

By-Laws
Springhill Baptist Church
of
Fernandina Beach, FL

PREAMBLE

We believe that the Word of God is the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

However, as required by law, the following articles and bylaws are for the orderly function of the church. These Articles and By-Laws are always subject to reconsideration as to their full and indisputable agreement with God's Word. As such, we, the members of the Springhill Baptist Church, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

Article 1 Name

This Local Body of Believers shall be known as the Springhill Baptist Church of Fernandina Beach, Florida. It is located on County Road 107 South, in Nassauville, with a mailing address, 941017 Old Nassauville Road, Fernandina Beach, Florida 32034.

This local body of believers is incorporated, having a Board of Trustees. This corporation has been registered with the State of Florida, as a Non-Profit Organization.

See attached appendix 1A for the historical account of the founding of Springhill Baptist Church.

See attached appendix 1B for the Corporation Document for Springhill Baptist Church.

Article 2 Membership

2.1 Purpose of Membership

When an individual is saved, he becomes a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-14). Because he is united to Christ and the other members of the body in this way, he is therefore qualified to become a member of a local expression of that body. Scripture instructs us to assemble regularly so that we can rejoice in our common hope and spur one another on to love and good deeds (Heb 10:23-25).

Therefore, to become a member of Springhill Baptist Church is to formally commit oneself to this identifiable, local body of believers who have joined together for specific, divinely ordained purposes. These purposes include receiving instruction from God's Word (1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Tim 4:2), teaching and admonishing each other in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Col 3:16), serving and edifying one another through the proper use of spiritual gifts (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:4-31; 1 Pet 4:7-11), participating in the ordinances (Luke 22:14-20; Acts 2:38-42), and proclaiming the gospel to those who are lost (Matt 28:18-20). In addition, when one becomes a

member of Springhill Baptist Church, he submits himself to the care and the authority of the biblically qualified elders that God has placed in this assembly (Heb 13:17).

2.2 Admission to Membership

No one shall automatically become a member of this church. Membership shall be open to anyone who professes personal faith in Christ for their eternal salvation, has a comprehension of the basic doctrine of salvation as contained within the Word of God, and has been baptized by water baptism (by immersion) after conversion. All requests for membership shall be made to an Elder, or Deacon. Upon making such a request, the person shall be given an application for membership, along with a copy of the Constitution and the By-laws. Before they are approved for membership, it will be necessary to complete the New Member Class. In the New Member Class, prospective members must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Constitution, promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant, subscribe to the By-Laws, and give a verbal testimony of their conversion and walk with Christ.

After completion of these requirements, and on the acceptance of this individual by the Council of Elders, it is the responsibility of the applicant to present themselves before the congregation. Then a recommendation will be made to the whole congregation regarding accepting this person into the membership of the church. The applicant will be received into membership upon receiving a majority of the vote by the congregation present at any of its public worship services.

2.3 Voting Privileges

Voting privileges are restricted to members who are in good standing, who are not under any disciplinary action.

2.4 Termination of Membership

1. Death -The name of a member shall be removed from the church roll upon verification of their death.
2. Transfer - Any member in good standing may request that a letter of membership be transferred to another fellowship of like faith. No letter will be granted to a member who is under the corrective discipline of this church.
3. Non-Letter Transfer. Any member upon verification will be removed from the membership roll, if they have:
 - a. Moved from the community and no longer attend Springhill Baptist Church.
 - b. Joined or regularly attend another church.
4. Discipline – When a member continues to knowingly ignore the commands or prohibitions of Scriptures in daily walk or teaching so that their life and/or erroneous teaching (1 Tim 1:18-20; 2 Tim 2:14-19; Heb 10:23-25) continues to hinder the peace of the church or its testimony, church discipline will be necessary. See specifics under Article 2.5 entitled Church Discipline.

2.5 Church Discipline

Church membership does not involve an expectation to live perfectly. Rather, church membership is a commitment to worship and minister in a body of believers where the members covenant together to hold each other accountable to pursue obedience to what Scripture teaches.

The pursuit of obedience is not the same as perfection. It will involve failure and confession on a regular basis. The mark of a true Christian, and the mark of a church member in good standing, is not perfection, but the persistent fight of faith that recognizes sin as sin, confesses it, and turns from it in new resolves of holiness again and again.

Any member consistently neglectful of their duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the Council of Elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matt 18: 15–20. Church discipline, then, should be initiated after individual private admonition has failed.

Discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (1 Cor 4:14; Heb 12:1–11; Ps 141:5; Prov 25:12; 27: 5; Eccl 7:5; Matt 18:15–20; Luke 17:3-4; 1 Cor 5:3-5; Gal 6:1–5; 2 Thess 3:14–15).

Discipline should be for instruction in righteousness, for the good of other Christians, and as an example to them (Rom 15:14; 1 Cor 5:11; 15:33-34; Col 3:16; 1 Thess 5:14-15; 1 Tim 5:20; Heb 10:24– 25).

Discipline should be for the purity of the church as a whole (Acts 5:1-14; 1 Cor 5:1–7; 2 Cor 13:10; 2 John 9-10; Jude 24).

Discipline should be for the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (Matt 5:13–16; Acts 5:1–14; Eph 5:6-11; 1 Tim 3:7; 2 Pet 2:1-2; and Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Rom 15:1–6; 1 Pet 2:12).

When the private efforts of loving church members do not bring about repentance, the Council of Elders will begin a process of patient inquiry and entreaty. If true repentance does not result, the Council of Elders of the church will present the findings to the church body and action will be taken to remove the person from membership in the hope that this will lead them to repentance (1 Cor 5:1-5; 2 Cor 2:5-11; 2 Thess 3:14-15). The Church will always vote on such a matter, and requires a two thirds (2/3) majority of members present. The fact that it is easy today for a disciplined person to be offended and withdraw membership and go to another church should not hinder the obedience of the church.

2.6 Restoration to Church Membership

The goal of all discipline is a holy walk under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and obedience to His Word. The right to exclude persons or the withdrawal of fellowship is in harmony with the teachings of the Word of God (Matt 18:15–17; 1 Cor 5; 2 Thess 3:6), and is balanced by the call to restore such persons who have given satisfactory evidence of repentance (2 Cor 2:6–8). When

a person gives such evidence, the Council of Elders shall recommend that the person be restored to full fellowship in this church.

2.7 Reapplication for Membership

If a former member chooses to apply for membership they may do so by presenting themselves before the Council of Elders and reviewing the Constitution, and By-Laws with them. In cases of corrective discipline, the procedures for Restoration found in Article 2.6 will be followed.

2.8 Non-Member Services

Non-members may serve on an as needed basis upon approval:

- a. In services, such as administration and professional consultation, upon approval by the Council of Deacons.
- b. In a ministry position under the direct oversight of a member upon approval by the Council of Elders.

Article 3 Church Government

3.1 General Officers

The Biblical offices in the church are Elders and Deacons. In addition, our church recognizes vocational staff positions and the corporate administrative positions under these By-Laws of Board of Trustees, Church Clerk and Treasurer. All officers must be members in good standing of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

3.2 Historical Account of Elder Leadership for Springhill Baptist Church

See attached Appendix 3.2A for Historical Account of Elder Leadership for Springhill Baptist Church.

3.3 Primary Responsibilities of the Council of Elders in Springhill

The primary responsibilities of the Council of Elders of Springhill Baptist Church will be the following:

- 1. To provide direction for the church and its ministries including appropriate delegation of authority and responsibility in particular areas of need.**
- 2. To lead the church in doctrinal areas of concern.**
- 3. To lead the church in discipline/restoration concerns.**

Having stated the three broad areas of responsibility, it is best to understand what these roles and responsibilities may look like in day-to-day life in Springhill. The following is not intended to be exhaustive, but only suggestive of how the Council of Elder assignment may be lived out among our congregation:

- **Shepherd the flock** – by providing the care and feeding necessary for the health of our church (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet 5:2).

- **Lead/rule the flock** – by hearing God’s voice and catching His direction for His church, the Council of Elders are to provide the necessary leadership for the church to follow after God (1 Tim 3:3-5; 5:17; 1 Thess 5:12-13; Acts 20:28-31; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:1-3).
- **Teach the flock** – that is, the Council of Elders are to accurately communicate (through verbal teaching and godly lifestyle) the truth of God (1 Tim 3:2; 5:17; Tit 1:9; Heb 13:7).
- **Resolve differences in the flock** – just as fathers are responsible to discipline children who are unruly and rebellious in the family, so the Council of Elders are responsible as “multiple fathers” in the “church family” to discipline believers who are determined to violate the will of God (Acts 15:1-29; 16:1-4).
- **Pray for the flock** – as the Council of Elders recognizes their dependence upon God and their awareness of inviting God into the situations of life, the Council of Elders are to be men of prayer who diligently prays for those under their care (James 5:13-15; Acts 6:4).
- **Protect the flock from false teachers and teaching** – as the Council of Elders teaches with their lips and lives the pure doctrine of the Word, false teachers and teachings are exposed (Acts 20:17-38; Tit 1:9-11).
- **Serve the flock in humility** – The Council of Elders realize their dependence upon God and are humbled by the trust of the souls of others (1 Pet 5:2-4; Heb 13:7).
- **Share leadership in the church** – in the New Testament church, God’s design is to have a plurality of leadership. There is no “one pastor” giving leadership to a church. It is always a shared concept, drawing from the maturity, discernment, and giftedness of the group raised to position to serve (Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28-31, Tit 1:5; 1 Pet 5:1).

3.4 The Relationship of Elders and Church Congregation

The purpose of elder leadership in our church is never to speak on behalf of our congregation or to silence the voice of our people. Some may think that all the decisions of the church will be made by the Elder leadership team. Granted, many of the day-to-day decisions will be made by this group of men. It is understood that this is why they are placed into this position: to give godly leadership to our church.

However, the driving purpose of Elder leadership is not to “make decisions” for Springhill. Rather, it is to catch the heart of God and lead our church to follow after Him. Thus, this team of men will be the leading group who will search the heart of God and seek after His will for our church. Having heard from Him, they will lovingly share and lead our church to take the necessary steps to follow Him. All of this should be done with affirmation and approval from our congregation as set forth in these By-Laws.

