**Constitutional Changes 2019**

The Board of Elders of The Chapel is presenting a number of proposed changes to our church constitution. This document will serve to help you understand THE NEED to update our constitution as well as THE REASON for and INTENT of each of the changes presented.

**WHAT IS NOT CHANGING**

First and foremost, we want you to be fully aware, that these changes do not affect the DNA or mission of the Chapel at all:

* Who we are as a church is not changing
* What we believe as a church is not changing
* What you see, experience and participate in on any given Sunday or throughout the week in ministry, is not changing

**THE NEED TO CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION**

Our church has a constitution that was written with many details and specifics that were appropriate and necessary for how the church was first established nearly 50 years ago. While incremental changes, adjustments and additions have been made to the document through the years, its fundamental structure and inclusion of these many details has never been changed.

At the same time, as the church has grown and evolved through the years, much has changed in the necessary details of what we do and how we function. Quite simply, for example, the constitution was written for a church with one pastor, one elder, one single staff member and no permanent location home. We now have eight elders, multiple pastors, a staff of more than 30, many departments, missions efforts around the world, two locations and multiple buildings.

**PROBLEMS THAT EXIST THAT IMPACT OUR INTERNAL OPERATIONS AND DECISION MAKING**

* There are now large parts of the constitution that are no longer aligned with the realities of how the church needs to function today, nor the expectation of how it will need to function in the future.
* Furthermore, the fact that these details and descriptions exist in the constitution has led to confusion (and the potential for confusion) regarding leadership and authority.
* Finally, the details included are, in effect, restrictive on how the church should specifically operate, when in fact, a constitution should rather provide big picture guidance and direction.

These realities have been before the staff and elders for some time now, leading to numerous discussions of changes needed, and even full drafts of a completely new proposed constitution written by former staff members in the last 10 years.

Therefore, the elders have prayerfully set out to fundamentally adjust or “clean up” our constitution. Our desire is to eliminate the confusion that existed and to accurately reflect the Chapel as it exists and operates today while providing appropriate big picture guidance and direction for the future.

Although the thought of an entirely new constitution was proposed, considered and even drafted years ago, we have specifically set out to work within the existing and historical framework of our constitution. We believe that it is wisest to work from the original, keeping what works and only adjusting those sections that require change. The details of these proposed changes follow.

**THIS WAS AN EXHAUSTIVE PROCESS**

In taking on this project, be aware that the elders:

* + Prayed through every step of the process
	+ Met for months
	+ Reviewed historical transcripts of meetings and ideas
	+ Carefully reviewed each word of the document
	+ Discussed at length the recommended changes
	+ Worked through different opinions where they existed to reach consensus
	+ Came to final decisions for these recommendations
	+ Presented the changes to focus groups for feedback

**THE REASON FOR AND INTENT OF EACH OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES**

The elders set out on this project with the following primary goals:

* Maintain as much as possible of the original intent of the constitution
* Maintain clear leadership authority based on instruction from the Bible
* Remove possible confusion over the leadership authority of the church that was caused by the sections that detailed various boards, committees and positions.
* Update the document to reflect the present and prepare for the future.
* Add new sections regarding fiduciary responsibility that were previously missing.

As you review the proposed changes, we have placed the original, “old” articles in the left-hand column, our proposed language in the center, and an explanation of the reason for and intent of the proposed change in the right-hand column.

Generally speaking, we are proposing the following:

**Constitution**

* We have **kept** the following 6 articles without adjustment: 1, 2, 3, 5, 12, 13.
* We have **adjusted** the following 4 articles: 4, 6, 7, 11.
* We have **removed** the following 3 articles, 8, 9, 10.
	+ Replacing them with new articles 8 and 9

**By-Laws**

* We have **kept** the following (1) article: 4 (now proposed as article 5)
* We have **adjusted** the following 3 articles: 1, 2, 3
* We have **added** a new article 4

**For reference, the outline of the historical Constitution and By Laws was:**

Article I – Name and Incorporation

Article II - Covenant

Article III – Statement of Faith

Article IV - Membership

Article V - Ordinances

Article VI - Leaders

Article VII – Selection & Qualifications of Leaders

Article VIII – Nominating Committee

Article IX – Personnel Committee

Article X – Finance Committee & Treasurer

Article XI – Suffrage

Article XII – Quorum

Article XIII - Amendments

**(Continued), the outline of the historical Constitution and By Laws was:**

BL -Article I – Responsibilities of Leaders

BL -Article II – Meetings of the Church

BL -Article III – Parliamentary Procedure

BL -Article IV - Amendments

**Constitutional Changes**

OLD

**ARTICLE IV**

ADULT MEMBERSHIP: The Chapel, as a nondenominational church, may receive any person as a member upon professing saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Persons presenting themselves for membership in this church shall be encouraged to attend all established instruction sessions provided for members. They shall, during the course of such instruction, acknowledge confession of faith in Christ, and acceptance of the Statement of Faith and Covenant of Fellowship of the Chapel. The Elders may waive the requirement for attendance at instruction sessions.

