

**BYLAWS**

**RIDGECREST BAPTIST CHURCH  
GREENVILLE, TEXAS**

# **BYLAWS OF RIDGECREST BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **PREAMBLE**

Being elected by God the Father, redeemed by Jesus Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and bound by love for one another, and to the end that this body of believing Christians may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted scriptural standards of a New Testament Church, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of the church, we do accept and establish this Constitution and Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this organization is Ridgecrest Baptist Church, herein referred to as “Ridgecrest Baptist Church,” RBC, or simply as “the church.”

## **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

### **Section 1 – Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this church will be to conduct an ongoing program of discipleship and evangelism and provide practical opportunities for the expression thereof. Such opportunities shall include regular services of worship, teaching, and training, and the development of Christian stewards of time, talents, and possessions. We shall ever keep before us the words of our Lord found in the Great Commission, Matthew 28:19-20, as the primary statement of our purpose.

### **Section 2 – Doctrinal Statement**

We, the members of Ridgecrest Baptist Church, believe that each member should hold the following doctrinal essentials: That the Holy Scriptures are the very Word of God, verbally inspired in all parts and therefore wholly without mixture of error as originally revealed, altogether sufficient in themselves, and man’s only infallible rule to life. (Mt. 5:18; Mark 12:26, 36; 13:11; Lk. 24:27, 44; John 5:39; 10:35; 16:13; 17:17; Acts 1:16; 17:23; 18:28; 26:22-23; 28:23; Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 2:13; 10:11; II Tim. 3:16; II Pet 1:21)

- A. That the Holy Scriptures are the very Word of God, verbally inspired in all parts and therefore wholly without mixture of error as originally revealed, altogether sufficient in themselves, and man’s only infallible rule to life. (Mt. 5:18; Mark 12:26, 36; 13:11; Lk. 24:27, 44; John 5:39; 10:35; 16:13; 17:17; Acts 1:16; 17:23; 18:28; 26:22-23; 28:23; Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 2:13; 10:11; II Tim. 3:16; II Pet 1:21)
- B. That there is One Triune God eternally existent in three persons; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And that these three are one God, having the same attributes, being worthy of the same homage and love. (Mt. 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:14; 4:24; 5:26; Acts 5:3-4; II Cor. 13:14; Heb. 1:1-3)

- C. That the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Second Person of the Triune God, is the eternal Word and Only Begotten Son, and our great God and Savior, that He was born of the Virgin Mary, and there became both true God and true Man, one Person with two natures. (Mt. 1-23; 20:28; Lk. 1:30-35; John 1:1, 14; 3:16; 8:46; Rom. 9:5; Gal. 3:13; Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9; Titus 3:13; Heb. 4:14; 9:24; I John 2:1) That the Holy Spirit, who is the Third Person of the Triune God, dwells in every believer from the moment of conversion and never departs from the church, nor from the feeblest of the saints. While uniting all saints in one body, He also restrains the evil on the earth and convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 14:16-17; 16:7-15; Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 6:19; Eph. 2:22; II Thes. 2:7)
- D. That the Holy Spirit, who is the Third Person of the Triune God, dwells in every believer from the moment of conversion and never departs from the church, nor from the feeblest of the saints. While uniting all saints in one body, He also restrains the evil on the earth and convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 14:16-17; 16:7-15; Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 6:19; Eph. 2:22; II Thes. 2:7)
- E. That man, though originally created in the image and after the likeness of God, has become separated from, and spiritually dead to God through Adam's sin. His state is one possessing depraved human nature with no spark of divine life, and without saving grace, has only expectation of divine wrath. (Gen. 1-26; 2:17; 6:5; Lev. 17:11; Ps. 14:1-3; 51:5; Jer. 17:9; Mt. 19:4; John 3:6; 5:40; 6:35; Rom. 3:10-19, 23; 5:12; 8:6-7; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:18; I Thes. 5:23-24; I Tim. 5:6; I John 3:8)
- F. That escape from divine judgment and salvation to eternal life is by grace through faith alone. By this we mean that salvation is a free and permanent gift of God that cannot be secured or merited in part or in whole by any virtue or good work of man. We believe that our redemption was accomplished solely by the blood of Christ, whose perfect deity and sinless humanity made an acceptable sacrifice to God, and whose death was a substitution for our own. (John 3:16; 6:28-29; 10:27-30; 14:6; Acts 4:12; 16:30-31; Rom. 3:24; 4:4-5; 6:23; Eph. 1:3; 2:8-9; Phil 3:4; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; I Pet. 1:18-19, 23; II Pet. 1:3)
- G. That salvation is inextricably bound to righteous living and good works and is the inevitable consequence (not the procuring cause) of the new life implanted by the Holy Spirit. We believe that each church member should evidence the fruits of divine life by walking according to the words of our Lord Jesus and in some manner bear the responsibility of taking the gospel to a lost world. (Mt. 7:16-18; Acts 1:8; John 15:16; Rom. 12:1-2; I Cor. 15:10; II Cor. 5:19; Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 2:14; I John 3:9-11, 4:19)
- H. That there is One True Church, the spiritual Body and Bride of Christ, and that there are various members of this one spiritual Body who themselves should assemble together in local churches for worship, prayer, teaching, fellowship and observance of the ordinances of our Lord. (Mt. 23:20; Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4; 5:25-32; I Cor. 11:17-22; I Thess. 4:16-47)
- I. We believe that water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper are the only ordinances of the church. (Mt. 28:19; Lk. 22:19-20; Acts 10:47-48; 16:32-33; 18:7-8; I Cor. 11:26)