In summary: God speaks, our Elders hear from Him, and then lead our church to follow Him as our congregation gives affirmation and approval. See Article 5 in our Constitution on Leadership and Organization.

The Church Should Respond To Elders By

- **Knowing Them** – to recognize, value, and appreciate them for their labor in our church (1 Thess 5:12).
- **Esteeming Them** – the congregation is to think highly of them for the valuable contribution they make to the life of the church (1 Thess 5:13).

- **Loving Them** – when a congregation submits to its leaders in love, it makes the eternal assignment much easier (1 Thess 5:13).
- **Obeying And Submitting To Them** – by gladly and lovingly following their leadership as they follow the leadership of the Chief Shepherd (Heb 13:17).
- **Praying For Them** – it is easy to criticize, but their work will carry on with more joy and effectiveness if the congregation will diligently pray for their leaders (1 Thess 3:1-2).
- **Supporting Them Financially** – there will be those Elders who will spend more time than others managing and shepherding the church and particularly carrying out major “teaching functions,” which involve encouraging, admonishing, instructing, correcting, training, preaching, etc. (1 Tim 5:17-18; 1 Cor 9:7-14).

3.5 Elder Qualifications

The New Testament teaches that aspiring to the office of Elder is a worthy desire (1 Tim. 3:1). Though every believing man should grow toward full maturity in Christ, we believe the New Testament clearly teaches that Elders must be qualified before they are placed into the role of Elder.

No Elder will be a perfect man, but if he is clearly and persistently lacking in any of the qualifications, he cannot serve in the church as an Elder. Maturity and predictability is the standard, not perfection.

The list of qualifications is stated in two places in the New Testament: 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Tit 1:5-9

1 Tim 3:1 opens with, “*If a man...*” It is the clear teaching of Scripture that only men can serve the church in this leadership position.

We believe that both men and women comprise the church and the gifts and abilities of each are greatly needed for the church to be the church God desires it to be. God assigns different roles to men and women in the church and the home because that is how He designed us to function. The truth of differentiation and equality can be seen in the functional hierarchy within the Trinity (1 Cor 11:3). The Son submits to the Father and the Holy Spirit submits to the Father and the Son. This functional submission does not imply an equivalent inferiority of essence; all three Persons are equally God, but they differ in their function. Likewise, men and women are equally human beings and equally share the image of God, but they have God-ordained roles and functions that mirror the functional hierarchy within the Trinity.

The qualifications for an Elder can be placed into four categories:

- **Personal** – the *character* of the man is of utmost importance.
- **Family** – the *home life* of an Elder is of great importance.
- **Ministry** – he must possess certain *gifts and abilities* as given him by the Holy Spirit.
- **Public Reputation** – what *unbelievers and outsiders think* of this man is of great importance.

3.5.1 Personal Qualities

1. Blameless/Above Reproach (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:6)

- This is not to say the man is “perfect.” None would qualify. However, he must be beyond any allegation brought against him.
 - His testimony and reputation must speak louder than any accusation brought against him
 - This qualification is a “banner” flying over all the others. The others are specific areas in which the man must be above reproach.
2. **Vigilant/Temperate** (1 Tim 3:2)
 - This indicates the absence of any personal disorder that would distort his judgment or conduct.
 - He must display sober, sensible judgment in all things and is able to keep his head in all situations.
 3. **Sober/Self-Controlled/Good Behavior** (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8)
 - Similar to vigilant in that he has self control; the master of his passions. He is obviously under the Spirit’s control.
 - There are no out-of-balance areas in his life.
 - He is content in doing and having only what God desires for him.
 4. **Hospitable** (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8)
 - He must have a welcoming personality and enjoy having guests into his home.
 - He must be open and receptive to people.
 5. **Not Given To Drunkenness** (1 Tim 3:3; Tit 1:7; Ro 14)
 - Because an Elder sets an example, he must be free from the use of alcohol.
 - The principle of causing a weaker brother to stumble should be the primary reason for abstaining.
 6. **Not Violent/No Striker** (1 Tim 3:3; Tit 1:7)
 - An Elder cannot settle disputes in violent ways.
 - He isn’t quick-tempered and doesn’t resort to physical violence.
 - An Elder must not deal with difficulties through physical or verbal abuse.
 7. **Not A Lover Of Money/Not Greedy For Filthy Lucre** (1 Tim 3:3; Tit 1:7)
 - An Elder understands the value and role of money in life.
 - He is not in pursuit of money for the sake of adding to his possessions in life.
 - He is a model of tithing, giving, and generosity toward others.
 8. **Gentle/Patient** (1 Tim 3:3)
 - An Elder must be considerate; approachable; humble; willing to see life from the perspective of another; understanding.
 - He is to be the opposite of quarrelsome.
 9. **Not Quarrelsome** (1 Tim 3:3)
 - An elder avoids debates and arguments.
 - He is peaceable and not argumentative.
 10. **Not Covetous** (1 Tim 3:3)
 - In conjunction with #7 – he must not be under the bondage of materialism.
 - He should not be in great financial debt.

11. Not A Novice/Recent Convert (1 Tim 3:6)

- An Elder must not be new to the faith.
- If new converts are placed into the position of an Elder, we are setting them up for an attack from the enemy at the point of their pride.
- Maturity takes time and experience.

12. Not Overbearing/Not Self-Willed (Tit 1:7)

- An Elder is one who is willing to listen to others and respect their opinions and thoughts.
- He must respect the point-of-view of others.
- He must not be a person who seeks his own way, disregarding the opinions, views, and feelings of others.

13. Not Quick Tempered/Not Soon Angry (Tit 1:7)

- An Elder must be one who is not easily angered for the wrong reason and at the wrong time and in the wrong measure.
- He must not be one with a short fuse who is given to a quick temper.
- To be angry when the Person and Teaching of Christ are trampled on is a virtue.
- To be angry because self is not praised and satisfied is a sin.

14. Love What Is Good/A Lover Of Good Men (Tit 1:8)

- The Greek word translated “good” means one who, with self-denial, loves and practices what is good.
- An Elder must be one who not only loves to be among people who are benevolent, but to love benevolence and do it.
- A selfish, self-seeking person should not be entrusted with the function of an elder.

15. Upright/Just (Tit 1:8)

- An Elder is one who is even-handed and views the rights of others as if they were his own.
- He must be just and equitable, impartial in his judgments and decisions in any position of leadership he has.

16. Holy (Tit 1:8)

- An Elder must recognize God’s moral commandments, not only as they pertain to his relationship with God, but also his relationships with others.
- He must be firmly committed to God and His Word and this commitment must be the basis for the way he conducts his daily life.

17. Disciplined/Self-Controlled (Tit 1:8)

- An Elder must exercise dominion over that from which he wants to escape lest he becomes controlled by it.
- He is a person who is able to bring his passions under God’s control.
- He is content in doing and having only what God wants him to do and have.

3.5.2 Family Qualities

1. The Husband of one Wife (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:6)

- An Elder must not be a womanizer.
- This means that a man is to be faithful to his own wife in thought and deed.
- Whether married or single, he is to be above reproach and blameless in his relationship with women.

- This is a positive statement in which Paul is dealing with Moral Purity, which is why he lists this quality immediately, stating that an Elder must be “above reproach.”
- There is nothing that builds a man’s reputation more significantly than being faithful to one woman – his wife.
- In essence, Paul is saying that if you can’t trust a man to be loyal to his wife, then you can’t trust him in other areas of his life, particularly in the areas of honesty and integrity.

2. One Who Manages His Own Family Well (1 Tim 3:4-5)

- An Elder must be a strong spiritual leader in his home before he is qualified to lead in the church.
- Paul viewed a well-ordered family as the true test of a man’s maturity and ability to lead other Christians.
- His ability to lead his family spirituality must be evident to all.

3. A Man Whose Children Believe (Tit 1:6)

- The children of an elder must also be considered seriously.
- He must not have children (who are still under his authority) who are accused of having gone astray or who are not subject to him.

3.5.3 Ministry Qualities

1. Able To Teach (1 Tim 3:2)

- An Elder must be able to respond to the issues of life with a biblical perspective.
- This does not mean all Elders must have the gift of teaching, but that the man is to hold to the pure and clear doctrine of the Bible as he guides and leads the church.
- An Elder must know the Word of God and be able to instruct others from it.

2. Hold Firmly To the Trustworthy Message (Tit 1:9)

- An Elder must know the truth of God’s Word and continuously stand on the truth.
- He must be steadfast and uncompromising in the Word of God.
- He must be able to share the Word with others and defend it against error.

3.5.4 Public Reputation

1. Good Reputation with Outsiders (1 Tim3:7)

- An Elder must have a good reputation in the local community.
- Just as an Elder must have a good reputation with believers by being “above reproach,” his reputation with outsiders must be above question.

3.6 Senior Pastor/Elder

The Pastor is an elder by definition; the terms are simply different ways of identifying the same person. At Springhill Baptist Church the Senior Pastor/Elder will be referred to as the Senior Pastor.

3.6.1 The Relationship of the Pastor to the Elders

When there is a plurality of leadership, someone needs to function as the primary leader of the team. It’s God’s design to always have a key leader in place to lead His people.

The Senior Pastor of the church acts as the chairman of the Council of Elders. He has in response to God’s call, devoted his vocational life to the ministry of the Word and prayer in the

service of the church of Christ. The Senior Pastor is supported financially by the church in return for his vocational labors. A plurality of elders does not mean that the pastor has no distinctive role. There are many references in the New Testament where a pastor is called to preach and yet that would not apply to all the elders in a congregation. In Corinth, for instance, Paul gave himself exclusively to preaching in a way that lay elders in a church could not (Acts 18:5, 1 Cor 9:14; 1 Tim 4:13; 5:17). Also, preachers seemed to relocate to an area for the express purpose of preaching (Rom 10:14-15), whereas elders seemed settled among the community (Tit 1:5). As the regular voice that proclaims God's Word, a faithful pastor will probably find that a congregation and the other elders treat him as the first among equals and especially worthy of double honor (1 Tim 5:17). Still, the Senior Pastor is fundamentally an elder, formally equal with every other elder called by the congregation to act in this capacity.