AFFILIATE MEMBER: In-service membership will be granted to the following classifications:

1. Students temporarily residing in the Baton Rouge area while attending school and wishing to remain members of their respective churches in their home localities.

2. Those members serving other ministries.

Affiliate members will be designated as such on the Chapel roll and will not have the privilege of voting in the Chapel business meetings. Affiliate members may return to their regular membership status by submitting a written request to the Chapel office.

UPDATED LANGUAGE

**ARTICLE IV**

ADULT MEMBERSHIP: The Chapel, as a nondenominational church, may receive any person as a member upon professing saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Persons presenting themselves for membership in this church shall be encouraged to attend all established instruction sessions provided for members. They shall, during the course of such instruction, acknowledge confession of faith in Christ, and acceptance of the Statement of Faith and Covenant of Fellowship of the Chapel. The Elders may waive the requirement for attendance at instruction sessions.

AFFILIATE MEMBER: Recognizing that The Chapel has a large collegiate ministry and population, affiliate membership, for the purposes of committing to and serving within the body, is a unique membership classification.

Students residing in the Baton Rouge area while attending school who wish to remain members of their respective churches in their home localities or are unsure of their post graduate plans may become affiliate members. Persons presenting themselves for affiliate membership in this church shall be encouraged to complete the designated instruction sessions, acknowledge confession of faith in Christ, and acceptance of designated stated beliefs of The Chapel. The Elders may waive the requirement for attendance at instruction sessions.

Affiliate members will be designated as such on the Chapel roll and will not have the privilege of voting in the Chapel business meetings. Upon leaving school and Baton Rouge, affiliate members may return to their regular membership status by submitting a written request to the Chapel office or will be encouraged to pursue adult membership through the designated membership transfer process.

EXPLANATION

**ARTICLE IV**

The language of Article IV – MEMBERSHIP was updated for clarity and to reflect current practices. As church membership is practiced much differently, generally speaking, in all churches today than it was more than 40 years ago, we felt that the language required updating. In particular, the elders reviewed and are recommending the following:

* Affirmed the language on adult membership.
* Recommended changes to the language for affiliate members to be more specifically reflective of collegiate ministry and the desire to have students, who may not remain in Baton Rouge, commit to the local body of Christ appropriately.

OLD

**ARTICLE VI**

LEADERS: Believing that Christ is the only head of the church, under Him the leaders, officers and boards of the Chapel shall be:

Section 1.  Elders, comprised of at least 9 men on a Board, shall be appointed and annually confirmed by the congregation, and meet at least monthly. The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall also be the President, one of the officers of the Chapel as a legal corporate entity.

Section 2.  Deacons, comprised of at least 12 men on a Board, shall be nominated and confirmed by the Chapel congregation and meet at least every other month.

Section 3. A Finance Committee comprised of at least 4 members, shall be appointed and meet at least every other month.

Section 4. A Treasurer, who shall be an officer of the Chapel as a legal corporate entity, and who is to be a member of the Finance Committee, shall be nominated and confirmed by the Chapel congregation to serve a term of at least three (3) years.

Section 5. The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall be the President of the Chapel as a legal corporate entity.

Section 6. The Chairman of the Finance Committee shall be the secretary of the Chapel as a legal corporate entity.

UPDATED LANGUAGE

**ARTICLE VI**

LEADERS: Believing that Christ is the only head of the church, under Him the leaders, officers and boards of the Chapel shall be:

Section 1.  Board of Elders, comprised of at least 7 men on a Board, shall be appointed by the existing Board and annually confirmed by the congregation, and meet at least monthly.

Section 2. Among the Elders there will be designated a Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer.

Section 3. The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall be the President of The Chapel as a legal corporate entity.

Section 4. The Treasurer and Secretary of the Board shall be the corresponding officers of The Chapel as a legal corporate entity.

EXPLANATION

**ARTICLE VI**

The language of Article VI – LEADERS was updated for simplicity and clarity in order to avoid confusion while maintaining the historical primary leadership instruction, which accurately reflects Biblical teaching.