- J. That the coming of Jesus Christ is imminent and that His return from heaven will be personal, visible and glorious. We believe that the Second Coming of Christ is the climactic event of all history and with its accompanying kingdom, resurrections and judgments constitute a fearful expectation of judgment for one who does not know Jesus Christ as personal Savior as well as a Blessed Hope of eternal life for every believer, that for which we should watch and pray. (Mark 13:33-37; Lk. 1:32-33; Acts 1:11; I Cor. 3:8-15; 15:24-28; 35-38; II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 3:20; I Thes. 4:16; Titus 2:11-13; Jude 13; Rev. 1:7, 19, 11-16; 20:11-15; 21:8; 22:20)

### **Section 3 – Articles of Faith**

#### **I. The Scriptures**

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

#### **II. God**

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

##### **A. God the Father**

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

## B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15, 24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

## C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

## III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy

fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

#### IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

## V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; John 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7, 26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39–12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

## VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

## VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12

## VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

## IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

## X. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

## XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21;



Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

## XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

## XIII. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

## XIV. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such co-operation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

## XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

## XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9, 38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36, 38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

## XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and

unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

## XVIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

## XIX. Statement on Marriage, Gender and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. (Gen 1:26-27.)

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.)

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Ridgecrest Baptist Church as the local Body of Christ and provide a biblical role model to the Ridgecrest Baptist Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Ridgecrest Baptist Church in any capacity or who serve as volunteers agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin and seek His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.)

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Ridgecrest Baptist Church.

## **Section 4 – Church Principles**

The governance of this church is vested solely in the body of the Active Members who compose it, subject to the Lordship of Christ. It shall be subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body.

So far as may be consistent with the principles and teachings of God’s Word, the church shall continue to cooperate with and have representation in the denominational causes sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, and the Hunt Baptist Association.

## **ARTICLE III – GOVERNANCE**

### **Section 1 – Congregational Nature**

The governance of this church shall be a local body of believers that are ruled by Jesus, led by elders, and governed by the congregation in accordance with the principles laid down in the New Testament and set forth in these bylaws.

### **Section 2 – Church Autonomy**

This church is an independent, autonomous church with full and final authority to determine solely within itself all matters related to the life of this church including but not limited to its membership, financial affairs, affiliations, ownership and uses of property, and pastoral leadership.

### **Section 3 – Membership**

Persons desiring membership in the Ridgecrest Baptist Church shall be received in the following manner by a vote of the Active Members in the congregation regularly assembled: Upon profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit by the Pastor or Associate Pastor of the church, or by a person selected by the church to administer the ordinance of baptism.

1. Upon receipt of the usual letter of transfer from another church of the same faith, and having been baptized by immersion by a church of like faith.
2. Upon restoration to membership of a person from whom fellowship has been withdrawn.
3. By personal statement, satisfactory to the church, as to the former membership in a church of like faith and baptism by immersion by a church of like faith.

