

# **Sweethaven Baptist Church**

## **Constitution**

### **2016 Version**

THE GOVERNMENT OF THIS CHURCH IS VESTED IN THE BODY OF BELIEVERS WHO COMPOSE IT. IT IS SUBJECT TO THE CONTROL OF NO OTHER ECCLESIASTICAL BODY, BUT IT RECOGNIZES AND SUSTAINS THE OBLIGATIONS OF MUTUAL COUNSEL AND COOPERATION WHICH ARE COMMON AMONG BAPTIST CHURCHES.

#### **BY-LAWS**

##### **ARTICLE I NAME**

The name of the church shall be Sweethaven Baptist Church.

##### **ARTICLE II PURPOSE**

- (A) The purpose of this church is to carry out the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20; to administer the ordinances of the New Testament; to edify the believers. This church will conduct itself in accordance with the laws of the land to the point of being contrary to the Word of God. This purpose is further expressed in the Church Covenant.
- (B) This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building of churches, parsonages, schools, colleges, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, print shops, daycare centers, camps, nursing homes, and cemeteries, and any other ministries that the pastor may be led of God to establish in the United States and in any foreign country.
- (C) The church shall also ordain and license men to the Gospel ministry; educate believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Holy Scriptures, both in Sunday and weekday and weeknight schools of Christian education; maintain missionary activities in the United

States and in any foreign country; and engage in any other ministry that the church may decide, from time to time, to pursue in obedience to the will of God. (1 Corinthians 7:17, 14:19; Titus 1:5, 2:4; Acts 5:42, 13:1–3, 14:23, 15:35–36, 40, 20:20; 1 Timothy 1:3, 2:7, 3:2, 4:11, 6:2; 2 Timothy 2:2,24; Romans 10:14–15; 2 Corinthians 8:12, 14; Philippians 4:10, 14–16; Hebrews 13:7, 17; Jeremiah 3:15; Ephesians 4:11–12)

### **ARTICLE III CHURCH COVENANT**

We, who have been called and separated from the world by the work and Spirit of God to the profession of faith in Jesus Christ, and who have been baptized in the name of Father and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, do hereby associate ourselves together, under God, in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel as a Baptist Church, which shall be known as the Sweethaven Baptist Church and we hereby mutually and solemnly and in the fear of God, enter into the following covenant:

SECTION 1: We of the Sweethaven Baptist Church hereby covenant and agree to walk in love, live in peace, to sympathize with each other under all conditions of life, to pray with and for one another and to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work.

SECTION 2: We covenant to live with the help of God in such a manner as to give no occasion for offense to the church in any way, but to follow after the things which make for peace and the things wherewith one may edify another and to abide by the rules of the church.

SECTION 3: We covenant by the assistance of the Holy Spirit to watch over each other with all kindness and Christian love, not suffering sin to rest upon a brother but as far as God shall make it known to us we will in all cases obey our Lord's teachings from the Word of God. We will endeavor to maintain a spiritual discipline in the Church.

SECTION 4: Moreover, we of the Sweethaven Baptist Church covenant to meet on the first day of the week for public worship, to fill our places at all times of the appointed meetings of the church. Wednesday evening is to be the time of prayer. We are to have the Lord's Supper at least once a month, which shall be served only by an ordained Baptist Minister, as God shall give us health and opportunity.

SECTION 5: We covenant to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel to all the world. We shall try to be faithful to the things of God doing our best for Him, looking for that blessed hope; that great day when we shall be caught up together to meet our Lord in the air; so shall we ever be with the Lord.

SECTION 6: We moreover engage 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 IV DOCTRINAL STATEMENT**

## SECTION 1: THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was written inerrant in its original languages by men divinely inspired, and it is perfect reassurance of heavenly instruction, that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the true center of Christian Union, and the Supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions shall be tried.

II Timothy 3:16, 17

I Peter 1:10-12

Proverbs 30:5, 6

I John 4:11

## SECTION 2: THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent, perfect spirit and personal being, the Creator, Preserver, and Supreme Ruler of the Universe, inexpressibly glorious in holiness and all other perfections, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

I John 4:24

Exodus 15:11

Mark 12:30

Matthew 28:19

John 10:30

Ephesians 2:18

## SECTION 3: THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but by the law of God, positively inclined to evil, and therefore under just condemnation of eternal ruin without defense or excuse.

