

Central Baptist Church
P.O. Box 8005
500 EAST MONTGOMERY STREET
Gaffney, S. C.

Dear Member,

This is your personal copy of the Constitution and By-laws of this locally autonomous and theocratic church. Its purpose is to offer you an insight into the governing, objectives, beliefs, cooperation, and privileges of our fellowship. You are urged to keep this copy in a special place and review its contents on a periodical basis. This will aid you in your relationship to the church family and its fellowship. Central's Constitution and By-laws can be accessed on our website at www.centralbaptistgaffney.com or by request through our church administrator. May the guidance of the Lord be yours as you seek to be an active part of His Work at Central Baptist Church.

Prayerfully,

Rev. Clay Jones

Wayne Bellew

Mary Starnes

Pamela Westbrooks

Casey Wilkins

June 11, 2023

CONSTITUTION

Purpose of Constitution

The purpose of the Central Baptist Church Constitution is to establish the principles of our faith and to govern this body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches. All other or previous constitutions or by-laws are hereby nullified and voided by this act.

Name

This body shall be known as Central Baptist Church of Gaffney, South Carolina, located at 500 East Montgomery Street.

God's Vision for His Church

Acts 2:42, 44 says that the early church in Jerusalem “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And all who believed were together and had all things in common.” The result, v. 47, “And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” Central Baptist Church joyfully submits to the Lord’s vision for His church. We strive to devote ourselves to the Word of God, strengthen our love and fellowship with one another, share commonality in doctrinal beliefs and life necessities, and pray without ceasing. In obedience to Jesus’ Commission (Matt 28:18–20; Acts 1:8), Central aims to equip all members to become disciple-makers as we grow in our knowledge and love for the Lord and one another. Our zeal is to share the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ from our community to the four corners of the globe. We trust that aligning ourselves with the Lord’s vision will bring glory and honor to Him and spiritual and numerical growth to His body (Acts 2:47).

Doctrine: The Baptist Faith and Message 2000

The following statements are the Southern Baptist Convention’s Committee Report on the submission of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 that Central Baptist Church agrees and adheres.

“Baptists cherish and defend religious liberty and deny the right of any secular or religious authority to impose a confession of faith upon a church or body of churches. We honor the principles of soul competency and the priesthood of believers, affirming together both our liberty in Christ and our accountability to each other under the Word of God.”

“Baptist churches, associations, and general bodies have adopted confessions of faith as a witness to the world, and as instruments of doctrinal accountability. We are not embarrassed to state before the world that these are doctrines we hold precious and as essential to the Baptist

tradition of faith and practice. It is the purpose of this statement of faith and message to set forth certain teachings which we believe.”

I. 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.

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.

II. 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 Saviour, 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.

III. 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.

IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, 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 Saviour.

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.

V. 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.

VI. 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.

VII. 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 Saviour, 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.

VIII. 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.

IX. 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.

X. 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.

XI. 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.

XII. 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.

XIII. 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.

XIV. 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.

XV. 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.

XVI. 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.

XVII. 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.

XVIII. 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.

CHARACTER

POLITY

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. All internal groups created and empowered by the church shall report to and be accountable only to the church, unless otherwise specified by church actions.

DOCTRINE

This church receives The Holy Bible as its sole and only authority in matters of faith and practice.

RELATIONSHIP

This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body. It recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptist churches. This church will cooperate with and support the association, the state convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

BY-LAWS

Purpose of By-laws

The purpose of the Central Baptist Church By-laws is to provide structure, organization, and to help maintain continuity and order for operating the church.

GENERAL

This is a sovereign and Theocratic 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 condition of such membership.

Article I CANDIDACY

Any person may offer themselves as a candidate for membership with the willingness to abide by its Constitution, By-laws, and Policy Acts. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any church service. Such candidate may be received in any of the following ways:

A. PROFESSION OF FAITH:

Upon their profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ followed by believer's baptism, according to Scripture.

B. PROMISE OF LETTER:

A letter of recommendation and good standing from a recognized Baptist church of like belief.