Any person desiring to join Ridgecrest Baptist Church who fulfills the conditions for church membership should notify the Church Office of his or her intention. Subsequent to meeting with the Senior Pastor or his designee, the candidate for membership must complete the Ridgecrest Baptist Church Membership Agreement in order to be presented to the congregation for its approval.

Persons approved for membership as required above shall be deemed to be “Active Members” of Ridgecrest Baptist Church.

### **Section 4 – Membership Termination/Discipline**

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Cor 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin and promoting purity (1 Tim 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Gal 6:1).

The Lord Jesus Christ has entrusted the local church with the authority and responsibility to discipline members for flagrant sin or serious doctrinal error, with the goal of the restoration of the offender. This discipline is entrusted to the Pastoral Staff and is to follow the biblical pattern as set forth in Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10-11; and 2 John 7-11. Any member of Ridgecrest Baptist Church who practices or affirms a doctrine or conduct that, in the judgment of the Pastoral Staff, is opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, or is threatening to the testimony of Ridgecrest Baptist Church, or is divisive to the body, shall be subject to church discipline.

Discipline will follow the biblical pattern set forth above in an effort to bring the individual to repentance and protect Ridgecrest Baptist Church from unrepentant sin. Discipline may involve exclusion from participation in ministry and communion, as well as dismissal from the fellowship of Ridgecrest Baptist Church. An individual may be disciplined by the Pastoral Staff short of dismissal from the fellowship as it deems appropriate for the specific circumstance. For example, an individual may remain in certain circumstances as a member of Ridgecrest Baptist Church but be denied the privilege of serving in a particular ministry. The Pastoral Staff, as is required by Scripture, may seek affirmance of the congregation of Ridgecrest Baptist Church of the loss of membership by reason of church discipline, as prescribed in Matthew 18:15-20.

Membership shall be terminated in the following manner:

1. By death of the member
2. By letter of transfer to another church of like faith.
3. By withdrawal of fellowship for any scriptural cause the church may deem proper after every reasonable effort has been made to restore such person to the church fellowship.
4. By request of the member.
5. Upon satisfactory evidence that the member has affiliated with a church of another denomination or faith.
6. By dropping, from the membership roll because of prolonged unexplained absence and unknown whereabouts, which action shall not be taken however until a sufficient length of time has elapsed to justify reasonable belief that the member has severed his connection with the church and does not desire to continue as a member. The names of members dropped in this manner shall be carried in a suspense file.

Except in case of death, all terminations of membership shall be by a vote of the church assembled at a regular or a called Church Business Meeting.

## **Section 5 – Church Governance**

- A. The Elder Board (or “Board”), which includes the Senior Pastor, has oversight of and care for each of the members. The Board is also responsible to lead the church in matters of direction, doctrine and discipline. The Board is responsible to oversee and evaluate the direction of all ministries and administration of the church. The Board may establish leadership teams or other boards to assist them in these duties as deemed necessary by the board.
- B. A majority vote of the Active Members at a Church Business Meeting is required to approve Elders, approve the annual budget, sell or buy property, borrow money and amend the Bylaws, as specified herein. The congregation may by majority vote at a Church Business Meeting bring any decision of the Elders to the congregation for consideration.

## **Section 6 – Church Business Meetings**

- A. Annual Meeting - The Annual Church Business Meeting shall be held during the month prior to the beginning of each Fiscal Year with prior notice of the date and time given to Active Members at least two (2) weeks in advance.
- B. Called Meeting - A Church Business Meeting may be called at any time by the Senior Pastor or Chairman of the Elder Board after due notice has been given to Active Members on a previous Sunday by an announcement from the pulpit, newsletter, or correspondence to Active Members sent at least one (1) week before the called meeting. In unusual circumstances or matters of great urgency, this notice provision may be waived by unopposed action by the Active Members assembled at any regular worship service/prayer service at which a quorum is present.
- C. Quorum - A quorum shall be fifteen (15) percent of the church’s Active Members.
- D. Election - In any election or matter in which members are eligible to vote, all votes must be cast in person by Active Members of Ridgecrest Baptist Church.

