

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

TOONIGH BAPTIST CHURCH

June 2013

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, to govern this body in an orderly manner, to preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church and to ensure the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches of like faith and order.

ARTICLE I – NAME

This body shall be known as Toonigh Baptist Church located in Lebanon, Georgia and may also be referred to in this document as “the church”.

ARTICLE II – MISSION AND PURPOSE

The mission of Toonigh Baptist Church is to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 19-20) and Christ’s charge to believers (Ephesians 4: 15-16). The primary purpose of this church is to disciple all people, winning the lost to salvation in Jesus Christ, baptizing and bringing into the fold those who are saved and teaching church members to follow the precepts and examples of Christ. Ancillary purposes of the church include:

1. To minister to the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical and social needs of the membership and community. (Ephesians 4: 11-16; Romans 14: 13-19)
2. To worship Almighty God in accordance with the teachings of His Word. (John 4: 23-24; Ephesians 5: 18-20)
3. To sustain the ordinances and doctrines of the New Testament. (Romans 6: 3-4; 1 Corinthians 11: 23-24; Matthew 28: 19-20)
4. To encourage Christian ethics and morality in all human relationships. (Matthew 5: 13; Matthew 22: 21; Romans 13: 1-7; 1 Peter 2: 13-15)

ARTICLE III – STRATEGY

Our strategy for accomplishing the Mission and Purpose includes:

1. Preaching of the Gospel
2. Music ministries
3. Bible and religious education
4. Visitation
5. Transportation ministries
6. Ministries to special groups
7. Media ministries
8. Youth ministries
9. Discipleship development
10. Ministering deacons
11. Participation in the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention
12. Vacation Bible Schools
13. Growth oriented recreation
14. Active auxiliary organizations
15. Revivals
16. Friendship
17. Capital improvements

ARTICLE IV – GOVERNMENT

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. Persons duly received by the membership in accordance with the Bylaws shall constitute the membership.

This church is autonomous and subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and accepts the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation common among Baptist churches as a part of the body of Christ. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Etowah

Baptist Association, the Georgia Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

All organizations and groups created by and within the church shall remain accountable only to the church unless otherwise specified by church action.

ARTICLE V – BELIEFS

We affirm the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God and the basis of our beliefs. We subscribe to the doctrinal statement of THE BAPTIST FAITH AND MESSAGE adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963.

We affirm that the word “marriage” means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, and the word “spouse” refers only to a person of the opposite sex (naturally born) who is a husband or a wife.

ARTICLE VI – ORDINANCES

We uphold as commandments of Christ the Church Ordinances of Baptism and The Lord’s Supper – and no others.

ARTICLE VII – CHURCH COVENANT

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

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian Love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort, to promote its prosperity and spirituality; 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 through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children religiously; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, gossip, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale or use of intoxicating beverages or drugs, except as prescribed medication; to refrain from the use of pornographic material; to refrain from engaging in same sex relationships; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

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

We moreover engage, that when we separate from this church, we will unite with another church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word as soon as possible.

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any regular Church Conference by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the active members present, provided the following requirements have been met:

1. Any member, committee, organization, or officer of the church may introduce a suggested amendment in any regular Church Conference. The majority of those present and voting must favor considering the suggested change.
2. The church shall select a committee to draft and formally present the proposed amendment(s).
3. The proposed amendment(s) shall be recommended to the church by the Church Council for adoption.
4. The proposed and recommended amendment(s) shall be read to the assembled congregation in two regularly scheduled services. The two

regularly scheduled services shall occur within a time period that is no more than four weeks and no less than two weeks prior to the time of the final voting. .

Amendments shall become effective immediately upon passage.

