

# **WALTON COMMUNITY CHURCH BY-LAWS**

*February 14, 2018*

## **Preamble**

We the members of Walton Community Church, A Reformed Baptist Fellowship, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves:

## **Article I Name**

The name of this church shall be Walton Community Church, Monroe Georgia.

## **Article II Purpose**

The purpose of this church is to glorify the God of the Scriptures in promoting His worship, edifying saints, and evangelizing sinners. To this end we are committed to proclaiming the whole counsel of God, especially His glorious Gospel of Grace in Jesus Christ, throughout the world and to defending the "faith once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3)

## **Article III Articles of Faith**

We do hereby adopt as a reasonable expression of our faith the 1689 London Confession of Faith (with footnotes stipulated by the 2009 board of Elders). This confession of faith gives a concise statement of biblical doctrine. In no way is it equal to the infallible authority of the Word of God. Nevertheless, it is a guide to us in controversy, a confirmation in faith, and a means of edification in righteousness. To help our membership in its grasp of the detail in this Confession we have adopted a Statement of Faith which is a more concise representation of the Confession. The Statement of Faith will always be subordinate to the Confession in all matters of faith and practice within the church. By having this approach the members of our church will have a compact body of Divine truth and, by means of Scriptural proofs, will be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in them. (I Peter 3:15)

## **Article IV Membership & Discipline**

### **SECTION 1. REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP**

Any person who professes repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been baptized upon profession of their faith, and who, after attending the required New Members class, agrees to submit sweetly, live peaceably, and respond teachably to the doctrines, aims, and government of this church shall be eligible for membership. The membership requirements of persons whose relationship to the church involves abnormal circumstances (e.g. incapacitated or handicapped individuals, Christian workers, etc.) shall be determined in each case by the action of the Eldership.

Those who meet the above mentioned requirements may request membership to one of the Elders. The Elders shall then fix a time and place for meeting with the applicant who shall attend and be questioned as to his or her basic Christian experience, doctrinal beliefs, and seriousness of intention to wholeheartedly support the total ministry of this church.

### **SECTION 2. PROCEDURE IN RECEIVING NEW MEMBERS**

Applicants who have met the requirements for membership shall be presented to the congregation at a regular Sunday Service. The applicants will verbally vow to accept the Church Covenant and this vow will be affirmed by the membership present.

### **SECTION 3. MEMBERSHIP RECORD**

In order to keep an accurate membership roll, there shall be an annual review of the membership roll by the Elders prior to the Annual Business Meeting. All who have been inactive for whatever cause will be classified as such and will be notified of this action.

### **SECTION 4. CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

The discipline of the church shall be exercised according to the following principles:

**A. Formative Discipline:** The sanctifying influence of formative discipline as taught in I Corinthians 12:12-27 should be well understood. Every member will then be satisfied with his place, and we shall all grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. By such observance can the church build up its members and use the talents of both old and young. All who have been redeemed should live for Him and the Church and not for themselves.

**B. Corrective Discipline:** Corrective discipline implies disorderly conduct or heretical doctrine that is opposed to the church's life and faith. Reasonable efforts shall be made to

clear up difficulties and remove offenses before any action is taken. No offense shall be brought before the church until the instructions of Christ have first been followed (Matthew 5:23, 24; 18:15, 16). Corrective discipline has for its aim the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the church, and the spiritual growth of the offender.

## **SECTION 5. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

**A. Voluntary Withdrawal:** Either by verbal consent or by letter from the Eldership shall dismissal be granted to members provided they are in good standing and not subject to or under discipline at the time of application.

**B. By Exclusion:** A member who is habitually absent from the stated meetings of this church without just cause, or refuses to support the work and worship of this church, will be considered not in good standing and his membership may be terminated at the discretion of the eldership.

**C. By Excommunication:** It is right and in harmony with the Scriptures for the congregation, upon determination of the Eldership, to exclude from this fellowship any person who persists in holding false or heretical doctrine; or who obviously and persistently lives inconsistently with his Christian profession; or who lives in violation of the law or public morals; or who walks disorderly; or any person who persists in disturbing the unity and peace of this church. (See Matt. 18:15ff; I Cor. 5:1ff; II Thess. 3:6, 11-15; Rom. 16:17)

## **SECTION 6. RESTORATION TO CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

The right to exclude or excommunicate persons or the withdrawal of fellowship (II Thess. 3:6) is in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament (Matt. 18:16, 17). The Apostolic church also had a right to restore those persons who gave satisfactory evidence of being penitent (II Cor. 2:6-8). The object of the discipline having been accomplished, the Eldership shall have the right and privilege of restoring the penitent to membership.

