Council of Ordained Ministers of the Gospel of like faith and order who shall perform the ceremony of ordaining this Member to the Gospel Ministry in the name of, and in the presence of the Church.

### **Section 3. DEACON ORDINATION**

If the Church shall, at a Church Conference, elect a Member (or Members) to the Office of Deacon, said Member(s) not having been previously ordained to this Office, it shall authorize and direct the Senior Pastor to assemble an Ordination Council, which shall be composed of ordained Ministers of the Gospel of like faith and order, Deacons of this Church, and visiting Deacons of like faith and order, who shall perform the ceremony of ordaining him (or them) to the Office of Deacon, in the name of, and in the presence of the Church.

## **ARTICLE 9 - USE OF BUILDINGS, FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT**

The Church staff and other appropriate leadership shall oversee implementation of a church policy regarding the use of church facilities, assets and other resources. Such policy will ensure that all facilities assets and resources of the Church are used in a manner which is consistent with the Holy Scriptures and the Baptist Faith & Message, 2000. The policy shall be drafted to ensure

that any use of all or part of the church grounds or facilities (whether by members or by outside interests or entities) will be done in a manner consistent with our beliefs as a Church. Moreover, any and all use of church property shall be sufficiently documented and memorialized so as to protect the church from unnecessary exposure to liability.

#### **ARTICLE 10 - LEGAL COUNSEL**

No Attorney shall be retained to represent the Church in any matter, without prior consent of the Deacon Council; nor, with regard to any major matter, without prior consent of the Membership.

No litigation shall be initiated without the prior approval of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Members voting at a regular or properly called Church Conference. The nature of the subject matter and the time of the vote shall have been properly announced at least seven (7) days in advance.

The above shall not be interpreted to preclude the procurement of legal advice by a Church organization, when such advice is necessary and appropriate, and falls within the scope of that organization's authority and approved budgeting.

#### **ARTICLE 11 - CHARGE**

The Senior Pastor and Deacon Officers are charged with the responsibility of assuring that all official Church authority is exercised in compliance with the Church Constitution and these By-Laws.

#### **ARTICLE 12 - MISCELLANEOUS**

##### **Section 1: INSPECTION OF RECORDS, REPORTS AND DOCUMENTATION**

In accordance with Florida law, every member of the Church shall have the right to inspect certain records, reports, documents and the physical properties of the Church. Such inspection shall be accomplished in accordance with applicable Florida Statutes. In accordance with existing law, the Church may restrict and limit the number of inspections or establish an orderly manner for such to be conducted.

##### **Section 2: DESIGNATED GIFTS**

The Church recognizes the wish of some members to designate the way in which contributions are used. However, the Church also recognizes that all that we have comes from God, and should be used to further His Kingdom. Therefore, the Church will accept gifts and contributions that are intended for a designated purpose. However, if the purpose designated on the gift or contribution is NOT to an existing account and/or ministry of the church, the designation shall be deemed advisory only (versus mandatory). In such an instance, the Church may choose to use the gift in accordance with the designation, or it may choose to use the gift elsewhere. All donors to the church recognize the necessity and propriety of this discretion. The Church's discretionary authority includes the right to refuse to accept any gift at any time, for any reason.

### Section 3: INDEMNIFICATION

Should any member(s) of the Senior Church Staff or Church Ministry Staff be faced with actual or threatened litigation as a result of the performance of their proper and normal duties, the Church will provide a sufficient and appropriate legal defense and/or indemnify such staff member(s) for costs and expenses relating to such actual or threatened litigation. This obligation to indemnify and/or provide a defense shall cease if at any time it is discovered that the staff member(s) in question acted contrary to Holy Scripture, in violation of law or otherwise acted in any way that was dishonest or lacking complete candor.