Genesis 1:27

Genesis 1:31

Genesis 3:6-24

Isaiah 53:6

Ezekiel 18:19-20

Romans 1:20

Romans 5:19

## SECTION 4: THE WAY OF SALVATION

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through the mediatorial office of the Son of God, Who by appointment by the Father, freely took upon Himself our nature; that being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, yet without sin, He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full atonement for our sin; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in Heaven, and that He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate and all-sufficient Savior.

Ephesians 2:8

John 3:16

Isaiah 53:4-5

Hebrews 7:25

Colossians 2:9

Hebrews 2:38

## SECTION 5: JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the great Gospel blessing, which Christ secures to such as believe in Him, is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, removal of guilt and the promise of eternal life; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but only through faith in the Redeemer's blood, by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us by God; that justification brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

John 1:16

Acts 13:39

Romans 5:9

Romans 4:4-5

Romans 5:1-2

## SECTION 6: THE FREENESS OF SALVATION

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them upon their cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel, which rejection involves him in an aggravate condemnation.

Isaiah 55:1

Romans 16:25-26

John 5:40

John 3:19

## SECTION 7: REGENERATION

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is affected in a manner above comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and newness of life.

John 3:3

II Corinthians 5:17

John 3:8

Ephesians 5:9

Galatians 5:16-23

I Peter 1:22-25

## SECTION 8: SANTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, believers are made partakers of His holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means – especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness and prayer.

I Thessalonians 4:3

I John 2:29

Romans 8:5

Philippians 2:12-13

## SECTION 9: THE PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS

We believe that such are elected unto salvation as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

John 3:31

I John 2:29

Romans 8:28

Philippians 1:6

#### SECTION 10: THE PRESERVATION OF SAINTS

We believe that the security of the believer is sure; that the believer has been indwelt by God Himself in the Person of the Holy Spirit; that the believer has been sealed unto the day of redemption; that the Father's purpose is to keep us in spite of everything; that God therefore sees the believer as predestinated, justified, and glorified; and thus his eternal destiny is secure.

John 10:28-30

Romans 8:29-30

I Corinthians 6:19

John 13:1

Ephesians 4:30

I John 5:13

#### SECTION 11: THE LOCAL CHURCH

We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its true mission is found in the Great Commission and that for it to exhibit the success of the church in Acts 1, the people must be in "one accord", dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit. We are opposed to the modern day ecumenical movement and the modern day charismatic movement.

Matthew 18:17

I Corinthians 1:1-13

I Corinthians 11:2

Matthew 28:20

Acts 2:41-42

Acts 2:46

#### SECTION 12: BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the Father, and Son and Holy Ghost, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life.

We believe that the Lord's Supper, in which the believers of a Gospel church commemorate together the dying love of Christ, is to be preceded always with solemn self-examination.

Acts 8:36-39

John 3:22-23

Matthew 29:19

Acts 2:41-42

I Corinthians 11:26

Romans 6:4

#### SECTION 13: THE LORD'S DAY

We believe that Sunday is the first day of the week and is referred to in the New Testament as the Lord's day, and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes; that believers are to consistently gather themselves together for worship of God and fellowship; that on this day we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

Acts 20:7

Psalms 118:24

Hebrews 4:3-11

Hebrews 10:25

#### SECTION 14: CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; that this is to be followed until such government might attempt to cause believers to violate God's law; in any such case we must obey God rather than man.

Romans 13:1-7

Matthew 22:21

Acts 5:29

Matthew 23:10

#### SECTION 15: THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such as only through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified by the Holy Spirit are truly righteous in God's esteem, which all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in God's sight wicked and under the curse; that this distinction is held among men, both in and after death, with the righteous having everlasting life and blessedness, and the wicked everlasting punishment and condemnation.

Malachi 3:18

Romans 1:17

I John 5:19

Luke 16:25

#### SECTION 16: THE FUTURE

We believe that the end is approaching; that Christ will rapture His own before a great time of tribulation and return to reign for 1,000 years on the earth; after which the lost shall be cast into eternal punishment and the redeemed shall be with the Lord forever.