As The Chapel of 40 years ago had one site, one pastor and minimal staff, specific instruction of multiple levels of leadership was needed in the original constitution construction. Currently, and going forward, this is no longer needed and only adds confusion over authority. In particular, the elders reviewed and are recommending the following:

* Section 1 remains clear that the elders are the governing authority of the church (as instructed by the Bible).
* We removed unnecessary language from section 1 regarding meeting details.
* Sections 2 and 3 were removed as they discussed Deacons and a Finance Committee. We believe this caused confusion as neither holds any decision-making authority in the church and so their inclusion in this section was unnecessary.
* The recommended sections 2, 3 and 4 replace the original sections 4, 5, and 6 with specific updates.

In particular, the elders are recommended that all legal officers of the Corporation should be elders rather than not. The recommended language details this accordingly where the prior language made members of the Finance Committee the legal Secretary and Treasurer

OLD

**ARTICLE VII**

SELECTION AND QUALIFICATIONS OF *LEADERS*:  Selection and confirmation of leaders shall be held at the Annual Business Meeting held on a Sunday in March.

 Section 1.  Elders shall be appointed by the existing Board of Elders, as deemed necessary from time to time.  All Elders will be subject to annual confirmation by ballot vote by the Chapel membership.  In order to be confirmed, an Elder must receive the approval of at least 80% of the votes cast.  Abstentions shall be considered a vote for confirmation. The Board of Elders will include the Senior Pastor, and others as appointed by the Board of Elders.

 Section 2.  Deacons shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee for a term of usually two (2) years but may be for one (1) year.  Not less than six deacons shall be selected each year.  Deacons will be subject to confirmation by receiving the approval of at least 80% of the ballots cast by the Chapel membership.  Abstentions shall be considered a vote for confirmation.

 Section 3.   A Treasurer shall be nominated by a Nominating Committee for a term of at least three years. The nominated Treasurer shall be subject to confirmation by receiving the approval of at least 80% of the ballots cast by the Chapel membership.  Abstentions shall be considered a vote for confirmation.

UPDATED LANGUAGE

**ARTICLE VII**

SELECTION AND QUALIFICATIONS OF *LEADERS*:  The confirmation of Board of Elders shall be held at the Annual Business Meeting held on a Sunday in March.

Section 1.  The existing Board of Elders, as deemed necessary from time to time, shall appoint new or additional elders.  All Elders will be subject to annual confirmation by ballot vote by the Chapel membership.  In order to be confirmed, an Elder must receive the approval of at least 80% of the votes cast.  Abstentions shall be considered a vote for confirmation. The Board of Elders will include the Senior Pastor, and others as appointed by the Board of Elders.

Section 2.  To remove anyone from the Board of Elders, the procedure given in I Timothy 5:19 and Matthew 18:15-17 for church disciplining shall be followed.  A vacated position may be filled at the discretion of the Board of Elders and the term of service will extend to the next Annual Business Meeting of the Chapel when Chapel members vote on confirmations.

Section 3.  Qualifications for elders and to hold an office are set forth in scripture, primarily at I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and Acts 6:3.

EXPLANATION

**ARTICLE VII**

The language of Article VII – SELECTION AND QUALIFICATIONS OF LEADERS was updated in line with the changes made to Article VI (Leaders). The intent of the changes made was for simplicity and clarity in order to avoid confusion while maintaining the historical primary leadership instruction, which accurately reflects biblical teaching.

In particular, the elders reviewed and are recommending the following changes:

* Sections 2 and 3 were removed as they discussed Deacons and the Treasurer as leadership roles and this article will only discuss the board of elders as the leadership and governing authority of the church.

OLD

**ARTICLE VII** Continued

Section 4.  To remove anyone from leadership, the procedure given in I Timothy 5:19 and Matthew 18:15-17 for church disciplining shall be followed.  A vacated position may be filled at the discretion of the Board of Elders or Board of Deacons in the case of a Deacon’s position,

and the term of service will extend to the next Annual Business Meeting of the Chapel when confirmations are voted by Chapel members.

 Section 5.  Qualifications for leadership and to hold an office are set forth in scripture, primarily at I Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9 and Acts 6:3.

 Section 6. All leaders, with the exception of the Senior Pastor, shall have been a member of The Chapel for not less than one (1) year immediately prior to being considered for confirmation.

UPDATED LANGUAGE

**ARTICLE VII** Continued

Section 4. All elders, with the exception of the Senior Pastor, shall have been a member of The Chapel for not less than one (1) year immediately prior to being considered for confirmation.

