

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS  
OF  
MARANATHA BAPTIST CHURCH OF PLAINS, INC.

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

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

ARTICLE I  
NAME

This body shall be known as the Maranatha Baptist Church of Plains, Inc.

ARTICLE II  
CHURCH COVENANT

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

We pledge, 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 spirituality and prosperity; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We promise to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk humbly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our behavior; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to use our influence to combat the abuse of drugs and the spread of pornography; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We promise to watch over one another in ~~brotherly~~ [Note new word] Christian love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian 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 vow that when we remove from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

### ARTICLE III OBJECTIVES

To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in our church, community, and throughout the world.

To be a worshiping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership.

To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellow believers.

To help people experience a growing knowledge of God

To be a church which ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and the world in Jesus' name.

To be a church whose purpose is to be Christ like in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the lordship of Christ.

"Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love" (1 Cor. 16:13-14 RSV).

### \* ARTICLE IV STATEMENT OF BASIC BELIEFS

The Holy Bible is the inspired word of God and the basis for our beliefs. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of The Baptist Faith and Message adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963. We voluntarily band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper.

### ARTICLE V POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

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

The church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Friendship Baptist Association and the Georgia Baptist Convention affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

## BYLAWS

### ARTICLE I CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

#### Section 1. General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist Church under the lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

#### Section 2. Candidacy

Any person may offer himself/ [Note new added word] herself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:

- (1) By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
- (2) By promise of a letter or recommendation from another Baptist Church of like faith and order.
- (3) By statement when letter is unobtainable due to extenuating circumstances.
- (4) By restoration after withdrawal of fellowship of said church upon evidence of repentance. (See Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:32; and Matthew 18:21-35.)
- (5) Associate member. By request of Christians of same faith or another denomination, for associate membership while residing in our community.

Should there be dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor and membership committee for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty days. A three-fourths vote of those church members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

#### Section 3. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- (1) Death of the member.
- (2) Dismissal to another Baptist Church.
- (3) Exclusion by action of this church (See Matthew 18:17.) Exclusion shall be by a three-fourths vote of those church members present and voting.
- (4) Erasure upon request or proof of membership in a church of another denomination.

#### Section 4. Voting Rights of Members

Every active member of the church, [Note new line] but not associate members, shall be entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, providing the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting.

An inactive member is a person carrying on a normal routine of daily activity and yet omits reasonable attendance at church services for a period of six consecutive months.

#### Section 5. Discipline (See Matthew 18:15-17.)

(1) It shall be the basic purpose of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor and members of the church are available for counsel and guidance. Redemption rather than punishment should be the guideline which governs the attitude of one member toward another. (See Galatians 6:1-2; Matthew 18:21-35.)

(2) Should some serious condition exist which would cause a member to become a liability to the general welfare of the church, every reasonable measure will be taken by the pastor and the membership committee to resolve the problem in accord with Matthew 18. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance. (See Galatians 5:22-26.) But finding that the welfare of the church will be best served by the exclusion of the member, the church may take this action by a three-fourths vote of the members present and voting at a meeting called for said purpose; and the church may proceed to declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church. (See Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-7A; and 1 Corinthians 6:2.)

### ARTICLE II CHURCH OFFICERS

The officers of this church shall be the pastor, moderator, clerk, treasurer, trustees and such church staff as shall be added at a future time.

#### Section 1. Pastor

The pastor is the under-shepherd of the flock. (See Pastorals: 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.) The pastor is responsible to the church for leading the church to determine its mission and move toward the attainment of its mission. Supremely, his [Note new word] the pastor's duty is to be a faithful interpreter of God's Word both to the believer and the unbeliever. He [Note new word] The pastor is to serve as an enabler or equipper to involve church members in the work of the church so that its divine mission can be achieved. (See Ephesians 4:11-16.) He [Note new word] The pastor shall preside at all meetings of the church.

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His [Note new word] The election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given.

A pastor selection committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and its recommendations will constitute a nomination. Any member has the privilege of making other nominations according to the policy established by the church. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one name at a time. Election shall be by ballot. An affirmative vote of three-fourths of those members present and voting shall be necessary for a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his [Note new word] the pastor's request or the church's request. The pastor shall give at least two weeks notice at the time of resignation before terminating his responsibilities as pastor.

