

PROVIDENCE BAPTIST CHURCH

CONSTITUTION and BY-LAWS - Updated 1/28/07

CONSTITUTION:

ARTICLE 1: Name & Identification

The name of this church shall be Providence Baptist Church. We are a sovereign, autonomous, reformed, and baptistic church.

ARTICLE II: Foundation, Object and Priorities of Ministry

(1) The foundation of this Church is the Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:11), and its code of guidance in all its affairs, is the Word of God, and this Church does here affirm its faith that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of Almighty God (Mark 13:31) (II Tim. 3:16-17).

(2) The object of this Church shall be to worship God according to the teaching of His Word, to practice the precepts and examples of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the New Testament, to sustain its ordinances and doctrines, and to preach and propagate among all peoples the Gospel of Salvation which is by personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

(3) The priorities of ministry of this church flow from the vision of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ. We exist to savor this vision in worship (John 4:23), strengthen the vision in nurture and education (I Corinthians 14:26; II Peter 3:18), and spread the vision in evangelism, missions, and loving deeds (I Peter 2:9; 3:15; Matthew 28:18-20; 5:16).

AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH:

The Scriptures

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and are the only sufficient, certain and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience.

God

There is but one God, the Maker, Preserver and Ruler of all things, having in and of Himself, all perfections, and being infinite in them all; and to Him all creatures owe the highest love, reverence and obedience.

The Trinity

God is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence or being.

Providence

God from eternity, decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events; yet so as not in any wise to be the author or approver of sin nor to destroy the free will and responsibility of intelligent creatures.

Election

Election is God's eternal choice of some persons unto everlasting life - not because of foreseen merit in them, but of His mere mercy in Christ - in consequence of which choice they are called, justified and glorified.

The Fall of Man

God originally created Man in His own image, and free from sin; but, through the temptation of Satan, he transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original holiness and righteousness; whereby his posterity inherit a nature corrupt and wholly opposed to God and His law, are under condemnation, and as soon as they are capable of moral action, become actual transgressors.

The Mediator

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the divinely appointed mediator between God and man. Having taken upon Himself human nature, yet without sin, He perfectly fulfilled the law; suffered and died upon the cross for the salvation of sinners. He was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended to His Father, at whose right hand He ever liveth to make intercession for His people. He is the only Mediator, the Prophet, Priest and King of the Church, and Sovereign of the Universe.

Regeneration

Regeneration is a change of heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit, who quickeneth the dead in trespasses and sins enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the Word of God, and renewing their whole nature, so that they love and practice holiness. It is a work of God's free and special grace alone.

Repentance

Repentance is an evangelical grace, wherein a person being by the Holy Spirit, made sensible of the manifold evil of his sin, humbleth himself for it, with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrence, with a purpose and endeavor to walk before God so as to please Him in all things.

Faith

Saving faith is the belief, on God's authority, of whatsoever is revealed in His Word concerning Christ; accepting and resting upon Him alone for justification and eternal life. It is wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and is accompanied by all other saving graces, and leads to a life of holiness.

Justification

Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal of sinners, who believe in Christ, from all sin, through the satisfaction that Christ has made; not for anything wrought in them or done by them; but on account of the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, they receiving and resting on Him and His righteousness by faith.

Sanctification

Those who have been regenerated are also sanctified by God's word and Spirit dwelling in them. This sanctification is progressive through the supply of Divine strength, which all saints seek to obtain, pressing after a heavenly life in cordial obedience to all Christ's commands.

Perseverance of the Saints

Those whom God hath accepted in the Beloved, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end; and though they may fall through neglect and temptation, into sin, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the Church, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be renewed again unto repentance, and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

The Church

The Lord Jesus is the head of the Church, which is composed of all His true disciples, and in Him is invested supremely all power for its government. According to His commandment, Christians are to associate themselves into particular societies or churches; and to each of these churches He hath given needful authority for administering that order, discipline and worship which He hath appointed. The regular officers of a Church are Elders, and Deacons.

