

**BYLAWS of BAYOU VISTA BAPTIST CHURCH  
A Louisiana Nonprofit Religious Corporation**

**PREAMBLE**

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be subject to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and governed in an orderly democratic process under the direction and leadership of the Senior Pastor (hereinafter referred to as "Pastor") with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist Churches, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of Bayou Vista Baptist Church, and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to the churches of the same faith and order, we do declare and establish these Bylaws.

**ARTICLE I - NAME AND PRINCIPAL OFFICE**

The name of this Church is "Bayou Vista Baptist Church," and it is referred to in these Bylaws as the "Church" or "Corporation." The Church maintains its principal office at 411 Field Road, Morgan City, Louisiana 70380.

**ARTICLE II - PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES**

The Purpose of Bayou Vista Baptist Church, a church committed to the full counsel of God as laid out in the Scriptures, shall be:

1. Evangelism – To encourage and facilitate the Church as a whole and the individual members to fulfill the Great Commission to create disciples of Jesus Christ.
2. Worship – To encourage and facilitate corporate, small group, and individual worship in meetings and in everyday life.
3. Fellowship – To encourage and facilitate cooperation and harmony among believers within Bayou Vista Baptist Church and in other church bodies.
4. Discipleship – To encourage and facilitate spiritual growth among the believers of Bayou Vista Baptist Church and believers in other church bodies.
5. Ministry – To encourage and facilitate acts that display the name of Jesus Christ to the world as a church and as individual members for the purpose of bringing individuals to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ as LORD and Savior.

Any conflicts between the Holy Scriptures and any governing document shall be resolved in favor of the Holy Scriptures.

## ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

### **A. Requirements for Membership**

Membership in the Church shall consist of all persons who have met the qualifications for membership and are listed on the membership roll. In order for an individual to be a candidate for membership in the Church, the individual desiring membership shall:

1. Make or have made a public profession that Jesus Christ is LORD and Savior; and
2. Shall be or have been baptized by immersion as a testimony of salvation.

An individual may demonstrate a desire for membership by providing to the Church:

1. A profession or statement of faith and baptism as specified above;
2. A promise of a letter of good standing/transfer of membership from a church of like practice/belief.

All eligible individuals shall be presented to the congregation for a vote of acceptance at any regularly scheduled or specially scheduled meeting of the Church. An individual shall be accepted for membership upon a majority vote of the members present.

### **B. Responsibilities and Duties of Members**

Every member is expected to demonstrate his/her love for and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the Church in the following ways:

1. Should seek to develop a vital devotional life, including daily Bible reading and prayer (Acts 2:42-47; 2 Timothy 2:15-16);
2. Should seek to attend regular Church meetings such as worship services (Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday evening), Bible Study (*i.e.* Sunday School), revival meetings and other special services as scheduled by the Church, unless providentially hindered (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42-47);
3. Should practice “storehouse tithing,” which means to give 10% of one’s income to the budget of the Church in an undesignated fashion as a minimum of his/her expression of financial stewardship (Malachi 3:8-12);
4. Should seek to live a Christ like, holy life (1 John 2:3-6; 1 Peter 1:13-17; Matthew 22:37-39), and agree with and abide by the teachings of the Bible and the governing documents of the Church;
5. Should seek to verbally share the gospel of Jesus Christ with lost people for the purpose of persuading them to be converted to Him in salvation (Matthew 28:18-20);
6. Should positively submit to and follow the leadership of the Pastor, ministerial pastors and lay leadership of the Church. Should preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace within the fellowship by striving to be a peacemaker rather than a troublemaker (Hebrews 13:17; Philippians 2:1-4);

7. Should strive to love one another and show an attitude of forgiveness and unity toward each other as an example to the world of Christ's love for His Church (John 13:34-35; Matthew 22:37-39; 1 John 3:16).

**C. Rights of Members**

By virtue of his/her membership, every member of the Church shall be entitled to:

1. Participation in the ordinances of the Church;
2. Eligibility for any elected or volunteer position(s) within the Church;
3. A single vote on the following matters: any amendment of the Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws, the annual budget of the Church, the election of the Pastoral Leadership, the disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the Church, the merger or dissolution of the Church and the calling or removing of the Pastor. There shall be no proxy voting. Unless otherwise provided for in the Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws, the members shall approve matters by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a meeting called and held for such purpose by giving notice to the members in accordance with the provisions herein.