3.6.2 Senior Pastor Tenure

His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out in Article 3.11.4, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 3.8.

The pastor shall serve for an undesignated period of time. He shall give 30 day notice to the church if the Holy Spirit leads him to resign, and the church shall give the Senior Pastor 30 day notice in case the church feels that his ministry at this local church is ended. By mutual consent this period may be lengthened or shortened.

3.6.3 Duties of Senior Pastor

He shall oversee the preaching on the Lord's Day, the administration of the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the Springhill Baptist Church Constitution and By-Laws.

In the absence or incapacity of the Senior Pastor, the Council of Elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

The responsibilities of the Senior Pastor shall include:

1. To faithfully exposit the Word of God by preaching and teaching.
2. To set an example in Christian living and dedication.
3. To oversee the administering of the ordinances.
4. To serve as the Chairman of the Council of Elders.

There shall, by all members, elders, and deacons, be respect for the office of the Senior Pastor. He shall be held in esteem and respected as an under-shepherd of God (1 Thess 5:12, 13). To aid him in carrying out his ministry, the church body shall not burden him with tasks unrelated to those duties that are absolutely necessary to his under-shepherding. The main task of the Senior Pastor is shepherding the flock (1 Pet 5:2; 2 Tim 4:1-5) and nothing shall be permitted to diminish the time and effort that the Senior Pastor needs to make such a ministry Spirit filled and instructive.

For additional responsibilities, see Article 3.12, entitled Council of Elders.

3.7 Vocational Pastors

A Vocational Pastor is an elder by definition, the terms are simply different ways of identifying the same person.

3.7.1 The Relationship of the Vocational Pastor to the Council of Elders

Vocational Pastors who, in response to God's call, serve the church of Christ as their primary vocation. His call shall be defined as per Article 3.8. Being a Vocational Pastor does not automatically render a person to serve on the Council of Elders. After a period of proving himself, the Vocational Pastor of the church may serve on the Council of Elders if so approved by the church. There shall be no distinction in their function as an elder from those serving as lay elders. All who serve as elders must be qualified according to scriptural qualifications, see Article 3.12, Council of Elders.

A Vocational Pastor will be presented by the Council of Elders as a candidate for the Council of Elders at any Sunday morning worship service 30 days before a quarterly or special business meeting.

If anyone has reason that the candidate is not qualified to serve on the Council of Elders, they may put in writing their reason(s). They must submit this only to the Council of Elders with their reason(s) in writing and signed by them. The Council of Elders will not accept any anonymous accusations. Any issues or concerns will be kept in strict confidence. The candidate will not know who raised the issue or concern, unless he feels he needs to respond to it. Then, with submitter's permission, the Council of Elders will arrange a meeting so the candidate can defend or explain the issue or concern. If the submitter is uncomfortable in putting the issue or concern in writing, then they may schedule an appointment with the Council of Elders. Again, this conversation will be held in strict confidence.

A Vocational Pastor may cease to be an employee of the church, but may still continue to be on the Council of Elders, and a lay elder may become a Vocational Pastor and receive compensation.

3.7.2 Vocational Pastors Tenure

His call as a Vocational Pastor shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation, and shall serve for an undesignated period of time. He shall give 30 day notice to the church if the Holy Spirit leads him to resign, and the church shall give the Vocational Pastor 30 day notice in case the church feels that his ministry at this local church is ended. By mutual consent this period may be lengthened or shortened.

Vocational Pastors serving on the Council of Elders shall be limited to the term limitations and reaffirmation process for an elder as described in Article 3:12.1.

3.7.3 Duties of Vocational Pastors

He shall assist the Senior Pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties which may be specifically assigned to him by the Council of Elders and approved by the congregation.

3.8 Senior Pastor/Vocational Pastor Call by the Church

The members shall call Senior Pastor/Vocational Pastors by ballot upon recommendation of the Council of Elders. A two-thirds majority of those members voting of the membership present is required for affirmation of the call. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on the next two successive Sundays preceding the meeting.

3.9 Termination of Senior Pastor/Vocational Pastors Call

1. By his resignation. The question of terminating the vocational call of a Senior/Vocational Pastors shall be considered at any time by the church upon the presentation of the Pastor's resignation (see Article 3.6.2 and 3.7.2).

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 Springhill Baptist Church Constitution or to alleged conduct on his part unfitting an Elder, such grievance may be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing, following the procedure prescribed in Article 3.11.5 of these By-Laws. If the Council of Elders, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the vocational call of the Pastor may be terminated at any business meeting upon their recommendation when supported by closed ballot of a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those members of the Church present at such meeting. Oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays next preceding the meeting.

3.10 Licensing and Ordination

In the matter of licensing and ordaining any person to the Gospel Ministry, the church shall follow, as far as possible, the procedure recommended in Springhill Baptist Church Policy Manual.

3.11 LAY OFFICERS

3.11.1 Definition

Lay officers are the non-Vocational Elders and Deacons of the Church. The New Testament gives us a clear indication of both elders and deacons in the local church. Deacons were those who rendered service (diakonos) in the local church. As distinct officers in the local church they are referred to in the plural (diakonoi, Phil 1:1), and are mentioned in addition to elders in 1 Tim 3:8–13. The government of the local church rests upon the elders (1 Tim 5:17; Heb 13:17), while the deacons give needed assistance in the various ministries of the local body of believers.

3.11.2 Lay Elder Selection Process

The Council of Elders shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for lay Elder. A form letter will be sent out to those outside our church who know the recommended man as we seek their input as to the character and testimony of the man we are considering (See appendix 3.11.2).

The Council of Elders shall present a candidate at any Sunday morning worship service 30 days before a quarterly or special business meeting.

If anyone has reason that the candidate is not qualified for the office of Elder, they may put in writing their reason(s). They must submit this only to the Council of Elders with their reason(s) in writing and signed by them. The Council of Elders will not accept any anonymous accusations. Any issues or concerns will be kept in strict confidence. The candidate will not know who raised the issue or concern, unless he feels he needs to respond to it. Then, with submitter's permission, the Council of Elders will arrange a meeting so the candidate can defend or explain the issue or concern.

If the submitter is uncomfortable in putting the issue or concern in writing, then they may schedule an appointment with the Council of Elders. Again, this conversation will be held in strict confidence.

The Council of Elders shall present a ballot of candidate(s) for the calling or reaffirmation as Elders to the congregation at any quarterly or special meeting. At least a two-thirds majority vote of the members present is required for affirmation.

3.11.3 Deacon Selection Process

For the initial calling of the Deacons, the Council of Elders will compile and confirm any nominations by members of the church and submit the names to the members for affirmation at any quarterly or special business meeting.

The Deacons shall consist of members possessing the qualifications described in 1Tim 3:8-13.

Thereafter, the Council of Deacons will compile and confirm any nominations by members of the church and submit the names to the members for affirmation at any quarterly or special business meeting.

The Council of Deacons shall have the responsibility to determine the need for and the availability of adequate Deacons to serve the church. The Council of Deacons shall recognize, interview, and investigate candidates for Deacon. A form letter will be sent out to those outside our church who know the recommended candidate as we seek their input as to the character and testimony of the candidate we are considering (See appendix 3.11.3).

The Council of Deacons shall present a candidate at any Sunday morning worship service 30 days before a quarterly or special business meeting.

If anyone has reason that the candidate is not qualified for the office of Deacon, they may put in writing their reason(s). They must submit this only to the Council of Deacons with their reason(s) in writing and signed by them. The Council of Deacons will not accept any anonymous accusations. Any issues or concerns will be kept in strict confidence. Whenever the issue becomes an issue of discipline, it shall be referred to the Council of Elders for resolution as described in Article 2.5. The candidate will not know who raised the issue or concern, unless the candidate feels they need to respond to it. Then, with submitter's permission, the Council of Deacons will arrange a meeting so the candidate can defend or explain the issue or concern.

If the submitter is uncomfortable in putting the issue or concern in writing, then they may schedule an appointment with the Council of Deacons. Again, this conversation will be held in strict confidence.

The Council of Deacons shall present a ballot of candidate(s) for the calling or reaffirmation as Deacons to the congregation at any quarterly or special meeting. At least a two-thirds majority vote of the members present is required for affirmation.

3.11.4 Council of Elders and Deacons Tenure

Springhill Baptist Church needs to always have an active Council of Elders and Deacons. Therefore, no more than one-fourth the eligible council members upon fulfilling their term shall be up for reaffirmation in any given year. If an Elder or Deacon does not fulfill their term, any incoming candidate shall fulfill that person's term of office before starting their official term. Elders and Deacons shall be called by the Church for a normal term of three years. They shall stand for reaffirmation not later than the third annual meeting of the church following their call or previous reaffirmation. Calling or reaffirmation of an Elder or Deacon shall be by two-thirds vote of those members present and voting at the meeting. Elders or Deacons shall serve no more than two consecutive terms. Following two consecutive terms the person shall remain an Elder or Deacon, but will not serve as an active member of the Council for a period of one year. Following this period they will be eligible to serve again on the Council of Elders or Deacons, upon reaffirmation.

3.11.5 Council of Elders and Deacons Resignation or Removal

1. Resignation. An Elder or Deacon may resign their office at any time if they find they are no longer able to discharge the duties of the office.

2. Grievance. Where a grievance exists against an Elder or Deacon of the Church either due to the adherence to and promoting of beliefs contrary to the beliefs of the Church as set forth in its Constitution or to alleged conduct on their part unfitting an Elder or Deacon. Such grievance will be brought before the Council of Elders by any two members in good standing, following the procedures prescribed in Articles 3.11.2 and 3.11.3 of the By-Laws of this Church. If the Council, after thorough investigation and consideration, believes the grievance to be true and substantial, then the Elder or Deacon may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders when supported by closed ballot of a two-thirds majority of those members of the Church present and voting at any annual, quarterly, or special meeting. An oral notice of any such meeting, stating its object, shall be given from the pulpit two consecutive Sundays preceding the meeting.

3. Lack of reaffirmation. If an Elder or Deacon stands for reaffirmation and fails to be reaffirmed, the Elder or Deacon shall be removed from office. Removal from office by this means shall not be considered disciplinary action.