Baptism

Baptism is an ordinance of the Lord Jesus, obligatory upon every believer, wherein he is immersed in water in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as a sign of his fellowship with the death and resurrection of Christ, of remission of sins, and of giving himself up to God, to live and walk in newness of life.

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of Jesus Christ, to be administered with the elements of bread and wine, and to be observed by His churches till the end of the world. It is in no sense a sacrifice, but is designed to commemorate His death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge and renewal of their communion with Him, and of their church fellowship.

The Lord's Day

The Lord's Day is a Christian institution for regular observance, and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, resting from worldly employments and amusements, works of necessity and mercy only excepted.

Liberty of Conscience

God alone is Lord of the conscience; and He hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in anything contrary to His Word, or not contained in it. Civil magistrates being ordained of God, subjection in

all lawful things commanded by them ought to be yielded by us in the Lord, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

The Resurrection

The bodies of men after death return to dust, but their spirits return immediately to God - the righteous to rest with Him; the wicked, to be reserved under darkness to the judgment. At the last day, the bodies of all the dead, both just and unjust, will be raised.

The Judgment

God hath appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world by Jesus Christ, when every one shall receive according to his deeds; the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment; the righteous, into everlasting life.

Adapted from the "ABSTRACT OF PRINCIPLES" By James Petigru Boyce 1887

SEE ALSO "THE LONDON BAPTIST CONFESSION OF FAITH 1689" FOR A MORE INDEPTH LOOK AT CHURCH DOCTRINE

OUR CHURCH COVENANT

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

(2) We engage, therefore, *by the aid of the Holy Spirit*, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to 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.

(3) We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment, to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to seek God's help in abstaining from all drugs, food, drink, and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.

(4) We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and 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.

(5) We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, if possible, unite with a church where we can carry out the articles of this confession and the spirit of this covenant.

ARTICLE III: Membership

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who publicly confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who give evidence of regeneration by a living consistent with their profession and with the views of faith, doctrine and practice of this church, who have been baptized (immersion is the preferred application and understanding of Scripture) and who have been received into its membership according to the By-Laws of this church.

ARTICLE IV: Leadership and Organization

(1) Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the membership of the congregation of the church is the final authority within this local church; this authority is normally exercised through the calling and affirming of elders to govern and lead the church.

- Upon the recommendation of the body of elders the membership shall affirm or not:

a) Members into the church, give letters of transfer or recommendation to members, or drop members from the church roll;

b) Appoint officers of the church;

c) Discipline members by dismissing them and discipline officers by removing them from office; as a ministry of reconciliation;

d) Approve annual budgets of the church, [authorize any expenditure of the funds of the church when such expenditure is not covered by an approved budget (except ministries of mercy)], and approve any transactions regarding real property;

e) Accept, reject, or otherwise dispose of any matter submitted to the membership of the church by the body of elders, or raised by motion at a business meeting;

- f) Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution or By-Laws of this church; except as noted within this document.
 - g) Approve the call, job description and initial salary of vocational pastors and ministers.
- (2) The offices of the church shall be vocational elder (male), lay elder (male), and deacon (male). The purpose of the officers of the church is to lovingly care for and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry.
- a) The leadership of the church shall be vested in the body of elders (vocational and lay elders) who are responsible for governing the church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this church. The elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function.
 - b) Deacons shall assist the body of elders by performing services of advice, administration and implementation as prescribed by the body of elders.