EXPLANATION

**ARTICLE VII**

Presented on page above

OLD

**ARTICLE VIII**

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**:A Nominating Committee, for the purpose of selecting candidates from Chapel members to serve on the Board of Deacons or for other functions as may be directed by the Board of Elders, shall be composed of the following Chapel representatives: One each from the Board of Elders, Finance Committee and Board of Deacons, the selection of which shall be made by and from the Board of Elders, the Board of Deacons and the Finance Committee, and four (4) selected at-large from the Chapel congregation, one (1) by the Board of Elders, one (1) by the Finance Committee and two (2) by the Board of Deacons. In addition, four (4) more representatives at-large from groups in the Chapel congregation, including consideration of Adult Sunday School class members, shall be selected by the Chairman of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee, selected in accordance with this article, and the Chairman appointed by the Chairman of the Board of Elders, shall be announced to the Chapel congregation at least five (5) months prior to the date of the Annual Business Meeting of the Chapel. The Nominating Committee shall consist of twelve (12) Chapel members, including the Chairman, and serve for terms of either one (1) or two (2) years except for the two Elder members that will serve as appointed by the Chairman of the Board of Elders. The Nominating Committee shall submit names of the nominated Deacon candidates, and others as may be directed, to the Chapel congregation at least two weeks prior to the Annual Business Meeting. Names of suggested Deacon candidates and others as may be directed, may be submitted by members of the Chapel to the Nominating Committee for consideration any time prior to one month before the Annual Business Meeting.

UPDATED LANGUAGE

Article VIII in its previous form, regarding the nominating committee will be **removed** from the constitution.

The **new Article VIII** (BELOW) will be about Deacons since they were removed from Articles VI and VII about leadership.

EXPLANATION

The previous ARTICLE VIII – NOMINATING COMMITTEE is presented for removal from the constitution. The reasoning for and intent behind this recommendation are as follows:

* The nominating committee was created for a much smaller church in different time. We believe that it is no longer needed today, nor will be going forward.
* The nominating committee was created when the deacons, treasurer and finance committee were prescribed leadership groups. As we have recommended removing these groups from mention as leadership, the need for the nominating committee is consequently removed as well.
* Finally, generally speaking, we believe that the constitution should provide broad guidance, rather than this type of specific outline of exact makeup and operational procedures.

OLD

NOTE – **OLD ARTICLE VI** language

Section 2.  Deacons, comprised of at least 12 men on a Board, shall be nominated and confirmed by the Chapel congregation and meet at least every other month.

NOTE – O**LD ARTICLE VII** language

Section 2.  Deacons shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee for a term of usually two (2) years but may be for one (1) year.  Not less than six deacons shall be selected each year.  Deacons will be subject to confirmation by receiving the approval of at least 80% of the ballots cast by the Chapel membership.  Abstentions shall be considered a vote for confirmation.

UPDATED LANGUAGE

**(NEW) ARTICLE VIII**

**DEACONS:** The Chapel will organize and utilize deacons for support and service in the church (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8-12).

Section 1. The Board of Elders shall appoint Deacons as needed to support the Elders and staff by serving and providing care for the needs of the church, and the congregation.

This team of people will meet, as needed to organize for this purpose. They will coordinate with staff.

Section 2. Deacons will be selected by the Board of Elders and confirmed at the next Annual Business Meeting of the Chapel when Chapel members vote on confirmations. In order to be confirmed, a deacon must receive the approval of at least 80% of the votes cast.  Abstentions shall be considered a vote for confirmation.

Deacons will meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Section 3. Annually the deacons will give a report the Board of Elders.

EXPLANATION

**ARTICLE VIII (NEW)**

As previously noted, Articles VI and VII, addressing leadership were updated to remove the mention of any groups or roles outside of the board of elders.

Looking to scripture (including I Timothy 3:8-12; Philippians 1:1; and Acts 6:2-4) as our guide, the elders believe that the role of Deacon is more accurately a role of service within the church rather than one of leadership authority.

Since the elders do clearly see the role of Deacon as a biblical role, described in the New Testament as a beneficial part of the church, we believe that it should remain mentioned in our constitution.

As such, we are recommending this new Article VIII – DEACONS for approval. The language of this new article was written with the following specific intent:

* We desire for the church to maintain deacons as a role of service within the body
* The deacons in their service should be in coordination with the church staff and under the authority of the elder board.
* Qualifications for deacons should remain in line with those presented in the bible in I Timothy 3
* The board of elders will select deacons with annual confirmation by the congregation. As such, a nominating committee is no longer needed.