3.12 Council Of Elders

3.12.1 Composition, Term, and Calling

The Council of Elders shall be composed of men. The Council of Elders should be composed of at least three members. The number of Elders at any time is determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of men in the church. No man may serve on the Council of Elders and the Council of Deacons simultaneously. There shall always be a majority

of Lay Elders to Vocational Elders. Elders, except as noted in Article 3.6.2, shall be called by the membership of the Church for a term of three years.

The call and any reaffirmation(s) shall be conducted as provided in Article 3.11.4 of these By-Laws.

3.12.2 Qualifications

Elders and nominees for Elder shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Article 3.5 of these By-Laws. Elders are also required to be in agreement with the Springhill Baptist Church Constitution and By-Laws.

3.12.3 Responsibilities

To review the fundamental responsibilities of the Elders, reference Springhill Baptist Church Constitution Article 5 Section 3, and By-Laws Article 3.3. In addition, the responsibilities of the Elders shall also include:

1. Examine and recommend prospective candidates for Senior Pastor/Vocational Pastor(s)/Ministerial Vocational Position(s).
2. Examine prospective members and acquaint them with the Springhill Baptist Church Constitution and By Laws.
3. Oversee the process of Church discipline.
4. Schedule and provide a moderator for business meetings.
5. Ensure for reporting and recording of official Church business.
6. Oversee the work of the Deacons and appointed committees.
7. Has authority to dissolve committees or positions, except as noted within these By-Laws.
8. Ensure all worship services are Christ-exalting, God-honoring.
9. In the absence of the Senior Pastor that the pulpit be filled.
10. Administer the ordinances of Baptism and Lord's Supper.
10. Equip the membership of the Church for the work of the ministry.
11. Teach the whole counsel of God both formally and informally.
12. Correct error, oversee, coordinate and promote the ministries of the Church.
13. Mobilize the Church for missions.

3.12.4 Organization

The Council 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. Normal meetings of the Elders may be held at any location and may, if necessary, be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the Elders may simultaneously hear each other. Meetings of the Council may be held immediately upon notice. The Senior Pastor/Elder of the church acts as the chairman of the Council of Elders. The Council shall annually select its Vice-Chairman from among its Lay Elders. The Council shall maintain a written record of their meetings.

3.13 Council Of Deacons

3.13.1 Composition, Term, and Calling

The Council of Deacons shall be composed of men. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the call and qualification of members in the church. No man may serve on the Council of Deacons and the Council of Elders simultaneously. Each Deacon shall be called by the membership of the Church to a normal term of three years. The call and any reaffirmation shall be conducted as provided in Article 3.11.3 of these By-Laws.

3.13.2 Qualifications

The New Testament clearly teaches that Deacons must be qualified before they are placed into the role of a Deacon.

Although many of the qualities may and should apply to all believers, these qualities must be evident in the life of a Deacon before he is to be placed in the role of a Deacon.

No Deacon will be perfect, but if they are clearly and persistently lacking in any of the qualifications, they cannot serve in the church as a Deacon. Maturity and predictability is the standard, not perfection.

The list of Deacon qualifications are stated in 1 Tim 3:8-13.

The qualifications for a Deacon can be placed into two categories:

- **Personal Character** – To be a servant in the local church, his personal character is of utmost importance. He must display predictability in personal character issues.
- **Spiritual Character** – A Deacon must have convictions based on the knowledge of biblical doctrine. His clear conscience implies that he lives out his convictions. He must hold to the faith and apply the truth in his life.

Personal Character

1. A person of dignity, Reverent (v8)

- A Deacon must be serious in mind and character, not silly or flippant about important church matters.

2. Not double-tongued, Sincere (v8)

- A Deacon must never be one that speaks out of two sides of their mouth. He must demonstrate honesty and integrity in communications.
- A double-tongued man could cause a lot of confusion within a local church as he moves among the members saying contradictory things.

3. Not addicted to much wine (v8)

- A spiritual leader must not be addicted to much wine. (Tit 2:3)
- Never overindulge and over drink. (Prov 23:29-30)
- Never cause others to sin by using their freedom in Christ. (Rom 14:21)

4. Not Pursuing Dishonest gain (v8)

- Deacons are often entrusted with the tasks of handling money. (1 Cor 16:1-4)

Spiritual Character

5. Holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience (v9)

- The gospel is called, "the mystery of the faith" because it was once a mystery before its revelation (Col 1: 25, 26). The prospective deacon must respect the truth and be not

opposed to doctrine or God's commandments (Tit 1: 9). In his proximity to the word, he must hold a pure conscience.

6. First tested (v10)

- A Deacon must not be new to the faith. Just as in the case of the Deacon, the prospective deacon must have an established track record before he is considered (1 Tim 3: 6).
- If new converts are placed into the position of a Deacon, we are setting them up for an attack from the enemy at the point of their pride. Appointing a man to serve as a deacon before he is prepared is not only unscriptural and injurious to the church, but it can be very discouraging to the man.
- Maturity takes time and experience.

7. Found above reproach (v10)

- This is not to say the man is “perfect.” None would qualify. However, he must be beyond any allegation brought against him
- His testimony and reputation must speak louder than any accusation brought against him. In essence, this means a spiritual leader should have a “good reputation” among believers as well as unbelievers.

8. Husband of one wife (v 11, 12)

- A wife who is dignified, reverent.
 - A wife must be serious in mind and character, not silly or flippant.
- A wife must not be a malicious talker.
 - A wife must not gossip.
- A wife must be temperate, reverent in the way they live.
 - A wife is alert, watchful, vigilant or clear minded. She has a clear focus on life.
- A wife must be faithful in all things.
 - A wife must be absolutely trustworthily in all aspects of her life.
- A Deacon must not be a womanizer, a man is to be faithful to his own wife.
- Whether married or single, he is to be above reproach and blameless in his relationship with women, this is a positive statement in which Paul is dealing with moral purity.
- There is nothing that builds a man’s reputation more significantly than being faithful to one woman – his wife. In essence, Paul is saying that if you can’t trust a man to be loyal to his wife, then you can’t trust him in other areas of his life, particularly in the areas of honesty and integrity.

9. Manages his children and household well (v12)

- A Deacon must be a strong spiritual leader in his home before he is qualified to lead in the church.
- Paul viewed a well-ordered family as the true test of a man’s maturity and ability to lead other Christians.
- His ability to lead his family spirituality must be evident to all.

3.13.3 Responsibilities

The Council of Deacons shall advise and 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 benevolent fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis, sickness or distress
2. The greeting and welcoming ministries of the church
3. Assisting in administering the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper
4. Assisting with the Church body fellowship gatherings
5. Caring for and maintaining the Church properties and material assets
6. Administering the business affairs and policies of the Church office
7. Assist in the Outreach ministries of the church
8. With the agreement of the Council of Elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church
9. Under the guidance of the Council of Elders shall provide oversight of standing committees
10. Has the authority to dissolve any committee or position which it created

3.13.4 Organization

The Council of Deacons shall organize themselves however they determine to be best to achieve the mission of the church. The Elders or the Deacons may designate any specific Deacon or group of Deacons to specialize in some particular Deaconal function. Meetings of the Deacons, or subcommittees thereof shall be held as needed to best fulfill the responsibilities of the Deacons. The Deacons must meet at least once per month. Normal meetings of the Deacons may be held at any location and may, if necessary, be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the Deacons may simultaneously hear each other. Meetings of the Council may be held immediately upon notice. The Council shall annually select its Chairman and Vice-Chairman from among its Deacons. The Council shall maintain a written record of their meetings which shall be made available to any member upon request. A representative of the Council of Elders may attend any Deacon meeting.

Article 4.0 The roll of Women in the Church

The roll and service of women in the New Testament is evident as one reviews the Gospel records (Luke 1:26–56; 2:36–38; 8:1-3; Matt 27:55, 56; Mark 15:40, 41). The Scriptures show that women played an active part in the life of each congregation of the early church (Acts 1:14; 5:14; 9:36; 12:12; 16:11-15; 17:34; 18:18-28; Rom 16:1-6; Phil 4:2-3).

In Springhill Baptist Church, women may faithfully serve the Lord as Scripture directs. This opens up many avenues of service. It is important to understand in the matter of service in the local church that God has given specific roles to both men and women. The Scriptures instruct that the leadership roles of elder and deacon are reserved for men (1 Tim 3:1, 12; Titus 1:6). The roles given to women in turn complement and enhance the total ministry of the local body of believers (e.g.: Rom 16; 1 Tim 2:9, 10; 5:10, 14, 16; Titus 2:3–5). It should be remembered that the Word of God never seeks to hamper women in their service roles, but rather seeks to direct them in fulfilling their roles in a way that promotes holiness in daily life, fruitfulness in service, unity in the body of Christ and harmony in the family (Eph 4, 5; Col 3).

Article 5.0 General Officers/Staff Positions

5.1 Church Clerk

The Church Clerk shall be a member in good standing of Springhill Baptist Church. It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special business meetings of the church.

The clerk shall be nominated by the Council of Elders and elected by majority vote of the members present to serve an indefinite term, to be reaffirmed annually.

In the absence or incapacity of the clerk the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk.

For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of Florida, the clerk shall serve as the secretary of the corporation.

The church clerk shall ensure that the Office Manager has dated copies of the most recent revision of the Constitution and By-Laws available.

The Clerk shall also act as a historian of the Church, ensuring records and events are on file of the various happenings in the Church which might add to the historical interest of the Church.

5.2 Financial Secretary/Treasurer

The Financial Secretary/Treasurer, a member in good standing, who shall not be an elder or deacon, and shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The Financial Secretary/Treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each quarterly business meeting. The responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the Council of Elders.

The Financial Secretary/Treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The Financial Secretary/Treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

The Financial Secretary/Treasurer shall be nominated by the Council of Elders and elected by majority vote of the members present to serve an indefinite term, to be reaffirmed annually by the congregation.

The Financial Secretary will post all individual gifts on a personal permanent file for Income Tax Purposes, as well as for individual personal records. The person keeping these records (Financial Secretary) will keep each and every individual financial record confidential. At the end of the

fiscal year these records will be ready upon request from individuals and will show the annual amount given to the Church that particular fiscal year.