BYLAWS

I. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

Anyone desiring membership in this church shall, except in cases of severe physical incapacitation, make known their desire by coming before the church at any regular worship service and presenting themselves for membership. Physically incapacitated persons may request membership in writing and their request shall be presented to the church in their behalf. Membership may be granted in one of the following ways:

1. By Profession of Faith – upon profession of personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and after scriptural baptism. (Reference Bylaws Part III, Ordinances; Section I, Baptism)
2. By Letter of Recommendation – upon receipt of a letter of good standing and recommendation from another Baptist Church of like faith and order.
3. By Statement – upon the candidate’s own statement of prior baptism and membership in a Baptist Church of like faith and order when no letter of recommendation is obtainable.
4. By Restoration – upon evidence of spiritual restoration following exclusion for reasons of offense.

SECTION 2. DISSENTS TO MEMBERHSIP REQUESTS

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the Deacons and/or the Church Council for investigation and recommendation to the church within thirty days. A three-fourths majority vote of active church members present and voting shall be required to grant membership to the candidate.

SECTION 3. RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

Every active member in attendance at the time of voting is entitled to vote in elections on all questions put before the church for vote.

Every active member of the church is eligible for consideration by the membership as candidates for elected offices in the church, except as otherwise stipulated by Scripture and/or these Bylaws.

Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

SECTION 4. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be terminated in any of the following conditions:

1. Death of the member.
2. Dismissal by letter to another Baptist Church.
3. Exclusion as a result of disciplinary action of this church as elsewhere provided for in these bylaws.
4. Discontinuance of membership upon written request by a member who has joined a church of another denomination.

Membership may also be terminated due extended periods of time on the inactive membership roll with no change in the conditions that prompted the inactive membership roll status.

SECTION 5. INACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

An Inactive Membership Roll will be established and maintained. Members on the Inactive Membership Roll are ineligible to vote on issues before the church or to be elected to any office of the church. Members will be placed on the Inactive Membership Roll due to one or more of the following reasons:

1. Long periods of absence except in the case of providential hindrance.
2. Unknown whereabouts.
3. Loss of contact.
4. Affiliation with a non-Baptist Church without requesting discontinuance of membership with this church.

Inactive Membership Roll candidates shall be selected and presented by one or more of the active deacons at any conference. Placement of a candidate on the Inactive Membership Roll shall require a majority vote of the active members present.

Inactive members (those whose names have been placed on the Inactive Membership Roll) may be restored to active membership by their attendance and participation or upon their own request in cases involving providential hindrance.

SECTION 6. DISCIPLINE

It shall be the practice of Toonigh Baptist Church to emphasize to its members that all reasonable measures will be taken to assist any troubled member. The Pastor, deacons, and qualified elder members will be available for counsel, guidance, and encouragement. Redemption rather than rebuke or punishment must be the intent of all disciplinary measures.

Should some serious condition arise which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the Pastor and deacons will pursue all reasonable measures to resolve the problem in accordance with the guidance of Matthew 18: 15-35. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a three-fourths majority vote of the active members present will be required to declare the offending member to be no longer in the

membership of the church. All such proceedings must be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness, forbearance and restraint.

The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon request by the excluded person, and by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

II. CHURCH OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

SECTION 1. CHURCH OFFICERS

The officers of the church shall be the Pastor, other staff, teachers, deacons, church council, moderator, clerk, treasurer, trustees, and corporate officers, all of whom must be members of this church.

1. PASTOR

1.1 Responsibilities – The Pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The Pastor will lead the congregation and the church staff to perform their designated tasks in the achievement of the church's mission and objectives, in the proclamation of the gospel, and in the care and ministry to church and community members. The Pastor shall have oversight of the congregation and shall minister to the church at all regular and appointed times for worship and service, and to individual members whenever required and possible. He shall be the church moderator and shall preside at all meetings of the church except as hereafter stipulated. He shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees of this church.