C. STATEMENT:

Their personal statement of prior conversion and baptism in a duly recognized church from which a letter is unobtainable.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the Pastor and Deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the quorum of members present and voting shall be required to elect the candidate to membership. The candidate shall be presented, if and only if, the dissension has been fully resolved.

Article II. MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

Candidates for church membership shall be required to attend an informational class or classes so that candidates can become acquainted with the mission and vision of the church. Candidates

will also become acquainted with biblical doctrine, government, and membership responsibilities of this local church.

Article III. RIGHTS OF MEMBERS

Every Member that is in full and faithful standing, not holding a letter of dismissal, or under any restriction can vote in all elections and on all questions and policy acts as submitted to the church in conference. This is provided that the member is present. Such and only may vote in transactions of this church.

RESTRICTIONS refer to a relationship with the church that prohibits a person from having the right to vote in any conference: *INACTIVE*: A person that has not attended any service of the church for a period of six (6) weeks time due to a lack of concern or the breach of fellowship. Their name may be found on the Inactive List of the Church Membership Roll. Additionally, active members must be 16 years of age or older to vote.

Article IV. DUTIES OF MEMBERS

See section in Constitution titled “God’s Vision for His Church” and Article VI of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 for membership expectations.

Article V. DIVISION OF CHURCH ROLL

Central’s membership is divided into the categories that will best describe the status of their relationship to this congregation. The roll shall be divided as thus:

A. ACTIVE:

This roll contains the names of those individuals that are fulfilling their responsibilities as members of this church. They are faithful in their attendance, prayers, and support of this local congregation. They are given the full rights and privileges becoming their status.

B. *INACTIVE*:

This roll contains the names of persons that have not, due to lack of concern and or breach of fellowship, been in attendance of any service of this church for a period of at least six (6) weeks time. All rights and privileges are denied them until such time as they reconcile their relationship to the Lord and this local congregation.

C. *SHUT-IN*:

These are the names of persons that have at one time been in good and faithful standing with the church and are now unable to attend the services due to their incapacitating health. They have good standing with the church and are prayed for and held up before the Lord by the congregation.

D. ASSOCIATE:

Students temporarily residing in the Gaffney, SC area who are members of another evangelical church may apply for associate membership. Qualifications are identical to those set out above apart from never separating from their home church membership. A letter of recommendation will be requested from the applicant's home church.

1. Limitations of Associate Membership

Duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for active members with the following exceptions:

- a) When absent from the Gaffney, SC area for extended periods of time, associate members are released from the responsibility to attend our church services.
- b) While associate members are encouraged to participate in business meetings, they will not be eligible to stand for any office (pastor or deacon) or to vote.

2. Termination of Associate Membership

Termination of associate membership for disciplinary purposes follows the same process as other members. Additionally, Central's pastoral staff will notify the pastor of the associate member's home church. Associate membership will also terminate immediately upon the conclusion of their temporary residence in the Gaffney, SC area.

Article VI. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall be terminated in one of the following ways:

- a. Death of the member
- b. Exclusion by vote of the church
- c. Dismissal by action of letter to another church
- d. Erasure upon request of or proof of membership in a church of another denomination

Article VII. DISCIPLINE

It shall be the practice of this church to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure will be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. The attitude of members toward one another shall be guided by a concern for redemption rather than punishment. Should some serious difference arise, it shall be dealt with in a spirit of prayerful tenderness as governed by example in Matthew 18:15–17. This shall be the responsibility of the pastor and deacons.

Should a case exist, which would cause a member to bring reproach and shame to the church and the Kingdom of Heaven, the pastor and deacons shall biblically remove this offense from the church membership when dismissal is necessary to maintain harmony and righteousness in the House of God. If it becomes necessary for the church to take action to exclude a member, a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the quorum is required; and the church may proceed to declare the

person to be no longer in the fellowship and membership of the church. All such proceedings shall be presented by a spirit of Christian kindness, prayer, and forbearance. The church may restore to membership any person previously excluded, upon the request of the excluded person, and by vote of the church upon evidence of the excluded person's repentance and reformation.