## Section 7 – Church Officers

The officers of this church shall be a Senior Pastor, Elders, an Elder Board, a Deacon Body, a Church Clerk, Trustees, Treasurers, and Church Administrator.

### A. Senior Pastor and Ministerial Staff

1. The Senior Pastor shall be recognized as the spiritual leader of the church. The Senior Pastor shall be in charge of all worship and other public services of the church. He shall direct the work of the church staff in cooperation with the Elders.
2. The church staff positions shall be filled by the Senior Pastor in consultation with, and approval of the Elder Board. Upon the approval by the Elder board, they shall be brought to the church for confirmation. The staff shall perform such duties as shall be assigned by the Senior Pastor and/or the Elder Board.
3. In the event it becomes necessary to end the employment of the Senior Pastor, at least thirty (30) days notice shall be given, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon by the Senior Pastor and the Elders. The church may dissolve the Senior Pastoral relationship by a three-fourths vote, by secret ballot, of the membership present at a Called Church Business Meeting. A notice of such proposed action shall have been given at least two (2) weeks in advance at a regular Sunday worship service.
4. In the event a Senior Pastor vacancy occurs, a Senior Pastor Search Team shall be formed. This team shall be composed of five (5) Active Members: two (2) Lay Elders and three (3) elected at large from the congregation by majority vote of Active members voting at a Called Church Business Meeting. No spouses shall be allowed to serve together on this team. The team shall be charged with the responsibility of recommending a permanent Senior Pastor for the church. After a unanimous vote, the team shall bring only one (1) for consideration of the church, and no nomination shall be made except that of the Senior Pastor Search Team.
5. The call of the Senior Pastor shall take place at a Called Church Business Meeting especially set for that purpose with at least one (1) week's notice by letter, newsletter, worship bulletin, or announcement from the pulpit to Active Members. The church shall have an opportunity to hear the candidate at a Sunday morning worship service prior to a vote being taken unless this provision is waived by majority vote of the church in a Called Church Business Meeting. Election, to constitute a call, shall require an affirmative vote of 80 percent of those Active Members present and voting. Should the candidate fail to receive an 80 percent vote, the Senior Pastor Search Team will be instructed to restart the process. The meeting shall be adjourned without debate.

### B. Elders

Elders are men called by God and ordained by the church who are charged with the responsibility of overseeing God's church. Elders are given the responsibility for being stewards of the church and shepherding the flock (1 Peter 5: 1-5, Acts 20:28). The Elders of the church shall be considered pastors of the congregation. By definition, the Elders in the body are segregated into two distinct groups. Lay Elders are responsible for assisting the Senior Pastor in overseeing of the body but are not monetarily compensated by the church. Staff Elders are ordained pastors who are compensated by the church for specific tasks required to assist the



Senior Pastor in executing his duties, and do not receive additional compensation for their service as an Elder. The Elder Board referred to in these Bylaws is composed of Active Members from each of these Elder groups.

The Elder Board shall, with the Senior Pastor, provide for the oversight, care and leadership of the church. All Elders shall be men who are scripturally qualified and who have been ordained by this or another church of like faith. If an Elder has been ordained in another church of like faith, Ridgecrest Baptist Church retains the right to qualify him as an Elder before accepting him as a Lay Elder.

#### Elder Qualifications:

1. Must meet the following Biblical qualifications:
  - a. I Timothy 3:1-7
  - b. Titus 1:6-9
  - c. I Peter 5:1-4
2. Staff Elders:
  - a. In order to serve as a Staff Elder, one must be an ordained minister on the Ridgecrest staff.
  - b. Staff Elders are monetarily compensated by the church for their primary ministry designation, but do not receive additional compensation for serving as an Elder.
  - c. Staff Elders are eligible to serve on the Elder Board if recommended by the Senior Pastor and approved by the congregation.
  - d. Staff Elders must possess, emulate, and abide by the qualifications of an elder as described in Scripture and by the Ridgecrest Baptist Church Constitution and Bylaws.
  - e. Agree with the Articles of Faith contained in the Ridgecrest Baptist Church Constitution and Bylaws.
  - f. Be of the male gender by birth.
3. Lay Elders of Ridgecrest Baptist Church must:
  - a. Possess, emulate, and abide by the qualifications of an Elder as described in Scripture and by the Ridgecrest Baptist Church Constitution and Bylaws.
  - b. Agree with the Articles of Faith contained in the Ridgecrest Baptist Church Constitution and Bylaws.
  - c. Be an Active Member of Ridgecrest Baptist Church who has been actively involved in the ministries of the church for at least four (4) years.