Acts 1:11

Acts 24:15

Revelation 22:11

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

Matthew 24:31-46

I Corinthians 15:15-58

#### SECTION 17: HUMAN SEXUALITY / MARRIAGE

We believe that the term marriage has only one legitimate meaning, and that is marriage sanctioned by God, which joins one man and one woman in a single, covenantal union as delineated by Scripture. Marriage ceremonies performed in any facility owned, leased, or rented by this church will be only those ceremonies sanctioned by God, joining one man with one woman as their genders were determined at birth. Whenever there is a conflict between the church's position and any new legal standard for marriage, the church's statement of faith, doctrines, and biblical positions will govern.

Genesis 2:24

Mark 10:6-9

I Corinthians 7:1-9

Ephesians 5:22-23

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage as defined above. We believe that any other type of sexual activity, identity, or expression that lies outside of this definition of marriage, including those that are becoming more accepted in the culture and the courts, are contradictory to God's natural design and purpose for human sexuality.

Genesis 2:24

Romans 1:26-29

I Thessalonians 4:1-8

Genesis 19:5

I Corinthians 5:1; 6:9-10

Hebrews 13:4

## SECTION 18: AUTHORITY OF THE STATEMENT OF FAITH

Our statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the statement of faith accurately represents the teachings of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all members, staff, and volunteers. All literature, whether print or electronic, used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the statement of faith. All activities permitted or performed in any facilities owned, rented, or leased by this church or engaged in by any member of the church staff (volunteer or paid) and all decisions of the administration of this church shall not conflict with the statement of faith. In all conflicts regarding interpretation of the statement of faith, the Pastor and Board of Deacons, on behalf of the church, have the final authority

## ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

### SECTION 1: QUALIFICATIONS

1. Qualifications for membership in this church shall be:
  - a. A vital faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and,
  - b. Baptism by immersion as set forth in the New Testament and,
  - c. An agreement with the Church covenant and
  - d. Agreement with the Doctrinal Statement of Sweethaven Baptist Church.

### SECTION 2: ADMISSION OF MEMBERS

1. Candidates desiring membership and accepting the aims and ideas of the church as expressed in the Church Covenant, shall present themselves publicly at any of the regular worship services of the church asking for membership in any one of the following ways:
  - a. By publicly professing faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and scriptural baptism.

- b. By letter of transfer from another Bible-believing Baptist church of like faith and practice if the applicant has been baptized by immersion subsequent to a profession of faith.
  - c. By public statement of Christian experience indicating previous compliance with one of the foregoing.
  - d. Restoration of Members:  
A person whose membership in this church has been terminated for any offense may be restored to membership after counseling and recommendation of the Pastor (or board of deacons if the office of pastor is vacant) and upon giving evidence of repentance and reformation. Restoration is subject to approval by the majority of members at a meeting in which a quorum is present.
- 2. The requirements of presenting oneself publicly may be waived for a candidate asking for membership by method (b) or (c), in a case of sickness or service in the Armed Forces, when such application is recommended by the Board of Deacons and the Pastor.
  - 3. A candidate's application for membership in the Sweethaven Baptist Church shall be voted upon at a regular worship service of the church and shall require majority approval of all members voting.
  - 4. Children under the age of 18 whose parents join the church will automatically become junior members not having voting privileges. However, upon turning 18 the junior member must present himself<sup>1</sup> for membership as stated in Item 1.

### SECTION 3: TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- 1. Membership in this church shall be terminated as follows:
  - a. By death of member.
  - b. By letter of transfer upon request of another church of like faith and practice.
  - c. Dual Membership: No member of this church may hold membership in another church simultaneously. If any member unites in membership with another church, that person is automatically terminated without notice from membership in this church.



d. Upon request of the member in writing.