Article VIII. CHURCH OFFICERS

All who serve as officers of the church and those who serve on church committees shall be members of this church. The officers of the church shall be the pastor, the deacons, a clerk, a treasurer, a moderator, trustees, and a church staff as deemed to be necessary by the church. Each of these positions are outlined as follows as to duties and responsibilities.

Section A. SENIOR PASTOR:

The pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament Church. He will lead the congregation, organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks. The pastor is the leader of pastoral ministries in the church. As such, he works to lead the church in the achievement of its mission, proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and care for the church's members and their spiritual needs. The major concern of the pastor is to be God's under-shepherd to the flock and lead all worship, education, and proclamation of the church. A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that express purpose, of which at least one (1) week public notice has been given. This meeting shall be moderated by the Chairman of the Pulpit Committee. This committee consisting of five (5) members shall be comprised of persons elected by the church to serve in the selection of a suitable candidate for nomination as pastor; its recommendation shall constitute a nomination. Only one man shall be presented at a time for the position of pastor. Election shall be by secret ballot with an affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) majority of those qualified church members present. Also, if there are any dissenting votes an opportunity will be given to make the vote unanimous. A pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. He shall preside as moderator at all meetings of worship and business unless he appoints another such moderator that is a member in good standings of this church. He shall have pulpit responsibilities and shall prayerfully select the preacher for revivals and special services. The pastor may relinquish the office by giving at least four (4) weeks notice to the church. The church may vote the office of pastor to be vacant by giving a four (4) weeks notice of such action to be taken except in cases of moral and ethical issues. This action shall take place at a meeting called especially for this purpose upon the recommendation of the majority of the duly elected deacons or by written petition, signed by not less than fifty (50%) percent of the qualified voters of the church. This meeting of dismissal shall be moderated by the chairman of the deacons and shall be voted by secret ballot, requiring a three-fourths (3/4) majority of affirmative votes of the qualified voters present to declare the office vacant, in a one month period of time. Upon the church's awareness of the Senior Pastor's vacancy, the Deacon Ministry, in coordination with the remaining pastoral staff, will be charged with the duty of pulpit supply until a long-term interim solution is determined (See Article IX, Section C).

Section B. *MINISTERIAL STAFF*:

This staff shall be elected and employed as the church determines the need for such office. A job description shall be written by personnel committee when the need for a staff member is determined. Such persons shall be members of the church and be fairly and reasonably compensated. Disciplinary issues will be handled by the senior pastor and deacons, including the termination of a ministerial staff member.

Section C. *INTERIM/TRANSITIONAL PASTOR*:

The Interim/Transitional Pastor shall be recommended by the Deacon Ministry in coordination with the remaining pastoral staff to the church for approval. The Deacon Ministry will also submit in writing the Interim/Transitional Pastor's rights and duties. This plan must be submitted to the church at a called business meeting within 60 days of its known vacancy. The candidate and plan require an affirmative vote of three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) majority of those qualified church members present. The Interim/Transitional Pastor cannot be considered as a candidate for the Pastorate and shall refrain from exerting influence toward the Pulpit Committee.

Section D. *NON-MINISTERIAL STAFF*:

These staff members shall be employed as the church determines the need for their services. The pastor and Personnel Committee shall have the authority to employ and terminate services of non-ministerial staff as necessary for the needs of the church. Employment to new non-ministerial staff requires an affirmative vote of three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) majority of those qualified church members present. However, replacing existing non-ministerial staff positions or the termination of services of a non-ministerial staff will not require an affirmative vote but will come as information only by the Senior Pastor and Personnel Committee. Members can request further information of the decision if needed by requesting to meet privately with the Senior Pastor and Personnel Committee.

Section E. *DEACONS*:

See the Central Baptist Church Deacon Handbook by visiting our website at www.centralbaptistgaffney.com or by request through our church administrator.