A detailed, comprehensive written, printed financial report of all receipts, disbursements, balances, etc., shall be given to the Church in printed form at each quarterly business meeting.

5.3 Board of Trustees

The Trustees shall be members in good standing of Springhill Baptist Church. The Board of Trustees shall consist of three members. Their purpose is to represent Springhill Baptist Church before governmental and other official bodies.

The Board of Trustees shall be nominated by the Council of Elders and elected by majority vote of the members present to serve an indefinite term, to be reaffirmed annually.

In the absence or incapacity of a trustee, the Council of Elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the trustee until confirmed by the congregation.

The Board of Trustees shall have a Chairman/Secretary.

5.4 Staff Positions

5.4.1 Church Office Manager

The duties of the Office Manager shall include keeping correct records, papers, and other documents of the Church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the Council of Elders, or the Council of Deacons. For specific details of the duties of the Office Manager, refer to Springhill Baptist Church Policy Manual.

The Office Manager shall be the custodian of the records provided by the Church Clerk.

5.4.2 Other Vocational Positions

In addition to Vocational Pastors, the church may employ additional personnel. The compensation and budget adjustments for such personnel must be approved by the congregation at a properly called business meeting. The Council of Deacons shall be responsible for determining the duties of and hiring such personnel. The Council of Elders shall be responsible for determining the duties and hiring of ministerial positions.

5.5 Personnel Committee

The church always needs to have an active standing Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee shall be nominated by the Council of Deacons and presented to the church for their approval by majority vote of the members present to serve an indefinite term, to be reaffirmed annually. No person may serve on the Personnel Committee and the Stewardship Committee simultaneously. This Committee shall consist of a minimum of three members. A simple majority must be present at a Committee meeting to constitute a quorum.

Meetings of the Personnel Committee shall be held as needed to fulfill the responsibilities of the Committee.

The Personnel Committee shall maintain a written record of their meetings which shall be made available to any member upon request.

For specific details of the Personnel Committee refer to Springhill Baptist Church Policy Manual.

Article 6 Church Finances

6.1 General

For the sake of efficiency the Church shall operate a Budget System determined and adopted by the Church upon recommendation of the Stewardship Committee. This Budget is presented and approved by the Church each year. The Budget works on a calendar year (January through December).

6.2 Contributions

The financial needs of this Church and its ministries shall be supported by the tithes, offerings and gifts of its members (Refer to Article 3.10, Springhill Baptist Church Constitution). These will be given to the Church and disbursed by the Church.

Giving financially to God's work is a joy! By giving, we express that 1) God owns everything 2) We are stewards, not owners, of God's material blessings, and 3) We trust God to provide for our future needs. Obedient giving is that which is done cheerfully and not begrudgingly or under compulsion (2 Cor. 9:7) to support the Church and its ministries through regular giving.

Special offerings/designated funds may be received by the Church, or any of its ministries, in accordance with the Springhill Baptist Church Policy Manual, under the oversight of the Council of Elders.

6.3 Indebtedness

No note or contract exceeding 1% of the total annual budget whereby the credit of the Church is pledged shall be made except upon recommendation of the Council of Elders and approved by the 2/3 majority vote of the members present.

6.4 Expenditures

No purchase shall be made except upon proper authorization as outlined by the Springhill Baptist Church Policy Manual.

6.5 Stewardship Committee

The church always needs to have an active standing Stewardship Committee. The Stewardship Committee shall be nominated by the Council of Deacons and presented to the church for their approval by majority vote of the members present to serve an indefinite term, to be reaffirmed annually. No person may serve on the Stewardship Committee and the Personnel Committee simultaneously. This Committee shall consist of a minimum of three members. A simple majority must be present at a Committee meeting to constitute a quorum.

Meetings of the Stewardship Committee shall be held as needed to fulfill the responsibilities of the Committee. The Committee must meet at least once a month.

The Stewardship Committee shall maintain a written record of their meetings which shall be made available to any member upon request.

The Chairman/Vice-Chairman should be present at all quarterly business meetings to present and answer any questions concerning both the Financial Statement, and Financial Matters that may be brought up.

For specific details of the Stewardship Committee refer to Springhill Baptist Church Policy Manual.

Article 7 Meetings

7.1 For Worship

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

7.2 For Business

7.2.1 Church Year

The Church year shall run from January first through December thirty-first. All church elected officers, committees, unless otherwise specified in these by-laws shall function during this church year. Their term of office will begin January first.

7.2.2 Annual Meeting

The annual meeting shall be held some time during the last month of the calendar year of the Church for the purpose of 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 calendar year.

7.2.3 Quarterly Meetings

Quarterly meetings of the Church shall be held in March, June, September, and December which will also be our combined quarterly/annual meeting, at some time apart from a public worship service.

7.2.4 Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called as required by the Council of Elders. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting.

7.2.5 Quorum

A simple majority of the voting members present shall constitute a quorum at any ordinary meeting of the Church. At meetings dealing with particular matters as stipulated in these By-Laws, the quorums prescribed shall apply.

7.2.6 Rules Governing Business Meeting

Robert's Rules of Order shall be recognized as the general pattern for the conduct of the business meetings of the Church. In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual

trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

An elder designated by the Council of Elders shall preside as moderator at all meetings of the church. The Council of Elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members. Any issues of concern with any business agenda items shall be brought before the Council of Elders for resolution at least 30 days prior to any scheduled quarterly business meeting.

7.2.7 Notice Provisions

Notice of regular/special meetings shall be given from the pulpit for two successive Sundays prior to the meeting.

Article 8 Church Property

8.1 General

No member of the Council of Elders, Board of Trustees, Council of Deacons, or any other church member, has any individual right to any part of the property of the church. On the other hand, no member of the church or any administrative committee may be held responsible for the corporate obligations of the church.

8.2 Church Division

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 and By-Laws; otherwise it shall belong to the group remaining loyal to this Constitution and By-Laws though it may not be the largest group in such division. Should any controversy arise as to whether such loyalty exists, the question shall be submitted to the Florida Baptist Convention for arbitration.

8.3 Church Discontinues

Should a condition arise at any time in the future when for any reason, the Church work cannot continue, the Church property shall be transferred to the Florida Baptist Convention, if agreed upon. Otherwise the property is to be sold and any remaining assets transferred to the Florida Baptist Convention.

8.4 Church Consolidation

Should conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of the same denomination be advisable, the Council of Elders in conjunction with the Board of Trustees shall be authorized by the Church to negotiate the terms of such consolidation in so far as the property of this Church is concerned.

Article 9 Church Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions' as may best secure cooperation for the great objectives 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 the 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.

The Government of this Church is vested solely in the body of members who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body. In so far as is practical this Church will cooperate with the Northeast Florida Baptist Association, the Florida Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Article 10 Amendments

Adoption –These By-Laws shall be considered adopted and shall take place of all other By-Laws when two-thirds (2/3) members present and voting at a Business Meeting shall vote in favor. Such vote shall take place after the Congregation has had ample time to read over, and review these By-Laws.

Suspension, Amendments or Repeal – These By-Laws may be altered, amended, or rescinded by the body of this Church at a Business Meeting called for this sole purpose provided that proper notice has been given at least 30 days prior to the Business Meeting. Notice of any proposed amendments must be made at least 30 days prior to the date of the consensus affirmation of the membership. During that period any member may express his conviction concerning the proposed amendment by submitting a written statement to the Council of Elders for consideration. Any of these actions must receive an approval of two-thirds (2/3) majority of members present and voting.

Appendix 1A

Historical account of the founding of Springhill Baptist Church

Minutes of Springhill Baptist Church

The Nassauville Baptist Mission was organized January 26, 1947 at the old Nassau School house at Nassauville.

The Rev. J. F. Green was called as mission pastor, Mrs. Robert Skipper, Treasurer, Mrs. H. J. Mobley, Mission Clerk, Mr. Robert Skipper, Supt. of Sunday School; Mrs. Robert Skipper and Mrs. H. J. Mobley were appointed teachers for the Mission.

Bros. J. J. Bennett and Robert Skipper and Mrs. H. J. Mobley were elected trustees.

At the beginning it was planned to send 10% of the offering to the co-operative program and 60% of the balance to the pastor as a salary. The Sunday School voted to turn over the amount of \$10.45 (which was left in their treasury after all the literature had been paid for) to the mission treasury.

It was believed by some present that the building could be secured for a permanent church home.

The second of March, on Easter Day, services were planned with an egg hunt fellowship.

Then we felt it time for a revival which would begin April 10th and run through April 20th with all day services and a basket dinner.

An attempt will be made to organize a Baptist Church.

The clerk was asked to request the presence of all pastors and deacons of the North East Florida Baptist Association to help organize a Baptist Church.

On the 20th of April at close of the revival and organizing of the Springhill Baptist Church, the money in the mission treasury was to be turned over to the treasurer of the Church when elected. Thus the mission was disbanded and the following is minutes of the organizing:

The organizing of the Springhill Baptist Church was approved by the council on April 20, 1947 at Nassauville.

The Council consisted of:

1. Rev. W. C. Robinson – Moderator
2. Rev. S. C. Baker – Clerk
3. Rev. Albright
4. Rev. Syd Rees
5. Rev. B. E. Jones
6. Rev. Lester Jennings

Those entered by statement were: Miss Geraldine Bennett, Mrs. Centello Bennett, Mr. J. J. Bennett, Mr. Dave Cook, Mrs. Annie Cook, Mrs. Eunice Bennett, Mr. J. E. Bennett.

Those entered by letter were: J. F. Green – Garden City, Mrs. Estelle Mobley - Pine Grove, Mallory Wilder – Pine Grove, Mrs. Missouri Mobley - Norwood.

-April 23, 1947-

Candidates for baptism were: Ornez Cook, Rosalee Littles, Max Bass.

Motion made and second that all members coming into the church during the month of April would become Charter Members.

Rev. Fred Green was called as pastor; Miss Geraldine Bennett, Clerk; Mr. Dave Cook, Treasurer. The electing of trustees and Sunday School Officers was to take place at the next business meeting.