OLD

**ARTICLE IX**

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE:  A Personnel Committee shall be composed of at least one (1) Elder who will serve as the Chairman of the committee. Also serving on the committee will be a Pastor and three (3) other members of the Chapel congregation designated by the Board of Elders for a total of at least five (5) members. The Board of Elders may appoint additional members as deemed appropriate from time to time. The responsibility of the Personnel Committee shall be to administer the Personnel and Policy Procedures of the Chapel including the periodic evaluation of employees and their performance, make salary recommendations and adjustments within the annual budget allocations for such purposes, and other personnel related matters as may be approved by the Board of Elders.

UPDATED LANGUAGE

**ARTICLE IX**

COMMITEES: The Board of Elders shall appoint members of the church to committees as needed. The purpose would to be both advise and ensure accountability to important areas of the church. Such areas would include, but not be limited to, the fiduciary health of the church (budgets, restricted funds and missional funds), and overall health of the staff of the church (personal policies, compensation, retirement, and insurance).

Details of selection, qualification and function are described in policy governance.

EXPLANATION

**ARTICLE IX**

Articles IX and X – PERSONNEL COMMITTEE and FINANCE COMMITTEE and TREASURER are recommended to be combined into one new Article IX – COMMITTEES. The language of the new recommended article was adjusted from the historical as follows:

* Generally speaking, we believe that the constitution should provide broad guidance, rather than this type of specific outline of exact makeup and operational procedures.
* We do believe that committees can and should provide accountability, oversight, and expertise to assist the Senior Pastor, staff, and board of elders in the ongoing ministry of the church.
* We believe that the areas in which this assistance may be needed and the desired form of such committees may change over time in the future.
* As such, we recommended more general language for the purpose and areas to have assistance from committees.
* We removed the very detailed and specific explanations of the exact committees and their makeup. The specifics are maintained and updated in policy governance the operating document used by the board of elders and senior pastor.
* As previously discussed in Article VI – Leaders, we have recommended adjusting the role of Treasurer. As such, we removed that specific language from this article.

OLD

**ARTICLE X**

FINANCE COMMITTEE AND TREASURER

 FINANCE COMMITTEE: The Finance Committee shall be composed of the Chapel Treasurer, the Chapel Business Administrator, one elder appointed by the Board of Elders and at least one (1) other individual from the Chapel congregation appointed by the Board of Elders that meets the qualifications set forth in Section 5 of Article VII. The Treasurer will also be confirmed pursuant to Section 3, Article VII. The Chairman of the Finance Committee shall be so designated by the Board of Elders and shall be the Secretary of the Chapel as a legal corporate entity. The Finance Committee shall serve as financial advisors to the Board of Elders, and as financial managers in coordination with the Chapel Business Administrator, with respect to bookkeeping, annual budgets, holding, disbursing, and investing all funds and securities of the Chapel. Other specific financial authority may also be designated to the Finance Committee by the Board of Elders. However, the Finance Committee shall have no authority to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, encumber or transfer any real property of the Chapel without the approval of the Board of Elders and a specific vote of the Chapel membership authorizing such action if the value of any such property exceeds two hundred and fifty thousand dollars ($250,000). The Chairman of the Finance Committee, in addition to the Treasurer and Chairman of the Board of Elders shall be authorized to sign for the Chapel as the legal corporate entity.

UPDATED LANGUAGE

**ARTICLE IX**

The recommended language for the updated Article IX was presented on the prior page.

EXPLANATION

**ARTICLE IX**

The explanation was provided on the prior page.

OLD

**ARTICLE X** Continued

TREASURER:As a member of the Finance Committee, the Treasurer shall have custody of all funds and securities of the Chapel, subject to any directions that may be imposed by the Board of Elders or Finance Committee. The Chapel Business Administrator shall assist the Treasurer in the execution of all financial management responsibilities. The Treasurer shall provide a financial report at least monthly to the Finance Committee and at least annually to the Chapel membership at the Annual Business Meeting, and at such other times as may be required by the Finance Committee or Board of Elders.

UPDATED LANGUAGE

**ARTICLE IX**

The recommended language for the updated Article IX was presented on the prior page.

EXPLANATION

**ARTICLE IX**

The explanation was provided on the prior page.