**D. Discipline of Members**

Every reasonable measure will be taken to minister to any troubled member. The Pastor, ministerial pastors, deacons and members will seek redemption rather than punishment. Should a serious problem arise regarding the conduct or activities of a member which would cause that member to become a liability to the welfare and interest of the Church, then the Pastor, ministerial pastors and/or their delegates will seek to resolve the problem according to Matthew 18:15-20.

**E. Termination of Membership**

Membership in the Church shall terminate in any of the following ways:

1. Death of the member;
2. Transfer of membership to another church.
3. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members as a result of the disciplinary process;  
or
4. A written request of termination by the member.

## ARTICLE IV-OFFICERS

The officers of the Church shall be the Pastor, Deacons and Trustees.

### **A. Pastor**

#### **1. Qualifications**

The initial qualifications for the position of Pastor shall be those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. In addition, the individual must be licensed by a church of like practice/belief, and may be ordained by Bayou Vista Baptist Church or a church of like practice/belief.

#### **2. Selection Process**

Should the position of Pastor be vacant, a Pastor Search Committee shall be formed. The Pastor Search Committee shall be formed and function as described in ARTICLE VII. The Pastor Search Committee shall submit an individual for consideration to the congregation. The name of the individual shall be announced and distributed to the congregation at least fourteen (14) days prior to a vote on the individual, which shall be by secret ballot of the members. A minimum three-fourths (3/4) vote of all members present shall be required to call an individual to become the Pastor.

#### **3. Responsibilities and Duties**

The Pastor shall:

- a. Faithfully teach the Scriptures;
- b. Proclaim the gospel to the Church and the world;
- c. Oversee the work of the Church;
- d. Counsel and shepherd the congregation; and
- e. Serve as the interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application for purposes of Church doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline.

#### **4. Rights**

In addition to the full rights of membership listed in these Bylaws, the Pastor shall have all authority necessary for the carrying out of the above responsibilities and duties, subject to the limitations of Scripture and the governing documents of Bayou Vista Baptist Church. The Pastor shall serve an indefinite term, and shall receive compensation in a manner and amount that shall be determined by the Church.



**5. Discipline and Termination**

The Pastor shall be subject to the general disciplinary process described in ARTICLE III of these Bylaws, except that the Personnel Committee shall hear any complaints against the Pastor because the complaint may trigger disciplinary measures and/or the termination process. Should the Personnel Committee determine after an investigation that there is a valid complaint and that disciplinary measures and/or termination are appropriate, the Personnel Committee shall address the Pastor with their concerns. If there is no resolution, the Deacon body shall then address the matter. If there is still no resolution with the Deacon body, then the Deacon body may present the valid complaint to the congregation. Any recommendation shall be announced and distributed to the congregation at least seven (7) days prior to a vote on the recommendation. A meeting of the Church shall be called for the sole purpose of taking the vote. A vote to terminate the Pastor shall be by secret ballot and require a two-thirds (2/3) vote. If approved, termination shall be effective upon announcement of the vote.

**6. Resignation**

The Pastor is employed at will and may resign after giving notice to the Deacon body at least fourteen (14) days prior to the effective date of the resignation.

**B. Deacons**

**1. Qualifications**

The qualifications for the position of Deacon shall be those listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-6.

**2. Selection Process**

Deacons shall be selected in compliance with the process outlined in Acts 6 and affirmed by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the congregation.

**3. Responsibilities and Duties**

The Deacons shall:

- a. Assist and counsel the Pastor in any matter related to the Pastor's responsibilities and duties as deemed necessary or required;
- b. Minister to the physical and spiritual needs of the congregation;
- c. Be peacemakers within the congregation; and
- d. Perform any other duties assigned to the Deacons in the governing documents.

**4. Rights**

In addition to the full rights of membership specified in these Bylaws, the Deacons shall have all authority necessary for the carrying out of the above responsibilities and duties, subject to the limitations of Scripture and the governing documents of Bayou Vista Baptist Church.