## Section 2. Moderator

The church shall elect annually a moderator as its presiding officer. In the absence of the moderator, the clerk shall call the church to order and the acting moderator shall be elected by those members present.

The moderator will be responsible for maintaining order at all times in said business meeting. Should disorder prevail, the moderator is empowered to adjourn said meeting without consent of the membership body.

## Section 3. Clerk

The clerk shall be elected at the annual conference in August for the term of one year. Duties shall be:

- (1) Record minutes of church business meetings.
- (2) Preserve records for present and future use.
- (3) Correspond with other churches and members.
- (4) Provide records for church history.
- (5) Prepare annual letter to the association.
- (6) And any other pertinent matters.

## Section 4. Treasurer

The treasurer shall be elected at the annual conference in August for the term of one year and shall be bonded at the discretion of the church. The treasurer shall give regular and itemized reports to the church. [Note New Sentence] **The treasurer will not be responsible for depositing the tithes, offerings, and other monies in designated bank.**

## Section 5. Trustees

Three or more trustees elected by the church will hold in trust the church property. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of trustees are required. Trustees shall serve on a rotating basis, with one new trustee being elected annually. The initial trustees shall serve terms

of one year, two years, and three years respectively, and all successive trustees will be elected by a three year term.

#### Section 6. Church Staff

The church shall call or employ such staff members as the church shall need. A job description should be written when the need for staff members is determined. Vocational staff members other than the pastor shall be recommended to the church by the pastor and employed by church action. At least two weeks notice at the time of resignation shall be given. The secretary and custodian shall likewise be recommended to the church by the pastor and employed by church action.

#### Section 7. Deacons

The church shall elect six members to serve as deacons. Each deacon shall serve for a term of three calendar years, shall rotate off at the end of that term, and shall then be ineligible to serve for one year. A list shall be provided to the membership each year from which two new deacons shall be elected on the first Sunday of December. Members unable to be present at the election may use the list to cast an absentee ballot. ~~Deacons shall be at least 21 years old, shall be resident members of this church for at least one year, and shall meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13.~~ revised on 6-11-17 - see on back

### ARTICLE III COMMITTEES

All church committee members shall be recommended by the nominating committee and elected by the church unless further indicated in the by-laws.

**Note: Committee sections have been renumbered so as to be alphabetical.**

#### Section 1. Baptismal Committee

The Baptismal Committee shall consist of at least three members. It shall be the duty of this committee to assist the pastor and candidates in all preparations for the baptismal service. This is to include preparing the candidates to enter and leave the water, clean and fill the baptistry, drain and clean after each use, and cooperate with the pastor in changes that should be made.

#### Section 2. Benevolence Committee

The Benevolence Committee shall consist of at least three members. It shall be the duty of this committee to seek out and minister in the spirit of brotherly [Note new word] Christian love to any who are in need, giving preference to church members. The committee should be made aware of any needs both in the church and community. This includes providing flowers and/or cards for sick and bereaved members. Bills approved for payment by the committee are to be submitted to the church treasurer for payment.

Voted on 1-11-17

**Motion Regarding Amendment to Article II, Section 7 of the By-Laws of  
Maranatha Baptist Church of Plains, Inc.**

I move that Article II, Section 7 of the By-Laws of Maranatha Baptist Church of Plains, Inc. be amended so as to delete the last sentence of said Section 7 regarding "Deacons" and adopt, in lieu thereof, the following:

A person may be elected to serve as a deacon so long as, at the time of such election, such person meets the following qualifications:

- (i) The person must be at least 21 years of age;
- (ii) The person must have been a regular member of the Church for at least one (1) year prior to the date of his election as deacon or must have been an associate member of the Church (as defined in these by-laws) for at least five (5) years who has joined the Church as a regular member prior to the date of his election as deacon; and
- (iii) The person must have demonstrated a love for Christ and Maranatha, and must meet the Biblical qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

### Section 3. Building and Grounds Committee

The Building and Grounds Committee shall consist of at least three members. This committee shall have the responsibility of outside maintenance and clean up for the buildings and grounds. When assistance is needed, this committee is to make a request to the church for help.

### Section 4. Clean-up Committee

The Clean-up Committee shall consist of at least two members. This committee shall secure volunteers to clean and maintain the church building(s) and grounds ~~and shall maintain a schedule listing persons on duty~~ [Note new line] for each 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the year.