## **Article V Ordinances**

We believe that there are two ordinances that Christians are exhorted to observe, namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe Baptism has no saving merit, but that after one believes and is saved, Baptism by immersion is the next step to show the world that he is now identified with Christ, who died, was buried and rose again. Baptism is observed once and is a sign of identification and a testimony to newness of life. The Lord's Supper is a communion with the risen Savior and a remembrance of His atoning work on the cross and is observed each Lord's Day.

## **Article VI Office Bearers**

### **SECTION 1. GENERAL STATEMENT**

Jesus Christ alone is the Head of His Church. However, as Head, He has ordained that individual churches should be blessed with the spiritual rule and ministry of special office bearers. Therefore, it is the duty of the church to seek to discover those to whom Christ the Lord has imparted the necessary gifts for office bearing, and having formally recognized such by common suffrage, to set them apart by united prayer and to submit to their rule and ministry. Christ has ordained that the administration of local churches is to be by elders and deacons.

### **SECTION 2. ELDERS**

**A. Qualifications and Responsibilities:** Elders shall exercise the oversight of the church in all its ministries and functions. Anyone desiring the office of Elder must evidence the personal, domestic, and ministerial qualifications as set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and in Titus 1:5-9. Elders must seek to discharge their duties as set forth in the Scriptures, particularly such passages as Acts 20:17, 28ff, I Peter 5:1-4, and Hebrews 13:17. While every Elder bears spiritual rule and must be "apt to teach", some will be more engaged in formal and public teaching, while others will be more exclusively engaged in the details of ruling. (See 1 Timothy 5:17) Elders are subject to each other, none having superior authority.

**B. Function:** The governing of the church and the conducting of its business, the management and control of its finances and property, real and personal, and the general supervision of its work shall, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, be vested in the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders may, at its option, delegate specific responsibilities to the Deacon Board, other office bearers, or members acting under the direction of and submission to the Elders.

**C. Organization:** The Board of Elders shall elect a Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary. The Chairman shall serve as Chief Executive Officer for the church and shall preside at all Board meetings, which are to be conducted according to the Roberts Parliamentary Rules of Order. The Vice Chairman shall assume the duties of the Chairman in his absence. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of meetings and shall attach to said minutes all official correspondence with relation to the Board. He shall be charged with the duty of giving proper notice to the congregation of annual and special meetings.

**D. Meetings:** The Board shall meet monthly at regularly scheduled intervals to discuss and act upon the general business of the church. Meeting dates and times should be determined by the Board and made available to the membership. There may be times when it is necessary to hold special meeting of the Board which will be determined as

needed. Any Elder or member in good standing may request a special meeting of the Board. A majority of the Board membership shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting church business. Whenever the business of the Board concerns excommunication of members, dismissing of Elders or Deacons, compensation for the Elders, calling of a minister of the gospel from outside the church, buying or selling of property or buildings, building new facilities, relocation of the church from its current address or planting a mission church out of this local church, a quorum shall then be a simple majority of the Board. All decisions of the Board of Elders shall be by unanimous vote of the Elders present. Any regular Elder meeting shall be open to members in good standing of the church unless necessity for the purpose of confidentiality dictates that the meeting should be closed. This determination is at the discretion of the Eldership.

### **SECTION 3. DEACONS**

**A. Qualifications and Responsibilities:** Deacons are responsible for administering the business and secular affairs of the church. This is to be done with spiritual grace and in cooperation with and subjection to the Eldership. The Deacons are to minister mercy toward their Care Group members and those in physical need, especially widows and orphans. Deacons must evidence the qualifications of the office as set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13.

**B. Organization:** The Deacon Board will elect a Chairman and other officers as approved by the Eldership. The Chairman shall direct the activities of the Deacon Board, moderate meetings, and be the liaison with the Elder Board.

**C. Meetings:** The Deacon Board shall meet monthly at regularly scheduled intervals; meeting dates and times should be determined by the Board and made available to the membership. The Elders will attend these meetings when possible. It is permissible for the Deacon Board to meet without the Elders. The Deacon meetings shall be open to all members in good standing who wish to attend.

### **SECTION 4. OTHER OFFICE BEARERS**

**A. Church Secretary:** The Elder Board shall appoint a Church Secretary according to the laws of the State of Georgia. The Church Secretary shall be responsible for recording the minutes of any annual or special business meeting. This will be the only responsibility of this position.

**B. Church Treasurer:** The Elder Board shall appoint a Church Treasurer. The Church Treasurer shall be responsible for all funds collected and distributed by the church, implement and monitor compliance with the annual capital and operating budget approved by the Elder Board, and ensure that the financial obligations of the church are met. The Church Treasurer shall support the work of the Finance Committee and participate in the preparation of the budget.