**<sup>1</sup>In this document, he, him, etc. refer to male or female unless scripture should dictate a specific gender.**

- e. By any member that becomes an offense to the church and its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian-like conduct or by persistent breach of one's covenant vows. (as found in Article 3 ) The church may terminate one's membership only after due notice and hearing and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such a member to repentance in accord with Galatians 6:1. All matters pertaining to the termination of one's membership, or action looking thereto, shall first be considered by the Pastor after conferring with the Deacons. Their recommendation to the church is subject to approval of a majority of members voting at any meeting in which quorum is present.
- f. The membership of any individual member shall be automatically terminated without notice if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the Church in the preceding six months. This provision may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the pastor. (or deacons in the event the office of pastor is vacant.)
- g. Automatic termination of church membership shall occur for any church member committing an act of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, adultery, or change of gender through surgery or appearance or shall occur for any church member who promotes such activities as these or who promotes activities involving fornication or pornography or shall occur for any church member who expresses publicly that any one of these such behaviors is his or her continued way of life.

#### SECTION 4: DUTIES OF MEMBERS

1. Members are expected to live the Christian life always in such a fashion to honor Christ and the Church.
2. To regularly attend the worship services of the Church.
5. To faithfully share in the work of the Church.
6. To faithfully support its leadership.

7. To support the church in prayer, tithes, offerings, and with other financial support as the Lord enables; in accordance with Biblical commands.

## SECTION 5: PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS

1. Members who are in full and regular standing are privileged to act and vote in the transactions of the church. The privileges of the members carry with them a parallel responsibility to be faithful and informed.

A member that has not attended a regular service for a period of two (2) months will automatically be transferred to an inactive non-voting status

- a. Regular attendance constitutes Sunday AM, Sunday PM, and Wednesday evening.
  - b. Sunday school is not considered a regular worship service.
2. Restoration to active membership and voting status will constitute faithful attendance for one month.
  3. Exception will be made to Paragraph 2 and 3 for members who are not able to attend regular services due to military deployment, out of town education, extended leave or sabbatical or prolonged illness.

## ARTICLE VI COMMITTEES

The committees of the church shall include Finance, Missions, Building & Grounds, Trustees, School Board and Nominating. Prior to the Annual Business Meeting, any names to be suggested to serve on committees shall be submitted in writing to the Nominating Committee and or Deacon Board for consideration.

1. The Finance Committee shall consist of a Finance Chairman and/or Bookkeeper, Chairman of Deacons, Building & Grounds Chairman, Church Bookkeeper, Treasurer, Missions Chairman, and two elected members.
2. The Missions Committee shall consist of the Deacon Board Chairman, Missions Chairman and two elected members.
3. The Buildings & Grounds committee shall consist of a chairman and at least four (4) elected members of the church.

4. The Trustees of the church shall consist of three or more members to serve for a term as long as desired.
5. The Nominating Committee shall consist of four (4) elected members and headed by the Chairman of the Board of Deacons. The Nominating Committee will be recommended to the church by the Board of Deacons.

## **ARTICLE VII SWEETHAVEN CHRISTIAN ACADEMY AND PRESCHOOL**

### **SECTION 1: PURPOSE**

The church believes that it is to provide the members and members' children with an education which is based upon and consistent with Biblical teachings. The church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. In order to assist the church's families with their obligation to biblically train their children, the church shall operate a Christian day school and preschool. To this end, the church shall engage in ministries in education in keeping with the following dictates.

### **SECTION 2: PARAMETERS FOR PARTICIPATION**

All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church shall be for the benefit of the members of Sweethaven Baptist Church and like-minded churches in the area. Special classes offered within the church/school are not open to whoever would choose to attend. The pastor reserves the right to determine who may attend which classes by his own criteria and discretion and may delegate the authority to make such decisions to other pastoral employees of the church and school administrators, keeping, however, his authority to override any decisions in such matters which may have been made by others.

### **SECTION 3: STAFF REQUIREMENTS**

All instructors, teachers, and administrators shall be members of Sweethaven Baptist Church. This provision shall not apply to visiting missionaries, evangelists, or preachers engaged for the purpose of delivering sermons, conducting revivals, or other special meetings on a temporary basis. If an individual is unable to become a member of Sweethaven Baptist Church and can demonstrate the necessity of his membership to another congregation that person must sign a document acknowledging his enthusiastic support of the Sweethaven Baptist Church's declared purposes and statement of faith in order to be considered for employment on any level.