1.2 Pastor Selection – The Pastor shall be chosen and called by the church for an indefinite term whenever a vacancy in the position occurs. A Pastor Selection Committee shall be elected by the church at large to seek a suitable pastor. This committee will be composed of five persons selected by the following procedure: At a regular Sunday morning service, each church member will be permitted to nominate, in writing, up to five choices for membership on the Pastor Selection Committee. Nomination forms will

be collected and counted by the Deacons or Church Council. Those five willing to serve church members receiving the most nominations will constitute the Pastor Selection Committee. The Pastor Selection Committee shall, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, seek out the man to fill the vacant Pastor position. They shall bring to the church, for consideration, only one man at a time. Their recommendation shall constitute a nomination. One week's notice must be given to the church before a prospective pastor is brought to the church on view of a call. The election shall be held at a special called conference following a Sunday morning trial sermon. A call may be extended only after a secret ballot election with three-fourths of the active member present voting in favor of the action.

- 1.3 Termination of the Pastor – Termination of a pastor's services to Toonigh Baptist Church may be by resignation or dismissal. The Pastor may terminate his services by giving a two week (or more) notice of his resignation. The church may dismiss the Pastor for any reason, but only after a three-fourths majority vote of active members present during a special called conference at which not less than thirty percent of the active membership is present and over which the Church Council President shall preside as moderator pro tem. At least one-fourth of the active membership must have signed a petition calling for vote of dismissal. . The vote shall be by secret ballot. Salary and compensation shall cease on the effective date of resignation or dismissal, unless the church elects to extend compensation beyond that date. Prior to the start of any action to dismiss the Pastor, the Deacons may call for a Pastor vote of confidence to provide guidance as to the best course of action for the church.

2. OTHER STAFF

Other church staff members may be recommended to the church by the Pastor and/or the Church Council. Services and compensation may begin upon majority vote during Church Conference. Staff members' duties will be prescribed by written position descriptions. Compensation will be as budgeted and authorized by the church in conference. Termination may be by resignation or dismissal. Resignation must be preceded by a two week (or more) notice. Dismissal may be recommended by the Pastor and /or Church Council and acted upon by the

church in any regular or called conference. Dismissal of staff members other than the Pastor will require a majority vote. A two week notice of termination will be given and compensation will cease on the termination date unless the church elects otherwise.

In the event that a staff member cannot support the Pastor due to irreconcilable differences and the Pastor is desired by the church, the staff member shall resign for the good of the church.

3. CORPORATE OFFICERS

The Corporate Officers, as registered with the State of Georgia, shall be elected by the church after nomination by the nominating committee and/or the church at large. They may succeed themselves indefinitely. The Corporate Officers shall also serve as Trustees for the church. Corporate Officers must have been members of the church a minimum of one year to be eligible for election to those offices. The Trustees/Corporate Officers shall act as legal custodians of the property of the church and will take all necessary measures for its protection, maintenance, and management. The Trustees shall be responsible for the purchase and sale of real property and the creation of debts and obligations binding upon the church, but only after receiving a majority vote of approval by the active members present in a regular or special Church conference. The following Corporate Officers shall be elected:

- 3.1 President – to be elected to one year term.
- 3.2 Secretary – to be elected to one year term.
- 3.3 Treasurer – to be elected to one year term. (The Corporate Treasurer and Church Treasurer shall be the same.)

4. GENERAL OFFICERS

The General Officers shall be filled annually from nominees from the nominating committee and/or the church at large. Election shall be by majority vote. The following offices shall constitute the General Officers.

- 4.1 Church Clerk – responsible for maintaining the church membership roll (active and inactive), requesting letters of recommendation from other Baptist Churches for prospective members who have requested membership on promise of letter, issuing letters of recommendation for departed members upon request from another church, taking minutes of church meetings, and preparing and sending the annual Church Letter to the association.
- 4.2 Church Treasurer – responsible for the receipt, deposit, disbursement and accounting of church funds. The Church Treasurer shall be responsible for preparation of the proposed annual Church Budget and for conducting all banking activities of the church. The Treasurer or his/her designee shall ensure the distribution of offering envelopes.
- 4.3 Recording Secretary – responsible for the maintenance of records of the receipt of tithes and offering and for providing notices of individual donations to all members at the end of each calendar year.