**5. Discipline**

The Deacons shall be subject to the general disciplinary process described in ARTICLE III of these Bylaws, except that the Pastor shall hear any complaints against any Deacon because the complaint may trigger disciplinary measures and/or dismissal from office. Should the Pastor determine after an investigation that there is a valid complaint and that disciplinary measures and/or dismissal from office are appropriate, the Pastor shall make such a recommendation to the Deacon body. The Deacon body shall then consider the recommendation. Should the Deacon body determine that disciplinary measures are appropriate, the Deacon body may recommend such to the congregation. Any recommendation shall be announced and distributed to the congregation at least seven (7) days prior to vote on the recommendation. A meeting of the Church shall be called for the sole purpose of taking the vote. A vote to remove a Deacon from elected service shall be by secret ballot and require a two-thirds (2/3) vote. If approved, removal shall be effective upon announcement of the vote.

**C. Trustees**

**1. Qualifications**

A Trustee shall be a member in good standing, of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit, and full of wisdom.

**2. Number of Trustees**

There shall be no fewer than three (3) but no more than five (5) Trustees. The number of Trustees should be odd.

**3. Selection Process**

Trustees shall be nominated by the Committee on Committees and approved by a vote of the Church.

**4. Length of Service**

The Trustees shall serve a three (3) year term and may be reelected for a second three (3) year term, being a maximum of six (6) consecutive years, which begins at the close of the annual business meeting, or until his successor is elected. The Trustees shall serve on a rotational basis with one-third (1/3) being elected every year.

**5. Responsibilities and Duties**

The Trustees shall:

- a. Hold Church property in trust;
- b. Buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer Church property, upon a vote of the Church authorizing any such action;
- c. Sign any document required for the purchase, sale, mortgage, lease, transfer, or rental of property or any other legal document which requires a signature, upon a vote of the Church authorizing such action; and
- d. Perform any other duties assigned to the Trustees in the governing documents.

**ARTICLE V – CHURCH STAFF**

The Church may hire and fire staff as deemed necessary. Should it be deemed necessary to hire or fire any staff member, the Personnel Committee shall be responsible for the hiring and firing process, except for Ministerial Staff. All practices of the Church shall be in compliance with federal, state, and local law(s), unless any such law is in violation of Scripture. Any staff hired shall receive compensation, which shall be determined by the Church on an individual basis.

**ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS**

The meetings of the Church shall be worship meetings and business meetings. The quorum for all meetings shall be the members present, unless stated otherwise in the governing documents.

**A. Worship Meetings**

The Church shall meet regularly on Sunday mornings, Sunday evenings, Wednesday evenings, and at any other time designated for biblical worship. Regularly scheduled meetings may be canceled at the discretion of the Pastor in consultation with the Chairman of the Deacons. Worship meetings shall be open to all members and to the public.

**B. Business Meetings**

There shall be regularly scheduled, specially called, or emergency business meetings throughout the year. Specially called business meetings shall be announced to the congregation at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. Emergency business meetings may be held as needed, without prior announcement. All business meetings shall be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order - Newly Revised*.

## ARTICLE VII – COMMITTEES

All committee members shall be members in good standing. Every committee shall consist of at least three (3) members, shall consist of an odd number of members and shall have a chairperson, who is a voting member of the committee. The Pastor, or his appointed representative, shall be ex officio on all committees. The Pastor (or the Chairman of Deacons in his absence), or his appointed representative, shall be ex officio without a vote on the Nominating Committee and the Committee on Committees. Ad hoc committees shall be created upon necessity and approval of the Church, and shall terminate upon completion of their specified task(s), reporting to the Church, and/or recommending action to the Church.

- A. The standing committees of the Church shall be the Committee on Committees, the Nominating Committee, the Budget and Finance Committee, the Personnel Committee, the Baptism Committee, the Benevolence Committee, the Floral Committee, the Pre-School Committee, the Properties Committee, the Recreation and Activities Committee, the Sound System Committee, the Usher Committee, the Kitchen and Ministries Committee, the Lord’s Supper Committee, and the Nursery Committee.
- B. Committee members shall serve on a rotational basis with one-third (1/3) being elected every year.

**1. Committee on Committees**

The members of all standing committees shall be nominated by the Committee on Committees, with the exception of the Committee on Committees, and approved by a vote of the Church. The members of the Committee on Committees shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and approved by a vote of the Church.