### Section 5. Constitution and Bylaws Committee

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee shall consist of at least four members. This committee shall prepare and present for church consideration a written constitution and bylaws. This committee shall provide for periodic review and updating of the constitution and bylaws.

### Section 6. Counting Committee

The Counting Committee shall be composed of at least four members and have the responsibility of counting and depositing the tithes, offerings, and other monies in designated bank. The committee shall keep an accurate record of its proceedings. [Note new sentence] **There should always be at least 2 people counting.**

### Section 7. Finance Committee

The Finance Committee shall consist of at least three members. This committee shall have supervision of the preparation and recommendation to the church of an operating budget for the coming church year. This budget shall cover all anticipated phases of the church's work and ministry. This committee shall review the finances of the church each quarter and make recommendations for adjustments in the budget as the need arises.

### Section 8. Flower Committee

The Flower Committee shall consist of at least three members. This committee shall be responsible for securing, arranging, and disposing of floral arrangements for church services and other [Note new word] church functions. Bills approved for payment by the committee are to be submitted to the church treasurer for payment.

### Section 9. Historical Committee

The Historical Committee shall consist of at least three members. This committee is to preserve and use the historical records of the church. The committee is especially concerned



with gathering and preserving available church records, recording full and accurate records and using the records to help members understand and appreciate their heritage and mission.

#### Section 10. Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality Committee shall consist of at least five members. This committee shall be responsible for coordinating all social functions such as showers, church meals, and meals for bereaved families.

#### Section 11. Lord's Supper Committee

The Lord's Supper Committee shall consist of at least three members. It shall be the duty of this committee to see that all necessary preparations are made to observe the said ordinance. This includes the securing, preparation, and upkeep of materials used in commemorating the Lord's Supper.

#### Section 12. Membership Committee

The Membership Committee shall consist of at least three members. This committee shall interview all new members at the discretion of the pastor. This committee shall have general charge of the membership rolls. This committee shall make reports to the membership as needed.

#### Section 13. Music Committee

The Music Committee shall consist of at least four members. This committee shall maintain an interest in matters pertaining to the choir, music of the church, care of the instruments and other matters of a musical nature.

#### Section 14. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of at least three members. The committee members shall serve on a rotating basis. The responsibility of this committee shall be to select, interview and enlist the church organizational leaders, general church officers and committees. The Nominating Committee shall present to the church for election all who accept the invitation to serve.

Should a vacancy occur within the year, the Nominating Committee shall be responsible for filling the vacancy as soon as possible as per procedure of paragraph above.

#### Section 15. Usher Committee

The Usher Committee shall consist of at least four members. The ushers are to greet people as they enter and leave the church, seat people at the proper time, and provide bulletin and/or other materials at the time of seating, and receive offerings. The ushers will be attentive to the needs of the congregation and the pastor.

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7-11-12

## **Tape Ministry Committee**

### **Section 15 Tape Ministry Committee**

The Tape Ministry Committee shall consist of five persons:

- The church treasurer
- A secretary
- The sound technician
- A deacon (active or inactive)
- A church member at large.

The committee shall process the recording of Sunday School lessons, duplicate a sufficient quantity, receive orders for copies, mail copies, and be responsible for all funds received. A chairperson shall be elected by the assembled committee membership. A report shall be made to the church at each regular church conference.

## Section 16. Youth Committee

The Youth Committee shall consist of at least two members. This committee shall plan for and execute programs and activities to enhance the Christian experience of young people in the church.

## ~~Section 14. Nursery Committee~~

~~The Nursery Committee shall consist of at least three members. This committee shall be responsible for coordinating all of the activities of the nursery departments and nursery work of the church and supervision of the nursery workers.~~

**Note: The functions of the Nursery Committee have been assumed by the Preschool Coordinator and this section is being deleted.**

## ARTICLE IV PROGRAM SERVICES

### Section 1. General

The workers for the church library and church recreation program services shall be recommended by the church Nominating Committee for election by the church.

### Section 2. Church Library Services

The church library will serve as the resource center for the church. The church librarian will seek to provide and promote the use of printed and audio-visual resources. The librarian will also provide consultation to church leaders and members in the use of printed and audio-visual resources.