### **SECTION 4: STATEMENT OF FAITH ACCORD**

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be taught and presented in full accord with the Statement of Faith of the church. The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or

volunteer for its educational programs who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith. All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as integral and inseparable ministries of the church. All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted consistent with the teaching of the inerrant Word of God. Any assertion or belief which conflicts with or questions a Bible truth as interpreted by the pastor is a pagan deception and distortion of the truth which will be disclaimed as false. It is the responsibility of every instructor or teacher to present the inerrant Word of God as the sole infallible source of knowledge and wisdom.

## SECTION 5: CHRISTIAN WALK

All administrators, instructors, teachers, and other staff, whether paid or volunteer, maintain a lifestyle consistent with the precepts taught by the church, whether in or out of the classroom. Any behavior that would constitute dismissal from church membership would also constitute dismissal from employment at the preschool and academy. All staff shall be under the supervision of the pastor, who has the sole authority to hire, appoint, or dismiss the same as stated herein.

## SECTION 6: HIERARCHY OF AUTHORITY

1. The pastor shall be the final authority on all matters relating to the ministry of education. The pastor shall serve as the overseer of all aspects of the educational ministry.
  
2. ACADEMY ADMINISTRATOR
  - a. The Sweethaven Christian Academy/Preschool Administrator will be required to be a member of Sweethaven Baptist Church and will be hired by the Pastor upon conferring with the Board of Deacons. The School Administrator and the Finance Chairman/Bookkeeper are responsible to create the current year budget to be approved by the Finance Committee. All additional spending will be approved by the Finance Committee of the church. As School Administrator, he will agree with and abide by the church By-Laws and Covenant.
  
  - b. As a member of the church he shall be subject to Article V
  
  - c. The Academy Administrator will work closely with the pastor and deacons of Sweethaven Baptist Church in order to provide a unity of purpose and vision between the two organizations. The administrator will present recommendations for hiring and firing of staff, enrollment and expulsion of students to the pastor with the pastor having final authority in each case.

## SECTION 7: ORGANIZATION

Sweethaven Christian Academy and Preschool will be an integral part of the church and not an entity in itself. As such the school shall not divide itself from the church or function without the authority

of the church. The Academy and Preschool shall have as its aims and objectives that of assisting the church in discharging the obligations and responsibilities that have been imposed upon it, rather than having different aims and objectives, which commonly act as divisive forces. The pastor may reside over all such organizations and societies, and he may develop additional organizations and societies as the need arises.

#### SECTION 8: GRIEVENCE PROCEDURE

Unresolved issues, after having followed school policy, shall be referred to the Board of Deacons for final resolution.

### **ARTICLE VIII OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH**

#### SECTION 1: TERM OF OFFICE

1. The Pastor and Pastoral staff will serve for an undetermined period of time. (see Article X section 2 for more information.)
2. The Committee Chairman and Board Members of this church shall be elected for a term of one year. Total term not to exceed three (3) consecutive years. The church may make exception when no one is willing or qualified to serve on said committee.

#### SECTION 2: THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH SHALL BE:

Pastor, Pastoral Staff, Board of Deacons, Church Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Sunday School Superintendent, Assistant Sunday School Superintendent, Finance Chairman, Missions Chairman, Trustees, Building & Grounds Chairman.

#### SECTION 3: ALL OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH SHALL BE:

1. Faithful to all public services of the church.
2. Loyal to church-approved programs.
3. Separated from worldliness by living Godly lives.
4. Elected by the church body.
5. Faithful in giving tithes to their local church.

#### SECTION 4: THE CHURCH SHALL HAVE THE PRIVILEGE TO:

1. Add or delete from the officers of the church as it deems necessary to effectively carry out its ministry to the Lord.
2. Failure to fulfill Section 3 will carry with it forfeiture of one's office by the church body according to Matthew 18:15-17.

### **ARTICLE IX DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

#### SECTION 1: PASTOR

1. The Pastor shall be the moderator of the church; he may call the Board of Deacons or the church together for special meetings to transact the business of the church; he shall devote his time and energies to the general welfare and spiritual oversight of the church; he shall serve as an ex-officio member of all committees of the church; he shall receive such compensation as the church may decide and shall affirm his stance with the church's Doctrinal Statement and according to Matthew 18:15-17.
2. It is the duty of the Pastor is to serve as the head of the ministry, including both Sweethaven Baptist Church and Sweethaven Christian Academy and Preschool and any other ministries the pastor or deacons shall organize in the future.(Acts 15:3-7, 12).