ARTICLE V: The Church Property

- (1) In the event of a division of this church, from which may God in His mercy save us, the property of this church shall belong to that group of such division as represents the largest portion of the church membership before recognizing a division therein provided such group is loyal to this constitution; otherwise it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this constitution though it may not be the largest group in such division.
- (2) Should a condition arise at any time in the future when for any reason, the church work cannot continue, the church property shall be dealt with in the following manner:

DISPOSAL OF ASSETS

At least three special business meetings are required to disband PROVIDENCE BAPTIST CHURCH (*may God deliver us*). Should a 3/4 majority of active members vote to disband the Church (*at a business meeting called for that purpose;*), they shall at that time elect a special "*disbanding committee*" to recommend how best to dispose of tangible remaining assets (*they shall elect their own chairman*). In so doing, the committee shall seek the furtherance of Christ's cause upon earth, that is, the building of His beloved Church. Special consideration should be given to those associations, churches, and/or missionaries that share our Reformed Baptist doctrinal views. Also, at that same meeting, a second meeting shall be scheduled to enable the disbanding committee to present its recommendations to the membership.

At that second meeting, if the recommendations of the disbanding committee are adopted, a procedure and timeline shall be established for the execution of same, and a third business meeting scheduled, to enable the disbanding committee to report the distributions they have made to the membership, and provide the necessary documentation. Also, at that second meeting, a volunteer shall be elected to store several boxes of church records for not less than seven years. This is to protect past and present members from audits by the Internal Revenue Service and/or possible satanically-inspired, after-the fact, hard-to-defend, accusations of wrongdoing. If the person elected does not have space available for such storage, and space must be rented, the cost of same shall be paid *in advance* from remaining church assets. A reasonable amount should also be included to anticipate the possibility of this elected "*archivist*" having to dig out, produce, and re-store such records, perhaps even appearing at a legal proceeding. All church records may be destroyed seven years after the church has been disbanded.

At that third special business meeting, each remaining member shall be furnished with an itemized statement, showing the exact disposition of every item and dollar, signed by every member of the disbanding committee. Nothing is to be excluded. Should differences of opinion grow into a dispute, a knowledgeable Christian Massachusetts attorney shall be consulted and remunerated from church assets. Should that occur, yet another meeting shall be scheduled. Under no circumstances is the congregation of Providence Baptist Church, to be considered "*disbanded*" while tangible assets remain.

ARTICLE VI: Revisions, Additions & Amendments

- (1) Revisions, additions or amendments of this constitution may be made only in the following manner: These Articles of Association may be amended, in whole or in part, by a 3/4 majority affirmation of the active membership at a duly called special business meeting.
- (2) Article II (1), IV (2a), and VI (2) of this constitution shall not be repealed, amended nor revised.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I: Membership

Section 1: General Procedure

All actions regarding membership, either of admission or dismissal, shall be by affirmation or not of the church upon recommendation of the body of elders. At any of the regular meetings for worship, the church may, without special notice, act upon the reception of members, or upon transfer of members to other churches.

Section 2: Admission By Baptism

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of change of heart, and having accepted the faith, aims and ideals of this church as expressed in the Affirmation of Our Faith and Our Church Covenant, may be received into membership by baptism, upon recommendation of the body of elders.

Section 3: Admission By Letter

Upon recommendation of the body of elders, members from other Baptist churches holding like faith may be received as members with us upon presentation of letters of transfer from such churches, and upon acceptance of the faith, aims and ideals of this church as expressed in the Affirmation of Our Faith and Our Church Covenant. If such credentials be of older date than six months prior to their presentation, the applicant may be required to furnish additional information.

Section 4: Admission By Experience Of Restoration

All applicants for membership other than by baptism or by letter of transfer, that is by Christian experience if previously baptized, or by restoration, shall be received into the church in the same way as those by baptism, except the ordinance shall not be administered.

Section 5: Instruction To New Members

All persons uniting with this church in any of the ways set forth in Sections 2 through 4 above shall previously, by the body of elders, be made acquainted with Our Church Covenant and the Affirmation of Our Faith.

New members shall pledge themselves, as God enables them, to fulfill their stewardship obligations as to worship, service, and giving, when they make public profession of faith and join the church.