OLD

**ARTICLE XI**

SUFFRAGE: Only members of The Chapel seventeen (17) years or older or emancipated by marriage shall have the right to vote in any business meeting. All votes of the Chapel membership taken for any purpose shall be by secret ballot. Any issue to be resolved by vote of the membership shall be considered resolved by the total votes cast, there being no requirement that a quorum of the active membership participate in the voting, as long as at least 100 total votes are cast. In the event that the membership is meeting at two or more locations, the total votes cast at all locations combined shall conclusively resolve the issue.

UPDATED LANGUAGE

**ARTICLE X**

As defined in Article VI of this constitution, The Chapel is governed by the Board of Elders and is therefore not a congregational church. However, for purposes of input and accountability, there are times that call for a vote of the membership, including but not limited to, confirmation of elders and deacons and amendments to this constitution.

SUFFRAGE: Only members of The Chapel seventeen (17) years or older or emancipated by marriage shall have the right to vote in any business meeting. As defined in article IV, affiliate members do not have the right to vote.

All votes of the Chapel membership taken for any purpose shall be by secret ballot. Any issue to be resolved by vote of the membership shall be considered resolved by the total votes cast, there being no requirement that a quorum of the active membership participate in the voting. In the event that the membership is meeting at two or more locations, the total votes cast at all locations combined shall conclusively resolve the issue.

EXPLANATION

**ARTICLE X**

The original Article XI – SUFFRAGE has become Article X through the recommended removal of a prior article. Additionally, the elders are making several recommended changes and additions to this article as follows:

* An opening paragraph was provided to be sure that clarity is maintained regarding the Chapel’s nature as an elder led church.
* This opening paragraph also serves to provide explanation for what types of things call for a vote of the membership.
* Language was added, in line with Article IV to specifically address the voting status of affiliate members.
* The requirement that a minimum of 100 votes be case has been recommended for removal as it was arbitrary and unnecessary.

OLD

BL- **ARTICLE I**

RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERS

Section 1.  The primary responsibilities of Elders are:

A. Prayer and ministering the word, i.e., teaching and preaching (Acts 6:4);

B. Provide pastoral care (Acts 20:18; I Peter 5:2);

C. General governance and oversight (I Timothy 5:17; Acts 11:30).

The Elders shall have co-equal voice and authority and have primary charge for the spiritual welfare of the congregation.  The Board of Elders is the final spiritual authority and has the ultimate responsibility for all other aspects of the Chapel as more fully described in the Incorporation Article I of the Constitution.  The Board of Elders may call the Chapel together for special business meetings.  The Board of Elders shall have responsibility to hire, retain or dismiss all staff or employees of the Chapel consistent with the Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual.  Prior to the hiring of staff or employees, the Board of Elders must consult with the Finance Committee concerning the financial aspects of any proposed hiring of personnel. The Board of Elders may delegate certain authority to the Finance Committee, Board of Deacons, staff, employees, committees or advisors as they deem appropriate, but retain ultimate responsibility for any authority so delegated.  The Board of Elders shall select a Chairman from among its members each year.  The duties of the Chairman shall include chairing Elders' meetings and serving as Moderator of the Chapel. The Chairman shall appoint members of the Board of Elders to serve on the Mission Committee, Personnel Committee and Nominating Committee.

Section 2. The Deacons serve as representatives of the congregation and are to assist the Board of Elders UPDATED LANGUAGE

BL-**ARTICLE I**

RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERS

Section 1.  The primary responsibilities of Elders are:

A. Prayer and ministering the word, i.e., teaching and preaching (Acts 6:4);

B. Provide pastoral care (Acts 20:18; I Peter 5:2);

C. General governance and oversight (I Timothy 5:17; Acts 11:30).

The Elders shall have co-equal voice and authority and have primary charge for the spiritual welfare of the congregation.  The Board of Elders is the final spiritual authority and has the ultimate responsibility for all other aspects of the Chapel as more fully described in the Incorporation Article I of the Constitution.  The Board of Elders may call the Chapel together for special business meetings.

The Board of Elders shall have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure the financial heath of the church. Additionally the Board of Elders will ensure the proper treatment of all employees of The Chapel consistent with all state and federal laws and guidelines in policy governance.

The Board of Elders may delegate certain authority to the Senior Pastor or advisors as they deem appropriate, but retain ultimate responsibility for any authority so delegated.  The Board of Elders shall select a Chairman, Treasure and Secretary from among its members.

The duties of the Chairman shall include chairing Elders’ meetings and serving as Moderator of The Chapel. The Treasurer will assist with financial oversight as determined by the board of elders. The Secretary will keep the minutes of all elder and membership meetings when present and appoint someone to do so in his place when not present.