#### 3. PASTORAL OVERSIGHT OF OFFICERS AND STAFF

- a. The pastor may hire associates and assistants to assist the pastor in carrying out his God-given responsibilities, as well as any related support staff. The pastor will communicate with the deacons regarding positions which need to be filled.
  - b. All church, academy and preschool staff, whether paid or volunteer, shall be under the supervision of the pastor who has the sole authority to dismiss the same. No employee or volunteer shall be hired, appointed, or retained who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith or who is not in unity with the purpose Sweethaven Baptist Church.
  - c. It shall be the responsibility of the pastor to perform the various duties incumbent on his office. He shall be solely responsible for the hiring, firing, disciplining, and supervising of all employees connected in any way with the church. This includes voluntary, voted, and hired help. He shall be free to act without imposition of defending his actions in this regard (Hebrews 13:17).
4. As a member and officer of the church he shall be subject to Article V and VIII, Section 3.

## SECTION 2: PASTORAL STAFF (Associate, Youth, Music, etc.)

1. The Pastoral Staff shall carry out their responsibilities as they are defined in a job description that has been developed by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons. They shall receive such compensation as the church may decide and shall affirm their stance with the church's Doctrinal Statement and according to Matthew 18:15-17.
2. As officers of the church, all Pastoral Staff shall be members of Sweethaven Baptist Church and shall be subject to Article V and VIII, Section 3.

## SECTION 3: BOARD OF DEACONS

1. In accordance with the meaning of the Word and the practices of the New Testament, Deacons are to be servants of the Church.
2. QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON
  - a. The qualifications for deacons shall be such as are prescribed and set forth in the New Testament (Acts 6:3; I Timothy 3:8-13).
  - b. To be zealous to guard the unity of the spirit within the church.
  - c. A candidate must have been a member of this church for a minimum of one full year and must be a minimum of 25 years of age.
  - d. A candidate shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee. He must successfully complete a questionnaire attesting to his qualifications to be a deacon according to the Scriptures. This questionnaire will be referred to the Pastor. After such approval he will be recommended to the nominating committee to be sent to the church for approval.
  - e. They shall serve as a council of advice and meet regularly with the Pastor to discuss the welfare and work of the church.
3. They are to seek to know the physical needs and the moral and spiritual struggles of the members of the Church, and to serve the whole Church in relieving and encouraging all that are in need as found in Acts 6:1-7.
4. In case of the inability of the Pastor, subject to advice and conference with him, or when the Church is without a Pastor, the Deacons shall provide leadership for Sweethaven Baptist Church Ministries and fill the pulpit vacancy on a temporary basis only.

5. They shall assist in the Church ordinances. The Lord's Supper shall be observed monthly.
6. As members and officers of the church they shall be subject to Article V and VIII, Section 3.

#### SECTION 4: CHURCH CLERK/ASSISTANT CLERK

1. The Church Clerk shall keep a record of all actions of the church in a suitable book. He shall preserve on file all communications and written official reports. The clerk shall keep a register of the names of the members with dates of admission, dismissal or death, together with a record of baptisms, and issue letters of dismissal. Such records shall be maintained at the church and all matters relative to the position surrendered to the church when the position is vacated.
2. The Assistant Church Clerk shall act in the absence of the Clerk and carry out duties as set forth.
3. As officers and members of the church they shall be subject to Article V and VIII, Section 3.

#### SECTION 5: TREASURER/ASSISTANT TREASURER

1. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to sign all checks as disbursed by the Bookkeeper or the Accountant. The Treasurer shall serve on the Finance Committee.
2. The Assistant Church Treasurer shall act in the absence of the Treasurer and carry out duties as set forth.
3. As officers and members of the church they shall be subject to Article V and VIII, Section 3.

#### SECTION 6: SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT/ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

1. The Sunday School Superintendent shall oversee the Sunday School staff and give direction to the entire Sunday School ministries.
2. The Assistant Sunday School Superintendent shall act in the absence of the Sunday School Superintendent and carry out duties as set forth.
3. As officers and members of the church they shall be subject to Article V and VIII, Section 3.