-April 30, 1947-

Business Meeting held at the home of Bro. Dave Cook. There it was voted and approved to continue giving 10% of collection to co-operative program and 60% of the balance for pastor's salary.

Mrs. Ruby Skipper was elected Sunday School Supt. and Miss Ornez Cook Secretary of Sunday School.

The rent concerning the Church building was discussed but nothing definite decided since there were so few of the church members present. Meeting adjourned.

-May 7, 1947-

Business meeting which was held at Mrs. Pope's and no business could be discussed because of the small amount present so it rested til the regular church service.

Mrs. Pope came under watch care of the church till her letter was received from Pine Grove. Meeting adjourned.

Others to join the church were: Mr. & Mrs. Robert Skipper by letter from Pine Grove; Mr. Emmett Littles rededication, H. J. Mobley profession of faith, Mrs. Pope by letter and Johnnie Frank Swails, Kenneth & Kathleen Wilder, Ruth and Charles Pope, Charles and Bubba Bennett, James Bennett await baptism.

Sunday night August 10, 1947-

Called business meeting at church:

Old business brought forth and discussed:

1. Decided to pay all bills up to that date and voted upon.
2. Talked again about the future plans of church building and were not sure at that time if we were to continue using the same one or make plans for another.

New Business:

The church elected a committee of the following: Mr. Mobley, Mr. Skipper, Mr. Cook, & Mr. Jim Bennett to visit with Mr. Johnny Bennett and clear up the old business of the building, come to something definite and report at next business meeting.

This same committee had to see Mr. Goffin about securing a Lot which he had spoken about giving. Prayer followed and meeting ended.

Wed. August 13th

Heard results from the committee. Decided to paint church for Mr. Bennett and to build another on the site located next to the present building. Committee was to get paint and start right away. They were also to reblock the building in places where it was necessary.

During an unexpected business meeting called after church one night a motion was made and second to spend \$50.00 on the church building, repairing and repainting it.

Bros. Dave Cook and Mallory Wilder were appointed for the building committee.

At this meeting the trustees were elected: they were as follows: J. J. Bennett, Dave Cook, and Jim Bennett.

Mallory Wilder was elected as Training Union Director and Miss Ruth Pope as Training Union Secretary. Meeting adjourned.

Revival to be held from Nov. 13th to Nov. 23rd with dinner on the ground and ordination services at 3 o'clock.

Sept. 28, 1947- Business Meeting

Deacons were elected:

1. Bro. Robert Skipper
2. Bro. Mallory Wilder
3. Bro. H. J. Mobley

Officers of Sunday School re-elected to continue the same positions held.

The trustees were to find the exact land marks concerning the land sought for the church property (consult surveyors, etc.). Bro. Skipper to act as trustee during Mr. J. J. Bennett's illness.

Motion made and second for Bro. Cook to pay for the literature already ordered.

Miss Barbara Mobley had been elected our Junior Choir leader. Bro. Robert Skipper as Senior Choir leader. Meeting adjourned.

Nov. 21, 1947 (during revival)

Mr. & Mrs. Nettles came under watch care of the church until we received their letters from Gainesville.

Nov. 23, 1947 – Sunday morning

Loretta Nettles, Carlton Nettles, Tommy Nettles came as candidates for baptism.

Nov. 23, 1947 – Sunday afternoon - Deacons ordained for Springhill Baptist Church:

Mallory Wilder, Robert Skipper, and H. J. Mobley.

The Council consisted of W. C. Frisekie and U. E. Bennett, H. V. Burgess, J. B. Haddock, F. M. Byrd and Bro. J. W. Hunt. Bro. Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Fernandina, was elected moderator. Bro. Green, pastor of Springhill, was elected clerk.

Candidates were questioned by Council and recommended they be ordained. Charge was delivered by

Oliver Frisekie, and the sermon delivered by Bro. J. W. Hunt.

Nov. 23, 1947 – Sunday night

Came rededicating their lives were Mrs. Annie Cook and Miss Ornez Cook. Mrs. Hamp Bennett and Mrs. R. D. Sowell by letter, Miss Barbara Mobley, Mr. R. D. Sowell and Miss Martha cook were candidates for baptism.

Thus ended a wonderful day of Christian fellowship and the close of an old time revival meeting.

Dec 7, 1947

Mrs. Bertha Cook and Mrs. Neil Cook joined Springhill Baptist Church and await baptism.

Unexpected meeting was called for a motion to be made and seconded giving Bro. Green permission and pleasure of appointing Bro. Frisekie, ordained deacon, to help with the baptism service following our past revival.

Several letters of thanks were to be written for the services rendered us during the revival. Mr. A. A. Manning, Rt. 3, Jacksonville, for use of wire for the motion picture machine, Mrs. Winnie Jones for rendering her services at the piano and Mr. L. L. Harrold, Sr. Talleyrand Avenue, for his generous donation of \$50.00 toward the piano secured for our church.

-1948-

January and February meetings were omitted since the weather was so bad and so few members were present.

March, 1948 – Monthly Business Meeting

Opened with prayer. Minutes for the last meeting which was held in December were read and passed on. Sunday School report was read. Training Union report was given, and Treasurer report was given.

Old & New Business concerned the building of the new church – some wants blocks, others lumber, some wanted to build like a pastorium and when able to build another which would look like a church, others want to go ahead now and build a permanent church. Will be discussed and settled later.

April 18, 1948 Business Meeting –

Opened with prayer; minutes read and passed. Reports given as near up to date as possible and went into business.

Old business: Still talking of the building of the church. Majority now deciding to build a permanent church building and use blocks unless there is a change in plans. Bro. Skipper suggested each child, adult; or whoever wishes to start buying blocks (individually). Passed by the Church.

April 18, 1948 –

Bro. Jim Bennett as Deacon was questioned by the Council and approved. Recommended by Church to ordain him. Deacon charged by Bro. Hunt, Church charged by Bro. Jones. Acting clerk, U. E. Bennett

June, 1948 –

Reports all given up to date.

New Business – It was finally decided to build a permanent church building, size;32 x 46, unless another change.

Bro. Green wants the church to buy its own equipment for the Lord's Supper. The Church agreed and gave Bro. Sowell permission to find the price and needed information. We will borrow a set for the coming Sunday and from then on, we will have our own.

ANNOUNCEMENT: They will have a 2 weeks revival and a 2 weeks Vacation Bible Study course sometime during July.

August, 1949 _

Held prayer meeting with intentions of having a business meeting. So few present the being was called off, but a motion was made and seconded for Mallory Wilder to take \$1.80 out of the treasury and pay for the deeds.

September, 1949

Wednesday night prayer service and Business Meeting –

First thing - elected new officers and teachers:

Clerk - Mrs. Robert Skipper

Treasurer- Bro. Jim Bennett

Sunday School Supt.- Bro. Mallory Wilder

Training Union Director- Bro. H. J. Mobley

committee was for and that they should be active in getting someone to fill the pulpit every Sunday until a pastor is secured.

The following have been elected: Bro. Red Sowell, Bro. Robert Skipper, Mrs. Robert Skipper, assistant, and Miss Ruth Pope.

\$6.30 associational mission fund.

\$5.00 for the printing of minutes for association.

Motion made and seconded to grant Mrs. Lilly Rudd and Mr. Rubin Logue their letters dismissing them from our fellowship and to unite with Pine Grove Baptist Church.

Bro. L. B. Griffin came Wednesday, October, 1949

December 7, 1949 – Moderator, L. B. Griffin, Pastor

Bro. L. B. Griffin has been appointed moderator until we elect one.

Sunday School report was approximately given by Rev. L. B. Griffin.

Training Union report was approximately given by Br. H. J. Mobley.

Motion was made by Bro. Mallory that we keep our records in Training Union by using the Eight point system. Seconded by Sister Giffin, it was favored by the Church by the uplift of the right hand.

The W. M. U. Report was given by Sister H. J. Mobley.

The Treasurer's report was given by Bro. M. D. Wilder.

Motion was made by Bro. J. E. Bennett that we send once a month 10% out of gross income for the co-operative program instead of giving it all at one time. Motion seconded by Sister J. E. Bennett, passed by the church by uplift of the right hand.

Motion was made by Bro. Wilder that we bring blocks for building and put them on Church property (immediately). Motion seconded by Bro. J. E. Bennett. Favored by the Church by the sign of the uplift of the right hand.

Motion was made by Sister Griffin that we accept Bro. Mallory's resignation of Sunday School Supt. It was seconded by Bro. J. E. Bennett. Favored by church by usual sign.

January Business Meeting – Wednesday night – 1950

Report of Sunday School given by Bro. Giffin. We are using the 8 point system and the attendance is very good (increasing).

We have set a goal of gaining one every Sunday.

We also have the books necessary to keep all Sunday School records.

No report on the Training Union.

The W. M. U. announced they were going to give a certain amount of offering to the Lottie Moon Program. They have also sent some clothes to a foreign country.

Treasury Report given by Bro. Mallory Wilder. There was a \$30.00 gain after everything was taken care of and leaving a balance of \$80.53.

Adjourned with prayer.

February events –

Mrs. Maggie Williams came under the watch care of our church until her letter was received from the Yulee Baptist Church, Yulee.

Don Bennett came by baptism

February 1, 1950 – Monthly Business Meeting –

Sunday School Report has fallen down.

Training Union Report – Bro. Giffin.

W. M. U. – No announcements.

Treasurer's Report – Bro. Sparkman

Business – The Board of Deacons has recommended that we change our building plans; use lumber instead of blocks.

Bro. M. D. Wilder was nominated to be Sunday School Supt. for balance of Church year. It was passed by majority and will take office next Sunday morning.

March 9, 1950 -

Received Bro. Rubin Logue's letter from O'Neil Baptist

March 1, 1950 - Monthly Business Meeting

Meeting called to order by Bro. Giffin.

Report for Sunday School given by Sister Ornez Cook – average gained for month – 8.

Report for Training Union given by Bro. H. J. Mobley. Average about 46.

W.M.U. report given by Mrs. H. J. Mobley. They were trying to buy socks for the children of the orphan's home. Everybody was asked to help with this project whether members or not. There present attendance is 7.

Treasurer's report partly read by Bro. Giffin as the Treasurer was absent.