EXPLANATION

BL – **ARTICLE I**

The elders are recommended adjusted language to BL ARTICLE I – RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERS in line with the recommended changes to Articles VI and VII of the constitution that address leadership. More specifically:

* Sections 2 and 3 regarding deacons and finance committee were removed as the elders are the sole governing authority of the church.
* Language was added to section 1 to recognize the fiduciary responsibility of the elders.
* Language regarding the responsibilities of the elders was simplified not to alter the responsibilities but to remove specific procedural mandates.
* Language was added to section 1 to recognize the operating and authority relationship between the board of elders and the senior pastor. This language includes mention of Policy Governance, the guiding document the elders use to provide guidelines to their efforts and those of the senior pastor.

OLD

BL- **ARTICLE I**

Continued

in carrying out the ministry of the Chapel, subject to the direction of the Board of Elders.  The responsibilities of the Board of Deacons lie primarily in attending to the maintenance of Chapel facilities and grounds, working in conjunction with the Chapel *Business* Administrator, Management Committee and Finance Committee, to provide physical assistance to Chapel ministries and other tasks, as directed by the Pastors and Board of Elders, including, but not limited to the preparation and serving of the elements of communion and preparation for baptismal services.  Additionally, the Board of Deacons has responsibility to help provide spiritual leadership and counsel.  The Board of Deacons shall elect a Chairman and Vice-chairman or two Co-chairmen and Secretary annually.

Section 3.  The Finance Committee is to assist the Board of Elders in carrying out the ministry of the Chapel subject to the direction of the Board of Elders. The responsibilities of the Finance Committee are primarily in the performance of financial management and oversight as further described in Article X of the Constitution. The Finance Committee is to provide a monthly financial report to the Board of Elders as prepared by the Treasurer. The Chairman of the Finance Committee is appointed by the Board of Elders and shall supervise the Committee in the execution of its responsibilities. The Finance Committee is the guardian of all funds, property and legal documents of the Chapel. The Secretary of the Finance Committee shall be the Chapel Business Administrator who will record the proceedings of the Committee and minutes from the Annual Business Meeting and any other Special Called Meetings of the Chapel.

OLD

BL- **ARTICLE II**

MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

Section 1. Services of The Chapel shall be for the purposes of worship, instruction, prayer, fellowship, evangelism and service. The times for such meetings shall be set by the Board of Elders.Section 2: The annual business meeting shall be held on a Sunday in March to be announced annually at least two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to the called Sunday meeting. All church business meetings whether annual or special may be convened for congregational vote following each worship service in all Chapel locations. All business meetings, annual or special, will be preceded by an informational meeting to be held not less than 3 weeks prior to the business meeting. The chairman of the Board of Elders (or his designee) shall preside at any informational or business meeting. Notice of the informational meeting shall be included in all notices of the business meeting. The purpose of the informational meeting shall be to discuss any proposals and to entertain suggestions regarding amendments to any of the proposals. No proposal will be submitted at the business meeting for a vote of the congregation unless it has first been approved and recommended by the elders. There shall be no amendment to any proposal at any business meeting at which votes shall be cast, except for the correction of errors which are purely typographical or clerical. In the event that the church is meeting at two or more locations, the elders may designate the location or locations at which informational and business meetings may be held, provided that the notice of the meetings shall contain information as to the specific locations at which each meeting will be held.

UPDATED LANGUAGE

BL – **ARTICLE II**

MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

Section 1. Services of The Chapel shall be for the purposes of worship, instruction, prayer, fellowship, evangelism and service. The Senior Pastor with approval of the Board of Elders shall set the times for such meetings.

Section 2: The annual business meeting shall be held on a Sunday once in each calendar year, preferably in March, but no more than sixteen (16) months later than the prior annual business meeting.

All church business meetings whether annual or special may be convened for congregational vote at a time determined by the board of elders and may take place in a single or multiple locations if deemed necessary to accommodate the membership, provided that the notice of the meetings shall contain information as to the specific locations at which each meeting will be held.

An informational meeting to be held not less than 3 weeks prior to the business meeting will precede all business meetings, annual or special. The chairman of the Board of Elders (or his designee) shall preside at any informational or business meeting. Notice of the informational meeting shall be included in all notices of the business meeting. The purpose of the informational meeting shall be to discuss any proposals and to entertain suggestions regarding amendments to any of the proposals. No proposal will be submitted at the business meeting for a vote of the congregation unless it has first been approved and recommended by the elders. There shall be no amendment to any proposal at any business meeting at which votes shall be cast, except for the correction of errors which are purely typographical or clerical.