#### SECTION 7: FINANCE CHAIRMAN

1. It shall be the duty of the Finance Chairman and/or Bookkeeper and Pastor to create a current year budget with approval from the Finance Committee. He shall oversee the expenses of the entire church ministries and dispense a quarterly financial report to the



church families. All additional spending will be approved by the Finance Committee of the church.

2. As an officer and member of the church he shall be subject to Article V and VIII, Section 3.

#### SECTION 8: MISSIONS CHAIRMAN

1. It shall be the duties of the Missions Chairman to direct the Missions Committee and oversee the operations of the missions programs of the church.
2. As an officer and member of the church he shall be subject to Article V and VIII, Section 3.

#### SECTION 9: TRUSTEES

1. The church shall elect three or more Trustees. They shall have general custody of the property of the church and shall perform such duties as are required by law. They shall execute, on behalf of the church, all notes, deeds of trust, mortgages or other instruments affecting the church property, when duly authorized by the church, but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property on behalf of the church without specific authorization by the church.
2. As officers and members of the church they shall be subject to Article V and VIII, Section 3.

#### SECTION 10: BUILDING AND GROUNDS CHAIRMAN

1. It shall be the duties of the Building and Grounds Chairman to direct the Building and Grounds Committee to oversee the improvements, additions and maintenance of the church property.
2. As an officer and member of the church he shall be subject to Article V and VIII, Section 3.

#### SECTION 11: NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee will be selected and recommended to the church by the Board of Deacons. The Committee will consist of four (4) members and will be headed by the Chairman of the Board of Deacons. This Committee shall be approved at a Church Business Meeting. This Committee shall nominate all of the above officers and committee members (except Pastor and Pastoral Staff) and shall present the names of the Church at its Annual Business meeting on a Wednesday in December for their election. The Committee shall serve to nominate persons to any new positions created by the church during the year and to any position left vacant during the year. Prior to the Annual Business Meeting, any names to be suggested to serve on committees shall be submitted in writing to the Nominating Committee and/or the Deacon Board for consideration.

#### SECTION 12: CHURCH ATTENDANCE OF PERSONS IN LEADERSHIP

In order to promote a high Spiritual standard for this church, all officers, teachers, and committeemen will be expected to attend all regular services of the church; except they be sick, providentially hindered, on leave, sabbatical, or vacation, or be in attendance at another church of like faith representing the purposes of Sweethaven Baptist Church as seen in Article III-IV. An office shall be declared vacant after evident delinquency.

## **ARTICLE X ELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE**

### **SECTION 1: PASTOR**

Whenever a vacancy occurs, a Pastoral Search Committee consisting of Chairman of Deacons, Sunday School Superintendent, Finance Director, Missions Committee Chairman, and three members at large, elected by the church shall seek out a candidate and their recommendation will constitute a nomination, although any member of the church shall have the privilege of making other nominations for candidates to the said committee. The Pastoral Search Committee shall bring to the church only one candidate at a time. No candidate shall be elected without an affirmation ballot vote of three-fourths majority of those members present at a called business meeting of the church, with not less than one week's notice having been given from the pulpit at a Sunday church service prior to the taking of such vote. The candidate can be terminated by written notice of thirty (30) days by either the church or the candidate.

### **SECTION 2: PASTORAL STAFF (Associate, Youth, Music, etc.)**

1. When a vacancy occurs, the Pastor(s), upon conferring with the Board of Deacons, shall seek out a candidate for an Assistant Pastor, Youth Director/Pastor, Children's Ministry Director, Music Director and present the candidate to the church to be voted on at a called business meeting. No candidate shall be elected without an affirmation ballot vote of three-fourths majority of those members present at a called business meeting of the church, with not less than one week's notice having been given from the pulpit at a Sunday church service prior to the taking of such vote. The candidate can be terminated by written notice of thirty (30) days by either the church or the candidate.
2. All other Pastoral Staff will be hired at the discretion of the Pastor upon conferring with the Board of Deacons.
3. All Pastoral Staff shall be members of Sweethaven Baptist Church and shall be subject to Article V and VIII, Section 3.