Section 6: Dismissal Of Members

(a) Members in good standing who have fulfilled their obligations to the church, or satisfactorily arranged the same with the elders, shall upon request be granted a letter of transfer to unite with a like minded church as they may designate. Such letter of transfer shall be sent to the pastor or the clerk of the church the member intends to join and shall be valid only for six months, but may be renewed after that time by affirmation of the church upon recommendation of the body of elders if satisfactory reasons be given for the non-use. These limitations of time shall be included in the letter of transfer. Members who shall unite with another church without such letter shall be dropped from the church roll.

Members in good standing who have fulfilled their obligations to the church, or satisfactorily arranged the same with the elders, and who desire to unite with a church of another denomination, shall receive a certificate of character and be dismissed.

(b) Members who move from this area, shall supply the church with their new address and apply for a letter of dismissal within one year provided there be a church of the same faith and order in the place to which they move. If necessary, it shall be the duty of the body of elders to remind such member of their duties in this respect. In case there is no such church in the place, or there are circumstances which render it inadvisable to change membership, the member shall report to the church as often as once a year at least, in person or by letter and by contribution. All non-resident members who do not so report shall be subject to dismissal by the church after appropriate efforts have been made to contact the member and remind them of their duties.

ARTICLE II: Church Government

Section 1: General Statement

(a) Officers. The officers of the church shall be a body of elders and deacons. Officers shall be called to office by affirmation of the membership of the church as provided for in Article II, Section 2 and Section 3 of these By-Laws. All officers of the church shall be members of the church in good and regular standing. The body of elders and deacons shall be composed of only men (see I Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, I Peter 5:1-3). Except as provided in

paragraphs (b) and (c) below, the body of elders and deacons are the only bodies and positions created by these By-Laws.

(b) Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary. The church, upon nomination by the body of elders shall affirm at the annual meeting, members to the positions of church clerk, treasurer and Financial Secretary. The elders shall provide a written description of duties to the clerk, treasurer, and financial secretary.

(c) Committees and Appointees. The body of elders has the authority to create committees and positions to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility.

The body of elders has the authority to dissolve any committee or position which it created. The body of elders also has the authority to appoint elders or other members of the church to serve as members of such committees and to act as its agents in such positions. Any church member may recommend candidates for any committee or position, for consideration of appointment by the body of elders. Every committee shall have a chairman(man), responsible for the overall operation of the committee, who shall be appointed by the body of elders.

Section 2: Vocational Pastors

(a) Definition. Vocational pastors are the ordained elders of the church, who in response to God's call, have devoted their vocational lives to full time ministry of the Word and prayer in the service of the church of Christ. Vocational pastors are supported financially by the church in return for their vocational labors.

(b) Duties. In addition to the duties of their office as described in Sections 3, 4, and 5 below, vocational pastors shall perform the duties determined by the body of elders and approved by the congregation. The duties shall be in writing at the time of the call to service, and substantial changes shall be approved by the church. The church's call of a vocational pastor is a call to the eldership of the church. Therefore vocational pastors shall be members of the body of elders and have all the Biblical qualifications of an elder.

(c) Vocational Call by the Church. The members shall call vocational pastors by affirmation upon the recommendation of the body of elders. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on the next two successive Sundays preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.

(d) Termination of Vocational Call by the Church.

(1) By resignation. The question of terminating the vocational call of a vocational pastor shall be considered at any time by the church upon the presentation of the pastor's resignation.

(2) Grievance. Where a grievance exists against a pastor, either due to his preaching or teaching contrary to the beliefs of the church as set forth in Article II of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an elder, such grievance may be brought before the body of elders by any two members in good standing, following the procedure prescribed in Article V of these By-Laws. If the body of elders, after thorough investigation, consideration, and prayer believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the vocational call of the pastor may be terminated at any special business meeting upon the recommendation of the body of elders when supported by an affirmation of the membership of the church. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays next preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.

(e) Licensing and Ordination. In the matter of licensing and ordaining any person to the Gospel Ministry, the church shall affirm or not on any recommendation by the body of elders. Note: The position of elder, both lay and vocational are ordained positions. The office of deacon is not.