**2. Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for nominating the members of the Committee on Committees and members for volunteer positions within the educational/discipleship ministries of the Church.

**3. Budget and Finance Committee**

The Budget and Finance Committee shall be responsible for preparing and monitoring the Church budget and all other financial business of the Church. The Budget and Finance Committee shall also evaluate all expenditures and requests for expenditures and may make recommendations based on these evaluations. The Budget and Finance Committee shall be composed of three (3) members nominated by the Committee on Committees and the following persons by virtue of their positions: Chairman of Deacons, Personnel Committee Chairman, Treasurer, Sunday School Director, and Discipleship Training Director.

**4. Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee shall be responsible for recruiting, interviewing, and recommending to the Church for hiring all paid staff, except the Ministerial Staff. The Personnel Committee shall be responsible for creating and maintaining job descriptions, policies, and procedures for all paid staff, and the Ministerial Staff. The Personnel Committee shall recommend compensation for all staff to the Budget and Finance Committee. The Personnel Committee shall be the forum through which complaints are levied against all staff.

**5. Baptism Committee**

The Baptism Committee shall be responsible for all matters related to the Church ordinance of Baptism.

**6. Benevolence Committee**

The Benevolence Committee shall be responsible for all matters related to the management of the Church food pantry ministry.

**7. Floral Committee**

The Floral Committee shall be responsible for all matters related to the placement of floral arrangements and seasonal decorations in the Church sanctuary.

**8. Pre-School Committee**

The Pre-School Committee shall be responsible for oversight of the weekday pre-school program of the Church.

**9. Properties Committee**

The Properties Committee shall be responsible for oversight of all Church buildings, grounds, vehicles, and equipment.

**10. Recreation and Activities Committee**

The Recreation and Activities Committee shall be responsible for planning and implementing any recreational activities of the Church.

**11. Sound System Committee**

The Sound System Committee shall be responsible for all matters related to the operation of the Church's sound equipment.

**12. Usher Committee**

The Usher Committee shall be responsible for assigning persons to collect the offering at all applicable worship services. Also, they will serve in assisting persons to be seated at all Church gatherings.

**13. Kitchen and Ministries Committee**

The Kitchen and Ministries Committee shall be responsible for all matters related to the kitchen and food services, including coordination of meals associated with funerals.

**14. Lord's Supper Committee**

The Lord's Supper Committee shall be responsible for all matters related to the Church ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

**15. Nursery Committee**

The Nursery Committee shall be responsible for all matters related to the operation of the Church nursery.

C. The *ad hoc* committees of the Church shall be the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, the Search Committee, and any other committee or committees the Church might deem necessary and appropriate.

**1. Constitution and Bylaws Committee**

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee shall be responsible for the drafting, revising, and updating of the governing documents of the Church. Any draft, revision, or update shall be submitted to the Church through the process outlined in Article IX herein below.

**2. Search Committee**

The Search Committee shall consist of five (5) members with two (2) alternate members. The members shall be nominated by the Personnel Committee in counsel with the Pastor. In the event of a Pastor search the Chairman of Deacons will counsel the Personnel Committee. The nominated Search Committee shall be approved by a majority vote of the members present at a regular or specially called business meeting of the Church. The committee shall be responsible for recruiting, interviewing, and recommending to the Church for calling all Ministerial Staff.

**ARTICLE VIII – RECORDS AND REPORTS**

The Church shall keep correct and complete records of account, with all receipts of monies and expenditures being properly recorded according to accepted accounting principles. A record of the proceedings of all business and members' meetings and a record of the names and addresses of Church members entitled to vote shall be kept and/or maintained at the principal office of the Church. All books and records may be inspected by any member for any proper purpose at any reasonable time pursuant to the Louisiana Nonprofit Corporation Law.

**ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS**

Any proposed amendment(s) to these Bylaws shall be duly considered by the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, and then announced and distributed in writing to the congregation at least thirty (30) days in advance of a vote on the proposed amendment(s). Any amendment(s) to these Bylaws must be adopted by a minimum of two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a duly called and noticed business meeting.