**C. Finance Committee:** The Elder Board shall appoint a Finance Committee to oversee the Church Treasurer and church finances. The Finance Committee shall conduct quarterly audits of church receivables and payables, make quarterly financial reports to the Board of Elders, prepare the annual capital and operating budgets of the church for approval by the Elders, and recommend matters of fiscal policy for approval by the Board of Elders. The Finance Committee shall give a financial report at each annual business meeting.

## **SECTION 5. APPOINTMENT AND REMOVAL OF OFFICE BEARERS**

**A.** The appointment of Elders and Deacons for office within the local church is the responsibility of the local church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Lord's appointment is recognized both by the inward conviction of the individual involved, and by approval of the church observing the possession of those gifts and graces required by Scripture for the office concerned. The existing Elders shall recognize those who are already functioning in the use of their gifts and bring such before the church for recognition. All officers shall have been a member of the church for a period of at least one year before being placed in nomination.

**B.** The recognition of office bearers is a matter of such importance that it should never be dealt with without much prayerful waiting upon God and an honest perusal of the relevant passages of Scripture and a frank evaluation of those who are being considered as potential office bearers. Each member of the congregation has a spiritual responsibility to be intelligently informed regarding the above mentioned matters. It should be the desire of the congregation to come to one mind regarding those office bearers to whom they must submit in the Lord. Nominations for Elders and Deacons shall be submitted by the congregation of Walton Community Church to the Board of Elders for their consideration and examination.

**C.** Following the final recognition of an office bearer, there shall be a Service of Ordination, at which time the office bearer(s) shall be formally set apart for his responsibilities by the prayer of the whole church and the laying on hands of the Eldership. All Elders and Deacons will be confirmed annually by the Eldership and announced at the business meeting.

**D.** An office bearer may be removed from office should he neglect his duty, be guilty of sinful behavior, fall into error, or hold views contrary to our confession and constitution. If an accusation is made against an office bearer, the directions of I Timothy 5:19-21 are to be followed. The Elders are to approach the matter with great caution, firmness and impartiality.

**E.** An Elder unable to fulfill his commitments should relinquish his office. Various unforeseen circumstances may render a man incapable of adequately handling the requirements of the Eldership. Under such circumstances, with the approval of the other Elders, he should step down from service.

F. In the event a church office becomes vacant during the interim year, the Board of Elders shall have the authority to fill such vacancy.

## **Article VII Congregational Meetings**

### **SECTION 1. GENERAL STATEMENT**

All Members should regard their presence at a duly called congregational meeting with the same seriousness with which they would regard their attendance at a stated service of worship. The Lord is present in power at the gathering together of the church and therefore all meetings should be carried out in a spirit of worship and unity. Every church meeting shall begin and end with prayer. Congregational meetings of the church are confidential and therefore members should speak of these matters only to fellow-members.

### **SECTION 2. NOTICE OF MEETINGS**

Notice of all congregational meetings shall be given at regular worship services on the two successive Sundays immediately prior to the meetings. In an emergency, a meeting may be called on shorter notice by notifying each member of the time, place, and purpose of the congregational meeting.

### **SECTION 3. NUMBER OF MEETINGS**

Congregational meetings shall be held when needed for the reception of reports and the transaction of such other business as may properly be brought before the congregation. A congregational meeting shall be held as soon as possible after the close of each calendar year and shall be called the Annual Business Meeting. The regular confirmation of officers shall be announced at the Annual Business Meeting. The annual budget shall be presented for approval by a majority vote of the membership present at the meeting. Members voting must be past their 16th birthday.

### **SECTION 4. METHOD OF CALLING MEETINGS**

It shall be the right and responsibility of the Board of Elders to call all congregational meetings. The Board of Elders shall arrange the details of all congregational meetings and see that all possible preparation for their successful conduct is made. Nothing shall be brought before the church at church meetings except through the Eldership.

### **SECTION 5. QUORUM FOR TRANSACTION OF BUSINESS**

All members present at any properly called congregational meeting shall be considered a quorum.

## **Article VIII Amendments**

From time to time the Eldership may determine that amendments to the by-laws are necessary. Notice of the proposed amendment(s) shall be given to the membership of the church in the following manner: an Elder shall announce the proposal from the pulpit in the regular Sunday morning service for two successive Sundays prior to the date of said meeting. In addition, notice shall be published 2 weeks prior to the date of said meeting. Any amendments to these by-laws may be adopted by a majority vote of those members present, who are past their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, at any annual or special business meeting.