Section 3: Non-Vocational Elders and Deacons

(a) Definition. Non-vocational elders are ordained men who fully meet the qualifications of the position of elder but serve the church without financial compensation. The deacons of the church consists of non-ordained men.

(b) Duties. Non-vocational elders and deacons shall have the duties of their offices as described in Sections 3, 4, and 5 below.

(c) Calling. The body of elders shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for elder and deacon. The body of elders shall provide for individual members of the church either to nominate candidates or to present themselves to the body of elders as candidates for office and for the body's further investigation. In no instances shall any individual be considered a nominee for the office without the nominee's consent. In those cases where the body of elders concludes that a nominee is not qualified for office they shall so inform the nominee stating the reasons for this conclusion. All elders and deacons shall be affirmed or not by the membership of the church upon the recommendation of the body of elders.

(d) Removal.

(1) Resignation. An officer may resign his office at any time if he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.

(2) Grievance. Where a grievance exists against an officer of the church either due to the adherence to and propagation of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the church as set forth in Article II, Sections 1 and 2 of its Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an elder or deacon, such grievance may be brought before the body of elders by any two members in good standing, following the procedures prescribed in Article V of the By-Laws of this church. If the body of elders, after thorough investigation, consideration, and prayer believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the officer may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the body of elders when supported by an affirmation of the membership of the church. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays next preceding the meeting. Notice shall also be given by mail to the resident membership at least one week before the meeting.

Section 4: Body of Elders

(a) Composition: The body of elders shall be composed of only men, both non-vocational elders and vocational elders.

(b) Qualifications. Elders and nominees for elder shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and I Peter 5:1-4.

(c) Responsibilities. The fundamental responsibility of the Elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The Elders are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this Church.

The responsibilities of the elders shall include: examining prospective members and acquainting them with the Affirmation of Faith and Church Covenant, overseeing the process of church discipline, examining prospective candidates for office, moderating business meetings, providing for reporting and recording of official church business, overseeing the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conducting worship services, administering the ordinances of the Gospel, equipping the membership of the church for the work of the ministry, teaching the whole counsel of God both formally and informally, correcting error, overseeing, coordinating and promoting the ministries of the church, and mobilizing the church for world mission.

(d) Organization. The body of elders shall organize itself however it determines to be best to achieve the mission of the church. The elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. The elders must meet at least once per month. The elders are by God's gracious leading to seek out the "first among equals" from among themselves to lead the body of elders and to represent the body of elders and their recommendations to the church.

Section 5: Deacons

(a) Composition and Calling. The deacon body shall be composed of only men. The number of deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men the church. Each member of the deacon body shall be called by the membership of the church.

(b) Qualifications. Members of the deacon body and nominees for the deacon body shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include I Timothy 3:8-12.

(c) Responsibilities. The deacons shall be ready to assist the elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the church, and the care for the members of the congregation. Their responsibilities may include:

- (1) administering a fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress;
- (2) the greeting and welcoming ministries of the church;
- (3) assisting in administering the ordinances of the Gospel;
- (4) assisting at fellowship gatherings of the church;
- (5) caring for and maintaining the Church properties;

For a further study on the Biblical doctrines and qualifications of elders and deacons see:

- "Biblical Eldership - An Urgent Call To Restore Biblical Church Leadership" ©1995 by Alexander Strauch
- "The New Testament Deacon - The Church's Minister of Mercy" ©1992 by Alexander Strauch
- "Biblical Eldership - Shepherd The Flock Of God Among You" ©1999 by John Piper
- "A Display Of God's Glory" ©2001 by Mark E. Dever
- "By Whose Authority? Elders In Baptist Life" ©2006 by Mark E. Dever

ARTICLE III: Church Employees

In addition to vocational pastors, the church may employ additional personnel; such as ministers of music, or secretarial staff as the church has needs. The moneys for such personnel must be approved by the congregation at a properly called business meeting. The body of elders shall be responsible for determining the duties and hiring of such personnel.