5. MODERATOR

The Pastor shall normally serve as Moderator. At such times that the Pastor's absence or the business at hand necessitates that the Pastor temporarily step aside as Moderator, a Moderator Pro Tem will be elected. The Pastor will resume the roll of Moderator at the earliest possible time thereafter. The Moderator shall preside over Church Conferences and shall lead in the conduct of the business of the church in conference.

SECTION 2. DEACONS

1. Qualifications – A deacon or candidate for deacon shall be a man who qualifies for the office of deacon according to the New Testament Scriptures of Acts 6: 3 and I Timothy 3: 8-13. He shall have been elected to service by this church and ordained by this or another church of like faith and order. He shall be a tither and shall have been an active member of this church for at least one year prior to election. Unless providentially hindered, he shall attend worship services and deacon meetings regularly.

2. Number and Term of Office – The church shall seek to maintain a minimum of four deacons for the first 200 church members and two additional deacons for every 100 church members over 200. Each deacon shall serve a three year term. To the extent practical, the terms shall be staggered so that one third of the deacons rotate off active deacon service each year. Deacons elected to serve the remaining period of vacated terms will serve only the remaining portion of that term. Deacons may not serve more than two successive active terms but may be reelected to active service after a one year inactive period.
3. Nomination – Nominations for active deacon service shall be completed each year by the first Sunday in September. Each church member will be given an opportunity to nominate, in writing, a number of men equal to the number of vacancies to be filled that year. Qualified men (ordained or not) may be nominated. The active deacon fellowship will evaluate and interview all nominees for qualification and willingness to serve and return to the church a list of qualified and willing nominees.
4. Election – The election of deacons shall take place not later than the first Sunday in October. Secret ballots will be cast by those active church members present. Each member may cast votes for as many men as the number of vacancies to be filled. The men receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected. The ballots shall be counted by the deacons. In the absence of elected deacons, the Church Council shall count the ballots.
5. Ordination – Members elected to the office of deacon, that have not been previously ordained, shall be ordained by the church at the earliest convenient time.
6. Duties – Deacons are to be servants of the church, assisting the Pastor in the various ministries of the church, including ministries to church and community members experiencing spiritual, emotional, financial, physical, or social difficulty. Deacons should always be ready and willing to perform any and all services which will relieve the Pastor of burdens and allow him to devote more time and energy to the task of oversight and preaching. Deacons must actively and aggressively lead the church in the accomplishment of the mission and objectives of the church.

SECTION 3 – CHURCH COUNCIL

The Church Council shall serve the church by leading in planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, and evaluating the activities and programs of the church and its organizations. The President of the Council shall be nominated by the nominating committee and elected by the Church. The council shall recommend to the church suggested strategies and objectives, monitor action plans to achieve the objectives, and evaluate the effectiveness of progress toward accomplishment of the objectives. The council will recommend policies, procedures, programs, plans and organizations to the church. The council will also maintain a Church Calendar of events. The members of the Church Council are: Trustee President, Sunday School Director, Woman's Missionary Union Director, Chairman of Deacons, and Treasurer. The Pastor and other staff shall act as ex-officio members of the Church Council. Other elected and non-elected leaders of the church may be requested to participate in Church Council activities in consulting capacities. All matters agreed upon by the council which call for action not already approved by the church shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

SECTION 4 – Committees

The standing committees of the church shall be elected annually from nominees from the Nominating Committee and/or the church at large. Ad hoc committees may be formed and staffed by the Moderator. The purpose, responsibilities, and duties of all standing committees shall be prescribed in the Policies and Procedures Manual. The following standing committees are established:

1. Nominating Committee (Church Council)
2. Music Committee
3. Benevolent Committee (Deacons)
4. Building and Grounds Committee
5. Ushers and Greeting Committee
6. Kitchen and Fellowship Committee
7. Nursery Committee
8. Flowers and Memorials Committee
9. Budget Committee