### **SECTION 3: BOARD OF DEACONS**

1. There shall be up to seven (7) active Deacons for the first three hundred members whose names are on the active roll, and one additional Deacon for each fifty active members.
2. The Nominating Committee shall present to the church for ballot vote nominations for the office of Deacon in accordance with the qualifications and duties for service as listed herein. Those elected must receive the majority of votes cast. Each Deacon shall be elected to serve for a one (1) year term, total term not to exceed three (3) consecutive years. The church may make exception where no other qualified or willing men are available. A Deacon elected to serve an unexpired term shall serve that term only before being eligible for re-election.
3. The Deacons shall elect a chairman, vice-chairman and secretary at the first regular business meeting of the year. Any man who has not already served one (1) year as a deacon shall not be elected chairman.

#### SECTION 4: ALL OTHER CHURCH OFFICERS

All other church officers shall be elected by the church body to serve a one (1) year term and may be re-elected to consecutive term. Total term not to exceed three (3) consecutive years. The church may make exception when no one is willing or qualified to serve as an officer of the church as spelled out in Article VIII, Section 3.

#### SECTION 5: CHURCH WORKERS

The Pastor and Deacons shall be at liberty to seek volunteers to serve in areas of ministry throughout the church.

### **ARTICLE XI CHURCH AND GROUND USE**

1. Any function that is not planned by approved church or school committees must be presented to the pastor for approval no less than six weeks prior to the date of the event.
2. Any event or function held on the property of Sweethaven Baptist Church must not violate the purpose or doctrinal position as expressed in the statement of faith. No event will promote worldly or carnal lifestyles or behaviors or promote any political or social agenda outside of the purposes defined in the covenant and statement of faith.
3. Any use of the facilities will be determined by the pastor upon conferring with the deacons.

### **ARTICLE XII MEETINGS**

#### SECTION 1: WORSHIP SERVICES

There shall be one Sunday morning service, one Sunday evening service and one Wednesday evening service, unless deemed otherwise by the Deacon Board and Pastor.

## SECTION 2: BUSINESS MEETING

1. A quarterly business meeting of the church shall be held on a Wednesday in January, April, July and October. An annual church business meeting shall be conducted on a Wednesday in December, at which time the election of officers and the church budget will be voted on. The Pastor (or the Chairman of the Board of Deacons) may call by one week's public notice from the pulpit at a Sunday service, a special called business meeting, the particular subject or subjects of the meeting being stated in such notice. In the event of an emergency, the one week public notice may be waived.
2. On major issues voted on, the minimum age must be 18. Business meetings shall be conducted in accordance with "Robert's Rules of Order."

## SECTION 3: QUORUMS

A quorum for the purpose of any business meeting shall consist of ½ or three (3) active deacons and adult representatives from ½ or twenty (20) families (whichever is the lesser of the two.) that are members of Sweethaven Baptist Church.

## ARTICLE XIII AMENDMENTS

1. This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present at a meeting specifically called for that purpose, the proposed amendment being inserted in the call and shall be posted at least two weeks prior to that meeting. No change shall be made in the "Doctrinal Statement" or "The Church Covenant" except by a two-thirds vote of all the members of the church present entitled to vote, said proposed change having been announced not less than one month before the time of the proposed action, and read from the pulpit on the Lord's Day next succeeding such proposal.
2. If amendments or changes become necessary, the Deacon Board shall authorize the Nominating Committee to present a By-Laws Committee to the church for election. The By-Laws Committee shall review said changes.

## ARTICLE XIV DISSOLUTION

Upon the dissolution of this church and its ministries, the Board of Trustees shall, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all of the liabilities of this church, dispose of all assets of this church exclusively for the purposes of the church in such manner, or to such organization or

organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law, as the Board of Trustees shall determine. In this event, it shall be the desire of the church that after liabilities are cared for, all remaining assets shall be equally divided among its current missionary families.

Revisions were made to these By-Laws and approved by the body of the church on September 21, 2016.

By-Laws Committee 2016

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Will Frantz, Chairman  
Linda Wescott  
John Oberholter  
Mark Lenington  
Cary R. Borkert, Pastor, Ex-Officio