The report was to be completed and read to the church the following Wednesday night.

April, 1950 –

Minutes read and passed for March. Sunday School Report by Sister Ornez. Training Union Report by Sister Barbara. Treasurer's report given by Bro. Sparkman and up-to-date. W.M.U. announced the next meeting date and place.

May 3, 1950 – Monthly Business Meeting

Opened with prayer. Minutes from last meeting read and passed. Sunday School report read and passed. Training Union report read and passed. W. M. U. no report as they had missed last meeting.

Program Chairman, Bro. H. J. Mobley, reported that the arrangements had been made and it was all right to borrow the \$500.00 for building purposes after securing 3 signers.

NEW BUSINESS: Sec. and Treasurer Bro. Mallory Wilder offered his resignation and a few nominations were made but none passed upon as accepted. Instead the motion was left open until the following Sunday night. In the meantime, Bro. H. J. Mobley was appointed as Acting Treasurer.

May, 1950 – Brief Business Meeting

This meeting set in order to elect a different Treasurer to finish out this year. No one else would accept, so Bro. H. J. Mobley has considered holding the office himself.

June, 1950 –

Opened with prayer and minutes given orally. Training Union Report, Treasurer's Report, Sunday School report wasn't completed as the Sunday School Secretary was absent.

OLD BUSINESS: Discussed the bill owed to Bro. Giffin and announced that it would be paid immediately.

NEW BUSINESS: Messengers were elected to represent (represent) Springhill Baptist Church at the association meeting – Mr. Red Sowell, Miss Ruth Jones.

July 5, 1950 – Monthly Business Meeting –

Minutes were given by clerk. Sunday School report read by Bro. Giffin as the secretary was absent: average enrollment, 44; average for previous month 29. There was a small increase. He also announced that since we were in our new building we could work harder to gain a greater membership now that we had plenty of room.

Training Union Report read by Barbara. Average enrollment 47, average (average) attendance 43.

Treasurer report read by Bro. H. J. Mobley was up-to-date.

NEW BUSINESS: Discussed the wiring of the building as soon as possible. Decided to have balances in the windows.

Dismissed with prayer.

Appendix 1B

The Corporation Document for Springhill Baptist Church.

IN RE; TRUSTEE CORPORATION OF SPRINGHILL BAPTIST CHURCH INC.

The undersigned incorporatees hereby represent the SPRINGHILL Baptist Church of FERNANDINA BEACH, Florida, is an unincorporated body, society, or association engage in the customary work of a New Testament Missionary Baptist Church. That is order to hold property and transact business, it is expedient that a TRUSTEE CORPORATION, under the not for profit laws of the State of Florida, be created as medium, trustee and agency to hold in trust for the CHURCH, and to put into legal form and effect the will and directions of the Church, as to her temporal or business matters.

That the CHURCH at a regular business meeting, held on the 10 day of November A.D. 1963, which was duly called and at which a quorum was present and voting, voted to secure the creation of a TRUSTEE CORPORATION. At said meeting, the proposed charter for the TRUSTEE CORPORATION, as hereinafter set forth, was submitted to and duly adopted by the CHURCH, and the Board of Deacons of the CHURCH were instructed to execute same and to secure approval and filing of same in accordance with law and the statutes as made and provided. Said charter is as follows.

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OR CHARTER

TRUSTEE CORPORATION OF SPRINGHILL Baptist Church, Inc.

The undersigned as incorporators of the Trustee Corporation of the SPRINGHILL Baptist Church, in the County of NASSAU, and State of Florida, hereby associate themselves together as a corporation not for profit, under the law of the State of Florida, pursuant to the will, instruction and direction of the SPRINGHILL Baptist Church, under the following Articles of Incorporation, as and for a religious, educational, benevolent and charitable body, medium or institution, trustee and agency, to –wit:

ARTICLE I NAME AND LOCATION

The name of the corporation shall be TRUSTEE CORPORATION OF THE SPRINGHILL BAPTIST CHURCH, INC. and it shall be commonly known and referred to as the “Corporate Body”, as distinguished from the SPRINGHILL Baptist Church, the unincorporated body, hereinafter referred to as the “Church”. The place where said corporation shall be located is in FERNANDINA BEACH, of the County of NASSAU, and the State of Florida.

ARTICLE II
NATURE AND OBJECTS

The general nature and objects of this corporation shall be in accordance with the instructions and directions of the “Church”, to receive and acquire by gift, devise, purchase or otherwise, real and personal property, to build, erect, construct, provide for, maintain and equip suitable buildings, church houses etc. and to own, possess and hold for the sole use and benefit of the “Church”, property of every description, and to sell, mortgage, bond, lease, re-lease, and dispose of the same, to sue and be sued and to enjoy all rights and privileges belonging and incident to corporations not for profit, and to, in every respect, do all things and exercise all powers which a natural person might have, do and exercise, for the sole use and benefit, however, of the “Church” and in accordance with her instructions and directions.

The corporation in its actions and functions, is to be simply a medium trustee and agency holding in trust the property of the “Church” and putting into legal form and effect the will, instructions and directions of the “Church” as to its temporal or business matters.

ARTICLE 111
MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this corporation shall be composed of the same persons who are at the time the duly elected and acting Board of Deacons of the “Church” and their successors in office as shall from time to time be elected by the “Church”, also the Clerk and Treasure of the “Church”.

ARTICLE IV
TERM OF EXISTENCE

This corporation shall exist perpetually.

ARTICLE V
SUBSCRIBERS

The names and addresses of the subscribers, including all members of the Board of Deacons of the “Church”, whether their names be actually subscribed to this instrument or not, are as follows:

M.J. Mobley- P.O. 162- Fernandina Beach, Florida
Lawrence D. Walker- Route 1, Box 105- Fernandina Beach, Florida
Jim Bennett- Route 1, Box 120-Fernandina Beach, Florida
L.E. Pope-Route 1, Box 106- Fernandina Beach, Florida
Mallory Wilder- Route 1-Box 115—Fernandina Beach, Florida

ARTICLE VI
OFFICERS

The administrative officers of this corporation shall be a President, who shall be the same person who is Chairman of the Board of Deacons of the “Church”: a vice-President, who shall be the same person who is Vice-Chairman of the Board of Deacons of the “Church”: a Secretary,

who shall be the same person who is the Clerk of the “Church”: and a Treasurer, who shall be the same person who is Treasurer of the “Church”. There shall be such other officers as the “Church” may from time to time direct and elect. Officers shall be elected annually pursuant to the Bylaws.

The minutes of the corporation may be the same as the minutes of the Board of Deacons and the “Church” , in so far as same may pertain to the temporal of business matters of the “Church.”

All deeds, bonds, mortgages, contracts, or other instruments authorized or directed by the “Church” shall be executed by the President or Vice-President and by the Secretary of the Corporation. In the absence or inability of one or the other of such persons to act, the corporation shall designate such other member or members of the Corporation to act pre-tempe as needed.

The property held by this corporation may be sold, conveyed, bonded, mortgaged or leased only upon pursuant to the will, instruction and direction of the “Church.”

ARTICLE VII
MEMBERS AND OFFICERS TO CONDUCT AFFAIRS
UNTIL THE NEXT ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT
OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

The names of the members of this corporation who are to manage all the affairs of this corporation until the next election of members of the Board of Deacons and Officers of the “Church”, by the “Church”, shall be as set forth under Article V hereof, and the administrative officers who are to serve in the various capacities until the next election, pursuant to nomination shall be.

PRESIDENT	H.J. Mobley
SECRETARY	L. E. Pope
TREASURER	L.D. Walker

ARTICLE VIII
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The entire membership of this Corporation shall constitute the Board of Directors of Trustees; however, they shall at all times be subjects to the direction and control of the “Church”. The subscribers as listed with their addresses in Article V hereof shall constitute the Board of Directors or Trustees who are to serve until the next election thereof.

ARTICLE IX
BYLAWS

The members of this Corporation shall adopt such Bylaws and amendments there to shall be in accordance with the instruction and approval of the “Church”, for the carrying on of the business for which this charter is granted, not inconsistent with the laws of the State of Florida,

but only after vote of the "Church". The said Bylaws are to be consistent and in accord with the Constitution and Bylaws of the "Church" in so far as possible.

ARTICLE X
AMENDMENTS OF CHARTER

Amendments of this charter may be had only in accordance with the laws and statutes of the State of Florida and after approval and adoption of the proposed amendments by the "Church" in (sic) converage sitting, pursuant to notice duly given or special, for two Sundays next (sic) preceding, from the pulpit or by such other notice as may be provided in and by the Constitution and Bylaws of the "Church".

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned (sic) incoporters, on behalf of themselves and of those named in Article V hereof, have hereunto set our hands and seals at FERNANDINA BEACH, in the County of Nassau, and State of Florida, this 10th day of November, A.D. 1963.

Mobley
Walker
Bennett
Pope
Wilder

State of Florida
County of NASSAU

Personally appeared before me, an officer duly authorized to administer oaths and take acknowledgements, H.J. Mobley, L. D. Walker, Jim Bennett, L.E Pope, Mallory Wilder, subscribers of the foregoing charter of the TRUSTEE CORPORATION OF SPRINGHILL BAPTIST CHURCH, INC. of NASSAU COUNTY, Florida, and they acknowledged to and before me that they executed the same freely and voluntarily for the uses and purposes therein expressed and who each swore to the truth of the statements therein.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and official seal this 13th day of November A.D. 1963, at Fernandina Beach, County of Nassau and State of Florida

Katie Nelson
Notary Public, State of Florida at Large
My Commission expires Oct 16, 1964

Appendix 3.2A

Historical Account of Elder Leadership for Springhill Baptist Church

On January 2, 2005, the Springhill Baptist Church commissioned a team of men to lead our church to a leadership model we can embrace and follow in our future ministry. This team of men has met almost on a weekly basis and have primarily used three major resources to reach the following conclusions presented in this document: The Word of God, Gene Getz's book, Elders and Leaders: God's Plan for Leading the Church, as well as trying to catch God's voice through prayer.

The church assigned to this group of men the responsibility of developing a leadership model to our Springhill Church by the end of 2005. The following is the collective convictions of this group of men as well as the recommendation of this group to Springhill.