 EXPLANATION

BL – **ARTICLE II**

The elders are recommending minor adjustments to the wording of BL Article II – MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH. Specifically, the elders are recommending and intending the following:

* The recommended wording is adjusted in order to allow for more flexibility in the timing of the annual business meeting. The goal and intent is to provide the board of elders some flexibility in exactly when during the year and when during the day the meeting is scheduled in case it is needed one day.
* The original intent remains the same, as a meeting will be scheduled, “preferably in March”; it must occur within a given time frame of the prior most recent meeting, it must be announced and must be preceded by an informational meeting.

OLD

BL **ARTICLE II** Continued

In addition to the annual business meetings, the elders may call special meetings for informational discussions and for the purpose of making decisions requiring congregational vote. The announcement of all business meetings, whether annual or special, shall be made during the worship service in all Chapel locations and published in Sunday program or on the official Chapel website at least two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to any called meeting.

UPDATED LANGUAGE

BL – **ARTICLE II** Continued

In addition to the annual business meetings, the elders may call special meetings for informational discussions and for the purpose of making decisions requiring congregational vote.

The announcement of all business meetings, whether annual or special, shall be made during the worship service in all Chapel locations and published in Sunday program or on the official Chapel website at least two (2) consecutive Sundays prior to any called meeting.

EXPLANATION

BL – ARTICLE II Continued

Provided on prior page.

OLD

BL **– ARTICLE III**

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Any question that may arise as to the parliamentary procedures not covered by the Constitution or By-Laws will be settled by reference to the latest edition of Robert’s Rules of Order. Such rules of order shall govern all business meetings whether annual or special.

UPDATED LANGUAGE

BL – **ARTICLE III**

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

For the purposes of conducting an orderly meeting, all business meetings, whether annual or special will be conducted using parliamentary procedure based generally on Robert’s Rules of Order. Any question that may arise as to the parliamentary procedures not covered by the Constitution or By-Laws will be settled by the Board of Elders based on a reference to Robert’s Rules of Order. At no time will the use of any version of Robert’s Rules of Order be used to overrule the meeting and voting guidelines outlined in this Constitution and By-Laws.

 EXPLANATION

BL – A**RTICLE III**

The board of elders is recommending updated language to BL – ARTICLE III PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE. The specific addition and intent of the updated language are:

* Wording has been added to clarify that Robert’s Rules of Order are used to provide and orderly meeting only.
* The intent is to state overtly that any given aspect of Robert’s Rules will not be able to force or create a situation where the elders are forced to act outside of the constitution or governing rules of the church.

OLD

BL – **ARTICLE IV**

AMENDMENTS…

NOTE – Recommending that this become Article V of the By-Laws

UPDATED LANGUAGE

BL – **ARTICLE IV**

PROPOSED **NEW ARTICLE**

**CHANGING OLD ARTICLE IV TO V**

FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

The Board of Elders, Senior Pastor and other Senior Staff will conduct their business in a manner that upholds their fiduciary responsibility, acting as good stewards of the resources that God has entrusted to The Chapel.

Section 1 Fiscal Year. As a corporation, The Chapel will conduct business annually using a fiscal year that assists in guiding planning, budgeting, tracking, and all legal tax or other filings. The fiscal year will be set by the Board of Elders and determined based on the time of year that best fits the ministry and fiscal needs of The Chapel. The Board of Elders may change the timing of the fiscal year as needed or deemed necessary or appropriate.

Section 2 Budget. The operations of the ministry, staffing and other aspects of The Chapel will be planned and carried out based on an annual budget. The budget process will be conducted by Staff leadership with appropriate involvement of the Board of Elders and any coordinating committees, as outlined by Policy Governance. The final budget total will be approved by the Board of Elders and may be amended by the Board of Elders as necessary based on the availability of funds.

 EXPLANATION

BL – **ARTICLE IV**

The board of elders is recommended the creation and adoption of this new by law, BL – ARTICLE IV – FINANCIAL OPERATIONS. This new by law is recommending with the following intent and reasoning:

* The constitution of an organization should outline key financial pieces and information, generally. Our historical constitution did not do this.
* This information includes: fiscal year and budget information.
* The board of elders believes that it is important that the key financial items are outlined generally in our constitution.
* Effort was made to write this new Article in a manner that provides information and guidance while leaving flexibility for the board of elders to make adjustments as needed without having to amend the constitution.