## **ARTICLE X - CONSTRUCTION AND DEFINITIONS**

Unless the context requires otherwise, the general provisions, rules of construction and definitions in the Louisiana Nonprofit Corporation Law shall govern the construction of these Bylaws. If any provision of these Bylaws, or application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid by a court of appropriate jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of these Bylaws which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions contained herein are declared severable.

## **ARTICLE XI - DISSOLUTION**

Written, oral, and/or electronic notice must be given to the congregation at least thirty (30) days prior to a vote to dissolve and liquidate the Church. Approval of dissolution shall require a three fourths (3/4) vote of the members present at a duly called and noticed business meeting. Should Bayou Vista Baptist Church ever disband and/or cease to exist, all net assets shall be transferred to the Louisiana Baptist Convention. Any dissolution of the Church corporation shall be in exact compliance and consistent with the provisions of the Louisiana Nonprofit Corporation Law and the Internal Revenue Code, §501(c)(3), *et seq.*

## **ARTICLE XII - STATEMENT OF FAITH**

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God and as the only basis of our beliefs. The Church accepts "The Baptist Faith and Message" as amended, as an affirmation of basic Christian beliefs, and a general statement of our faith as follows:

### **1. The Scriptures**

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

See Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.



## **2. God**

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all-powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

### **a. God the Father**

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all-powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

### **b. God the Son**

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1 3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

### **c. God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

### **3. Man**

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

### **4. Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

a. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

b. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

c. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

d. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

## **5. God's Purpose of Grace**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28;

Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

## **6. The Church**

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

## **7. Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

## **8. The Lord's Day**

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

## **9. The Kingdom**

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

## **10. Last Things**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

## **11. Evangelism and Missions**

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11;



1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

## **12. Education**

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

## **13. Stewardship**

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

## **14. Cooperation**

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New

Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

### **15. The Christian and the Social Order**

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

### **16. Peace and War**

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.



## **17. Religious Liberty**

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

## **18. The Family**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-

12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

## **19. Statement on Marriage and Sexuality**

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one’s sex, or disagreement with one’s biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the Church.

Because we believe in the biblical teaching that marriage is between one man and one woman, marriages outside those parameters will not be performed by Church ministers or on Church property.

Additionally, the Bible (Scripture) is the authority for all matters of faith and practice in the Church, and the Church shall operate in accordance with Scriptural principles specifically relating to marriage, the family and sexual morality. We believe the Church’s Statement on Marriage and Sexuality is based upon God’s will for human life as conveyed to us through the Holy Scriptures, upon which the Church has been founded and anchored, and this Policy shall not be subject to change through popular vote; referendum; prevailing opinion of members or the general public; influence of or interpretation by any government authority, agency, or official action; or legal developments on the local, state or federal level.

Therefore, if it reasonably appears to the Church that the general welfare of the Church, its members or employees, are jeopardized by the conduct of any person inconsistent with the mission or principles of the Church, including, but not limited to, those principles described herein including the exercise of sexual expression outside the biblical definition of marriage in any manner, the Church may take those actions it deems appropriate and necessary in accordance with Scripture and the Bylaws, including, but not limited to, disallowing the person from accessing or entering the facilities and/or property belonging to the Church.

It is the policy of the Church that all of the Church’s assets and property shall be used to glorify God in fulfillment of the mission of the Church. Accordingly, the Church

may disallow any use of its property, formal or informal, by those affiliated with the Church or otherwise, inconsistent with the mission or principles of the Church, including, but not limited to, those principles described herein.

**20. Statement on the Sanctity of Human Life**

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefor called to defend, protect and value all human life. (Ps. 139.)

**ARTICLE XIII - AFFILIATION**

The government of the Church is vested in the body of believers (members) who compose it. The Church will be, and is always to be, a sovereign, autonomous Baptist church, self-governing on all matters by a majority of the body of members who compose it. The Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in world missions, the Church voluntarily affiliates with the Southern Baptist Convention and the Louisiana Baptist Convention in their international, national, state and local expressions.

**CERTIFICATION OF ADOPTION**

THE FOREGOING BYLAWS have been duly accepted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016, by the membership of Bayou Vista Baptist Church.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, witness the hand of the undersigned duly authorized persons on such date.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name/Position or office*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name/Position or office*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name/Position or office*