As a congregation of committed followers of Jesus Christ, we take seriously the teachings of the Word of God. It has become increasingly clear to us that, according to the New Testament, there are two distinct offices prescribed for the local body of Christ: **Elders and Deacons**.

Since its inception, Springhill has primarily functioned through staff (assumed to be the Elders) and deacons (selected and elected men from the congregation) in providing leadership, stability, and purity to the church. However, to bring our church more in harmony with the teaching of the Bible, we sensed we needed to reach within our congregation for those called and gifted men to come alongside the pastor (and staff) in providing the necessary leadership for our church. We believe this group of men is identified in the New Testament as **Elders**.

The appointment of this group of men does not diminish the leadership the pastor is to provide, nor does it silence the voice of the people of the church. Rather, we see this as the biblical mandate to appoint those in this local congregation who will provide consistent leadership in three primary areas:

- **To provide leadership in the direction of the church and its ministries**
- **To give general oversight to the doctrinal practices and direction of our church**
- **To take the initiative in any necessary church discipline/restoration concerns**

We believe that as committed followers of Jesus Christ, we are all priests before our God. That is, we do not need another human to represent us before the throne of our God, nor do we need another human to represent our God to us. Each follower of Jesus Christ has been given the ability and privilege of hearing God's heart on life's matters. Elder leadership is not a challenge to that, nor is it an attempt to improve on what is already ours in Christ. **Those who serve as elders are not the only ones in the church who hear from God. These are men recognized by the church as men of God who have the assignment of making certain that God is heard in matters of direction, doctrine, and discipline in Springhill.**

The Term “Elders”

As casual reading of the New Testament reveals that there must be leadership in the **Local** church. That is, each local congregation must have in place those who are not only qualified to lead, but are capable of hearing from God and then leading that local church in God’s direction. Without such leadership, the local church will find itself in confusion (for where there is no such godly leadership the people will find themselves in chaos) and wandering away from God’s desire for that church.

Scripture also reveals there are three terms used interchangeably for this position of leadership in the church. These three terms are **Elder, Overseer/Bishop, And Pastor/Shepherd**. A careful explanation is in order.

Elder – is the most frequent term used to describe this leadership team in the local church. In **Titus 1:6** Paul writes to Titus the following instruction: *For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city.*

A careful study of Scripture will also reveal a **Plurality** of Elders were the ones who were charged to fill the leadership role in the local church. That is because every local church must have in place a recognizable leadership team of godly men who can catch the heart and will of God and then lead that church in God’s direction.

At no time must a church ever think of these men as the ultimate **Leaders**. That may sound a bit contradictory, but **God has been and always will be the leader of the church**. Always, these men must function under the authority and leadership of the **Chief/Head Shepherd**, the Lord Jesus Christ. We would never question that. However, for there to be harmony and unity in the local church, there must be in place those men who know how to hear from God and lead that church toward God’s revealed will.

Overseer/Bishop – is the term that points to the office he holds in the local assembly. The Greek word is a compound of two words, “epi” meaning “over” and “skopos” meaning “to look or watch, to peer about, to oversee. Thus, it gives the idea of those who are given the charge to give oversight, to superintend, or to be guardian of the local church.

Pastor/Shepherd – Peter writes to his fellow elders the following charge: *shepherd the flock of God which is among you*

(1 Peter 5:2). The word “Shepherd” is the translation of a word that means “to tend” or “to care for”. This includes all that is involved in the work of the **Pastor/Shepherd**: guiding, guarding, feeding, leading, and correcting. There is also the idea in this word of a sense of urgency; that is, this role of being pastor/shepherd is to be a consuming and compelling motivation in life.

In Acts 20:17, Paul calls together the Elders of the church in Ephesus and delivers a farewell charge to them. Contained in this charge are these words in vs. 28: *take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you Overseers (episkopos – which is translated as either overseer or bishop), to Shepherd (poimaino – which is translated as either shepherd or pastor) the church of God which He purchased with his own blood!*

All three words are directly related to the same group of men (**Elders**) in the church in Ephesus who as **Bishops (Overseers)** were to watch over the congregation and as **Shepherds** tend and feed the flock of God!

The Elder Selection Process

As a Springhill Church, we are suggesting the following process as we implement our first Elder Leadership Team in our church. For future Elder needs, the recommendation will originate with the sitting Elder Team, following the same procedure we will follow in this initial step. That means, the next Elder recommendation will come from the existing Elders, his name will be presented to our church, and the same process will ensue as stated in the following steps.

On October 13, 2005, the pastor and existing Leadership Team will meet with all our current Grace Group Leaders (and their spouses). This Thursday evening meeting will bring our leaders up-to-date on the process we will employ. During this meeting, Grace Group leaders will be asked to make their suggestions of potential Elders for our church through the following process:

- All of this process must be bathed in much, much prayer. After all, this is not about who we think should lead us, but who our God has been preparing for this leadership position. Remember this: **The ministry must be in the man before we can put the man in the ministry!**

- Each recommendation must be made in light of the qualifications as described in this document. That is, hold your recommendation before each of the 23 qualifications before his name is suggested.

- Suggested names do not have to come only from your Grace Group – please consider any man you think might qualify.

- Do not try to limit the number of names you feel being led to submit.

- The names you suggest must be unified suggestions as you and your spouse spend time together praying about the Lord's leadership. **You must not discuss your suggestions with your Grace Group.**

- Do not approach those you are suggesting. You should submit the names in complete confidence.

- The Grace Group leaders will have **two weeks** to make their recommendations. Their sealed and signed recommendation must be submitted **only** to the pastor no later than **Thursday, October 27, 2005**. Please do so by personally giving your envelope to the pastor.

- Submit your recommendation sheet even if you do not have any recommendations to make

Upon receiving the recommendations, the pastor will then schedule an appointment with those who are recommended by the Grace Group leaders. This appointment will consist of the pastor

sharing with the man and his spouse that he has been recommended. Along with this, he will ask the potential Elder if there are any reasons he should/could not be considered. Then, the responsibilities will be discussed in as much detail as possible.

Then, a final question will be asked: If our church embraced you for this position, would you be willing to serve our church as an Elder Leader?

On Sunday Evening, October 16, 2005 our entire church will be called together to discuss the Elder model we have proposed to our Grace Group leaders. We will also discuss the process we are recommending as we put in place this first Elder Leadership Team.

We will share what we have and ask for input from our congregation during that open forum meeting. **On that night, we will ask our church to approve this as our future leadership model.**

On Sunday, November 6, 2005, we will present to our Springhill Church those men who have been recommended and who are willing to serve. This will be done during the morning service on that day.

We will explain to our church the next step in the process. If anyone has any just cause that any of these men should not be given this spiritual assignment, then the way for them to respond is as follows:

You may put in writing your reason(s). You must submit this **only** to the pastor with your reason(s) in writing and signed by you. We will not accept any anonymous accusations. Please know that your reason will be held in strict confidence. The candidate will not know who made the accusation, unless he feels he needs to respond to it. Then, with your permission, the pastor will arrange a meeting so he can defend or explain the accusation.

If you are not comfortable in putting the accusation in writing, then you may schedule an appointment with the pastor to discuss this with him. Again, this conversation will be held in strict confidence.

For **one month** these men will be before our people. If any legitimate complaint comes, then appropriate action will be taken. If no legitimate accusations arise, then we will know God has been faithful to raise up our men.

We will send out a form letter to those outside our church who know the recommended man as we seek their input as to the character and testimony of the man we are considering.

Assuming all goes well through this, we will **Commission/Set Apart** our first Elder Leadership Team on **Sunday Morning, December 4, 2005.**

Appendix 3.11.2

Elder Letter of Review for Those outside the Church

Dear _____,

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your help in an extremely important matter in the life of our Springhill Baptist Church. Mr. _____ is being recommended to serve as an Elder in our congregation.

Elder appointment is not a popularity contest, nor is the position something that a man earns due to his level of education, business success, social status, his wealth, or his seniority. Elders must be qualified according to God's standard as detailed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

One of the qualifications stated in the biblical text is that an elder must have a *good reputation with outsiders* (1 Timothy 3:7). In other words, he must have a good reputation in the local community. We consider this to be a valuable asset to his leadership in our church.

You have received this letter from us because of your relationship with _____. We are not asking you to state the man is perfect. We fully realize no one is. However, you who know him best are the ones we want to hear from.

Do you consider this man qualified to be a spiritual leader in our church? We do not ask you to be unfair. Just share with us your opinion. You have known him outside the "church setting" and your input is important to us.

If you have any just cause of concern, please contact us and we will arrange an appointment with you in private. If you have no reservations about the one considered, please sign below and return this letter to us.

Also, please know that anything you share with us will be held in strict confidence. We can promise you that.

Thank you for your consideration and input.

Sincerely,
Council of Elders
Springhill Baptist Church

Signature

date

Appendix 3.11.3

Deacon Letter of Review for those outside the Church

Dear _____,

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your help in an extremely important matter in the life of our Springhill Baptist Church. Mr. _____ is being recommended to serve as a Deacon in our congregation.

Deacon appointment is not a popularity contest, nor is the position something that a man earns due to his level of education, business success, social status, his wealth, or his seniority. Deacons must be qualified according to God's standard as detailed in 1 Timothy 3.

One of the qualifications stated in the biblical text is that a Deacon must be a person of dignity with a good reputation with outsiders. (1 Timothy 3:8, 10) In other words, he must have a good reputation in the local community. We consider this to be a valuable asset to him serving in our church.

You have received this letter from us because of your relationship with _____. We are not asking you to state the man is perfect. We fully realize no one is. However, you who know him best are the ones we want to hear from.

Do you consider this man qualified to be a spiritual servant in our church? We do not ask you to be unfair. Just share with us your opinion. You have known him outside the "church setting" and your input is important to us.

If you have any just cause of concern, please contact us and we will arrange an appointment with you in private. If you have no reservations about the one considered, please sign below and return to us.

Also, please know that anything you share with us will be held in strict confidence. We can promise you that.

Thank you for your consideration and input.

Sincerely,
Council of Deacons
Springhill Baptist Church

Signature

date