### Section 3. Church Recreation Services

The Recreation Committee will serve the church in seeking to meet the recreation needs of members and groups. They will provide recreation activities, consultation, leadership assistance and resources.

## ARTICLE V PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONS

### Section 1. General

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church.

### Section 2. Sunday School

There shall be a Sunday School, divided into departments and classes for all ages and conducted under the direction of the Sunday School Director for the study of God's Word.

The task of the Sunday School shall be to teach the biblical revelation; to perform the functions of the church within its constituency; to provide and to interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

### Section 3. Church Music

There shall be a church music program under the direction of the Music Committee and such officers and/or organizations shall be included as needed.

## ARTICLE VI CHURCH ORDINANCES

### Section 1. Baptism

A person who receives the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith; who professes Him publicly at any worship service; and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord shall be received for baptism.

- (1) Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- (2) Baptism shall be administered by the pastor.  
The Baptismal Committee shall assist in preparation for and observance of baptism.
- (3) Baptism shall be commemorated as an act of worship during any worship service of the church.
- (4) A person professing Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor. If negative interest is determined, he shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

### Section 2. 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, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming. It is obligatory for all baptized believers.

- (1) The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly, preferable the first Sunday of the quarter, or as otherwise scheduled.
- (2) The Lord's Supper Committee shall be responsible for the physical preparations of the Lord's Supper.
- (4) The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the serving of the Lord's Supper.

## ARTICLE VII CHURCH MEETINGS

### Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of Almighty God. These meetings are open to the entire membership of the church and all the people, and shall be led by the direction of the pastor.

## Section 2. Special Services

Revival services and any other church meetings which will be essential in the promotion of the objectives of the church are to be placed on the church calendar.

## Section 3. Regular Business Meetings

Regular business meetings are to be held quarterly on a designated Wednesday night.

## Section 4. Special Business Meetings

A special called business meeting may be held to consider matters of a significant nature. A one-week notice of the subject, date, time, and location must be given for the special called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical.

## Section 5. Quorum

The quorum consists of those members who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

## Section 6. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

# ARTICLE VIII CHURCH FINANCES

## Section 1. Budget

The Finance Committee, in consultation with the treasurer and the pastor, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and other world wide expenses. Offering envelopes will be provided for members' use.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts (tithes and offerings).

Each new member shall therefore be approached by a representative of the Finance Committee for a pledge to the church's unified budget, and at least annually, plans should be put into operation for securing a worthy subscription from each member of the church.

## Section 2. Accounting Procedures

All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the books of the church treasurer, and be properly recorded on the books of the church. The church treasurer shall be bonded at the discretion of the church.

### Section 3. Fiscal Year

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

## ARTICLE IX USE OF CHURCH FACILITIES AND FIXTURES

### Section 1. Weddings

- (1) Couples desiring to use our church facilities when neither are members will be required to pay a nominal fee of \$ 50.00. (The fee may vary according to the economy.)
- (2) When our members use the church, it shall be free insofar as the church buildings, heating, or cooling is concerned, but as a matter of courtesy if additional janitorial service is required, a reasonable gift will be in order for the janitor.
- (3) Wedding Scheduling - The church facilities may be used at any time not conflicting with scheduled services provided they have been cleared with the church office and/or the pastor.
- (4) Alcoholic beverages and smoking are prohibited inside the buildings at all times.

### Section 2. Extra-church Activities

All extra-church activities must be approved by the church upon recommendation of the trustees.

### Section 3. Removal of Fixtures

No chairs, tables, kitchen utensils or other furniture or fixtures shall be loaned or otherwise moved from the church buildings without the approval of the church trustees and/or pastor.

## ARTICLE X MEMORIALS

The church shall have no pews, organs, or other equipment with memorials attached thereto. Memorials are to be recorded in the Book of Memories, to be accessible to all members.

## ARTICLE XI AMENDMENTS

The bylaws may be amended at any regular business meeting of the church by a two thirds vote provided the prepared amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous

meeting, but any article herein may be temporarily suspended to meet an extreme emergency by a unanimous vote of the conference.

ARTICLE XII  
PRIORITY OF THIS WORK

This constitution and these bylaws shall supersede all former actions taken by the congregation and church in matters relating to the same.