ARTICLE IV: Church Finances

Section 1: In General

No method of raising funds shall be entertained which is in conflict with the Scriptural ideals of the church. All funds donated for missions by the societies and organizations of the church shall pass through the church finance secretary and the treasurer in order that due record may be made and credit given to the church.

Section 2: Contributions

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligations to support the church and its causes with regular and proportionate giving. Each member shall be encouraged in Scriptural giving, with tithing as the ideal minimum. Special offerings may be sought by the church, or by any of its organizations, with the approval of the body of elders. This shall not preclude individuals from making special offerings or designated gifts at any time as the Spirit of God may move them.

Section 3: Financial Planning

The financial planning of the church shall be carried out through the medium of annual budgets for carrying out of the various programs of its work. Annual budgets shall be adopted by the church upon recommendation of the body of elders. Matters involving staff compensation shall be the responsibility of the members of the body of elders. The body of elders may delegate this responsibility provided such delegation is to lay members of the church.

Section 4: Accounts

Financial receipts from all sources shall be accounted for by the finance secretary according to the purposes for which contributions are designated. The treasurer of the church shall disburse these funds promptly according to the financial program of the church as detailed in the budgets or other authorized designations.

Section 5: Indebtedness

No note or contract exceeding 1% of the total annual budget whereby the credit of the church is pledged shall be made except by recommendation of the body of elders and approved by the church.

Section 6: Authority To Bind The Church

The body of elders are the only officers who have authority, in accordance with these By-Laws, the church Constitution, and any applicable laws, to execute legal documents relating to real estate, church property, and church finances.

ARTICLE V: Meetings

Section 1: For Worship

Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day. The Lord's Supper shall be celebrated on the first Sunday of each month or at such other times as the body of elders may determine. Other religious services may be appointed as the advancement of the work of the church may require.

Section 2: For Business

(a) The Annual Meeting. The annual meeting shall be held some time during the end of the fiscal year of the Church for the purpose of affirming the calling and reaffirming the officers, reviewing proposed budgets and other business. Officers called at the annual meeting shall assume their duties at the beginning of the new fiscal year.

(c) Special Meetings. The body of elders, may call for a special meeting. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit or by other notification, the particular object of such meeting being clearly stated in the notice. In the calling of special meetings for purposes where an interval after advance notice is required by provision in these By-Laws or according to law, such provisions shall be observed. Notice shall be given at least one week in advance for meetings on specially important matters not otherwise provided for.

ARTICLE VI: Organization of Members for Ministry

Members of this church shall have the liberty to participate in and organize themselves for ministry, provided that such participation and organization does not conflict with Article II of the Constitution. Any such organization may seek church sanction from the body of elders as an official ministry of Providence Baptist Church. Such sanction shall be granted provided that **1)** the object, purpose, belief and conduct of the organization and its members is consistent with Article II of the Constitution, and **2)** the primary officers of the organization are: members of the

church, or other regular attendees of the church who have been approved under guidelines established by the body of elders. Sanction by the body of elders does not necessarily imply support of the organization by the church with personnel, finances, or facilities. Such support may be requested of the church by the body of elders.

ARTICLE VII: Discipline

The discipline of members shall be a responsibility of the body of elders as affirmed by the membership of the church under such rules and procedures as the elders may from time to time establish on the basis of Scripture. All such proceedings shall be guided by a spirit of prayer mingling Christian kindness, forbearance, and holy firmness under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Holiness and reconciliation must always be the goal of Biblical discipline.

ARTICLE VIII: Amendments

General:

Amendments to these By-Laws may be introduced through written motion at any annual business meeting, but shall not be acted on until that notice of the proposed change or amendment be given from the pulpit on at least two Sundays and in writing to the resident membership [not in attendance of at least one of the Sunday services when the verbal announcement for the scheduled meeting for the proposed change] in the interim period between the next special business meeting.

*****Note: most of the constitution and by-laws were taken from Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN and then adapted for Providence Baptist Church. This document with its present revisions is intended to only represent the views and beliefs of Providence Baptist Church.*****