Section F. *CLERK*:

The church shall elect a clerk to deal with and keep a suitable record of all actions of the church. The clerk shall serve until their resignation or church action of dismissal. The clerical responsibilities are furthered in the keeping of an updated listing of all church rolls, records of business meetings, records of history, and any rolls or files as requested by the pastor. The clerk shall issue letters of dismissal to other churches, preserve on file communications and reports, and the preparing of the annual church letter to the association. Any required notice for a special meeting can be given by the clerk, when needed, such as the absence of a pastor or by request of the pastor. All church records are the exclusive property of the church and shall be kept in the church office.

Section G. *TREASURER*:

The church shall elect a treasurer to serve until their resignation or church action of dismissal. The treasurer is responsible for fair and consistent application of church financial policies. The treasurer will serve on the Budget and Finance Committee and be responsible for ensuring all

policies remain updated and all activities of the Budget and Finance Committee are executed appropriately. Upon rendering the annual account at the end of the fiscal year and its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered to the church clerk. The treasurer reports to the Senior Pastor and works with the church clerk to keep and preserve financial records and policies and Budget and Finance Committee records as part of the church's permanent records.

Section H. *TRUSTEES*:

Trustees will be nominated by the Leadership Team and be elected by the church. They shall be empowered to transact any and all business of the church as authorized by the church.

Section I. *MODERATOR*:

The moderator shall be the Pastor. In the absence of the Pastor, the chairman of the deacons shall preside. In the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order, and an acting moderator shall be elected by the church. The pastor reserves the right to appoint a moderator other than himself any time he deems necessary.

Article IX. COMMITTEES

All Church committee members shall be selected by the Leadership Team and approved by the church unless otherwise indicated in the description below. Each committee shall meet at least once a quarter and report to the church at the first business meeting of each quarter if needed. The church shall have the following standing committees:

- a. Leadership Team
- b. Budget and Finance Committee
- c. Building and Grounds Committee
- d. Personnel Committee

Section A. *LEADERSHIP TEAM*:

The Leadership Team assists the Senior Pastor in evaluating the volunteer needs in the church and making recommendations for ministry needs. The Leadership Team may assist in assembling ministry volunteers based on their knowledge and interaction in the church. Recommendations are shared and voted on by the church at a scheduled business meeting. The team will also coordinate with the pastoral staff to schedule and plan events for their designated ministry.

The Leadership Team is comprised of the following ministry leaders: Senior Pastor, Youth and Associate Pastor, Worship Pastor, Deacon Chairman, Communications, Sunday School, Young at Heart, Men, Women, Upper Room, Children, and Nursery. Upon an even number of members on the team and a split vote, the Senior Pastor will hold the tie-breaking vote. Additions and reductions to the team based on church structure will also be recommended by the Leadership Team and voted on by the church, requiring three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) vote to edit church By-laws.

Section B. *BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE*:

The Budget and Finance Committee shall serve a three-year term and be made up as follows: the treasurer and four from the church's membership. The goal of this committee is to faithfully receive, steward, and use the financial assets in a manner that supports the church and ministry. This includes budget evaluation and preparation to present to the church no later than two weeks before the last business meeting of the fiscal year. The committee shall also promote the stewardship program of the church and review and update financial policies and procedures to ensure the church's financial stewardship integrity. This committee will be aware of the church's fiscal position, make quarterly reports of such matters to the church, and present as information at a regularly scheduled business meeting.

Section C. BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE:

The Building and Grounds Committee shall have at least (3) three members. It shall be the duty of this committee to give attention to and study the condition and state of repair and appearance of the buildings and grounds, manage such repairs and improvements authorized by the church, and include regular maintenance and foreseeable improvements and repairs in the church budget. All matters of major repair or improvements and items of equipment shall be referred to the Budget and Finance Committee for recommendation to the church (See Financial Policy).