III. CHURCH ORDINANCES

SECTION 1 – BAPTISM

This church shall receive for baptism any person who has received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly at any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Jesus Christ as Lord. Scriptural baptism is considered to be as follows:

1. Purpose – Baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and by following His example and command, one who is baptized signifies his or her own regeneration and resurrection.
2. Mode – Baptism is immersion in water. Except for persons suffering severe incapacitation, all candidates for baptism will be immersed.
3. Administration – The Pastor or any other ordained male member approved by the church shall administer the ordinance of baptism for the church.
4. Manner – The ordinance of baptism shall be conducted reverently, worshipfully, and with thanksgiving and praise.

SECTION 2 – THE LORD’S SUPPER

The Lord’s Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby the congregation engages in self examination and recommitment. Through the partaking of the elements (bread and the fruit of the vine), the congregation remembers the death of Jesus Christ and anticipates His second coming.

1. The Lord’s Supper shall be observed at least quarterly.
2. The Lord’s Supper may be observed in either the Sunday morning or evening worship service or on other special occasions as desired.
3. The Pastor and deacons (or in the absence of deacons, selected ordained and/or worthy men) shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord’s Supper.
4. The Lord’s Super is open to all born-again believers.

IV. CHURCH MEETINGS

SECTION 1 – WORSHIP SERVICES

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening (as decided by Church Council) for preaching, instruction, evangelism, singing, prayer, and praise. Revival and other church worship meetings may be scheduled and announced via Church Calendar, bulletin, or other means. Worship services shall be open to the entire membership and visitors, whether prospective members or not, and shall be conducted under the direction of the Pastor or his designee.

SECTION 2 – BUSINESS CONFERENCES

The church will conduct regular or called business conferences to consider matters requiring consideration, action, or awareness by the church membership. Special conferences may be called by the moderator or the Church Council President and will be preceded by announcements in at least three regular worship services prior to the called conference. Conferences shall be presided over by the Pastor acting in the capacity of moderator or by a moderator pro tem in his absence. A quorum shall be considered to be those in attendance unless the number is obviously too small to represent the wishes of the church. ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER, REVISED and the Church Rules of Decorum are the authority for parliamentary procedure for all business conferences.

V. CHURCH FINANCES

SECTION 1 – FISCAL YEAR

The church's fiscal year shall run concurrently with the church year which begins on October 1 and ends on September 30.

SECTION 2 – ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

All funds received for any and all purposes and from all sources shall be accounted for by the Treasurer and shall be properly recorded in the financial records of the church according to church-approved bookkeeping/accounting procedures. The Treasurer (or the Treasurer's designee) and at least one deacon shall count, document and verify all offerings. The requisitioning, vouchering, and validating of purchases will be accomplished in accordance with standard operating procedures which will be published and maintained.

SECTION 3 – BUDGET

The Treasurer, in consultation with the appointed budget committee, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an annual general operating budget, indicating the funds needed and sought for operating purposes including local expenses as well as missions. The approved budget constitutes spending authority without further church authorization. Designated offerings will be kept to a minimum with all tithes going to the general operating budget.

VI. Policies And Procedures Manual

A Policies and Procedures Manual will be developed, published, and maintained to define church policy, procedures, instructions, plans, and programs. Procedures depicting lines of responsibility, organization, accounting, conduct of ordinances, position descriptions, business conference meeting times, and all other appropriate subjects will be provided. The manual shall be kept in the Church office and shall be available to all members. The Church Council/Deacons and the Pastor shall review the Policies and Procedures Manual annually for currency and correctness. Additions, deletions, revisions, and changes to Policies and Procedures Manual may be suggested by any active member or committee. Proposed changes will be submitted to the Church Council/Deacons for review and approval. The Church Council/Deacons will, in turn, submit recommendations to the church for approval.

VII. AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

Changes to the bylaws may be made at any regular business conference of the church provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous conference and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. Passage of amendments shall require a three-fourths majority of church members present and voting in favor of the amendment.