Section D. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:

The personnel committee shall consist of three (3) members of the church and shall serve a three-year term. One member shall rotate off each calendar year. The pastor shall serve as an ex-officio member of the committee. The committee shall be responsible for employment, job descriptions, salaries, and benefits of all non-ministerial church staff. This committee shall also be responsible for job descriptions, salaries, and benefits of all ministerial staff. The committee shall assist the pastor in any ministerial and non-ministerial staff conflicts and make recommendations to the church body as needed.

Section E. PULPIT COMMITTEE:

Upon the Senior Pastor's departure, the Leadership Team will recommend five (5) active members to serve on the Pulpit Committee to the church during a Sunday morning service. The church will have until Thursday of the same week to nominate others for consideration. A ballot vote will be taken the following Sunday during a called business meeting where each active member will vote for five people to serve. The five who receive the highest vote total will constitute the Pulpit Committee. The next two will serve as alternates. The Pulpit Committee will elect its own officers and determine alternate involvement. The formation of the Pulpit Committee will be complete within 30 days of the known vacancy.

Article X. CHURCH PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The church shall maintain programs of Bible studies, church member training, new member orientation, mission education, and music education, overseen by the pastor. All organizations related to church programs shall be under church control, all offices being elected by the church and reporting regularly to the church, and all program activities subject to church coordination, approval, and biblical standards of attire and conduct. The pastor is the ex-officio officer of all the church organizations, and his leadership is to be recognized in them. The church shall

provide the human resources, physical resources, and financial resources for the appropriate advancement of these programs.

Article XI. CHURCH ORDINANCES

Section A. *BAPTISM:*

See Article VII of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 for a description of Christian Baptism. The baptismal service shall be administered by the pastor, or whomever the church shall authorize, and shall be assisted by the Baptismal Committee in preparation and observance of baptism.

Section B. *LORD'S SUPPER:*

See Article VII of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 for a description of the Lord's Supper. The church shall observe the Lord's Supper as scheduled by the pastor. The pastors and deacons shall administer the Lord's Supper with the Lord's Supper Committee responsible for the physical preparation.

Article XII. CHURCH MEETINGS

Section A. *WORSHIP SERVICES:*

The church shall regularly meet each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening to worship our Almighty God. Prayer, praise, preaching, instruction, and evangelism shall be among the ingredients of these services. The pastor shall direct the services for all church members and others who choose to attend.

Section B. *SPECIAL SERVICES:*

Revival services and any other church meetings essential to the advancement of the church's objectives shall be placed on the church calendar by the pastor. All church services of this nature will be bathed in prayer and supported by the church family.

Section C. *VOTING:*

Each active member shall have one vote at any called business meeting. A three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of the active members present is required for an affirmative vote at any business meeting. No proxy or absentee votes are allowed.

Section D. *QUORUM:*

At any business meeting, a quorum shall be established by the presence of 15 active members. The meeting will be rescheduled if less than 15 active members are present.

Section E. *REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS:*

The church shall hold regular sessions of business on a quarterly basis. These meetings are for the transacting of the church's business and the sharing of the financial statement and needs of the church. There will be an agenda for each meeting and any member wishing to put something on the agenda must submit it 10 days (Thursday) before the meeting. The agenda will be

available to the church one week prior to the business meeting. This meeting will be held on the second Sunday evening of the month.

Section F. *SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS:*

The church may conduct called business meetings to consider matters of special nature and significance. A one (1) week notice must be given for the specially called business meetings unless urgency renders such notice impractical.

Section G. *PARLIAMENTARY RULES:*

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

Article XIII. CHURCH FINANCES

See Central Baptist Church Financial Policies by visiting our website at www.centralbaptistgaffney.com or by request through our church administrator.

Article XIV. AMENDMENTS

Changes in the Constitution and By-laws may be made at any regular or special called meeting of the church, provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous business meeting and copies of the proposed amendment shall have been furnished to each member present at the earlier meeting. Amendments to the Constitution and By-laws shall require an affirmative vote by the qualified church members present. Amendments to the By-laws shall be approved by three-fourths (3/4) of the members present and voting. The Leadership Team will select a Constitution and By-laws committee every five years to review and make necessary changes as the church's structure changes.

AMEN