- d. Be of the male gender by birth.
  - e. Not be monetarily compensated by the church.
  - f. Must affirm that he has been called by God to become an Elder.
4. An Elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two (2) Active Members with reason to believe that an Elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the Elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Any of the Elders may be dismissed by an 80 percent vote of the Active Members at a Church Business Meeting.
  5. Periodically, the Pastor and the Elder Board will solicit nominations from the Ridgecrest body for Lay Elder candidates. The Elder Board and Pastor will submit questionnaires to those nominated, review the candidates' responses and interview each potential candidate. Those deemed to be qualified candidates will be recommended to the congregation for approval. Each candidate must be individually approved at a Church Business Meeting by an affirmative vote of at least 80 percent vote of the Active Members present. The newly elected Lay Elder candidates will be ordained by the church in a timely fashion.

#### C. Elder Board

1. The Elder Board shall, in conjunction with the Senior Pastor, have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. They may, on a case-by-case basis, delegate this responsibility. The Board, in conjunction with the Senior Pastor, is also responsible to lead the church in matters of direction, doctrine and discipline and to oversee and evaluate the direction of all ministries and administration of the church.
2. The Elder Board shall consist of an odd number of members with seven (7) being the maximum and three (3) being the minimum. The Senior Pastor shall be one Staff Elder. If enough Elders are available, the normal number of members of the Elder Board shall be seven (7) members. At least a majority of the Elder Board shall consist of Lay Elders elected at a Church Business Meeting by a majority vote of the Active Members present. The remaining members shall be Staff Elders.
3. Lay Elders shall be expected to serve in this capacity for a minimum of five years, but not more than eight years per term. Lay Elders may be re-elected after a lapse of one year. Terms shall be staggered such that no more than two (2) Lay Elders terms end in any one year. At any time that the Elder Board has a vacancy, a replacement shall be elected at a Church Business Meeting by a majority vote of the Active Members present from the existing Lay Elders not currently serving on the Board. When filling a vacancy, the maximum length of a Lay Elder's term shall not exceed eight (8) years prior to a lapse of one-year.
4. The Staff Elders shall be appointed by the Senior Pastor each year for a term of one (1) year. There is no limitation on the number of consecutive terms a Staff Elder may serve.
5. The Elder Board shall select a Chairman from the Lay Elders on the Board. The Board shall also elect one (1) of the Lay Elders to serve as Moderator of Church Business Meetings.
6. As a general rule, the Elder Board meetings will be held regularly. The Elder Board shall reserve the right to meet in private to discuss matters deemed sensitive or personal in nature.

An Active Member who wishes to address the Board directly on any particular issue must submit a written request to the Chairman of the Elder Board in writing fifteen (15) days prior to the next regularly scheduled Elder Board meeting specifically detailing the issue to be discussed.

7. The Elder Board shall organize two (2) standing teams: the Administrative Team and the Ministries Team. The Administrative Team shall assist the Board with personnel, property, budget and financial issues and shall be solely responsible for recommending salaries and benefits for staff members. The Administrative and Ministries teams in conjunction with the Elders may create sub-teams they deem necessary to fulfill the mission of the church, such as (property, facilities, children, discipleship, etc.) The Administrative Team shall consist of no more than nine (9) members, to include, at least one (1) Lay Elder, and the Church Administrator. The Ministries Team shall assist the Board in areas related to ministries and discipleship and shall establish and populate any team deemed appropriate by the Board. The Ministries Team shall have nine (9) members, including one (1) Lay Elder and the Chairman of the Deacons. Members of the Administrative Team and the Ministries Team shall each annually elect a chair. The Senior Pastor or a staff designee shall be an ex officio member of the Administrative Team and the Ministries Team.
8. Method of Election for Administrative and Ministry teams: Ridgecrest Baptist Church Active Members will be encouraged to recommend candidates for open positions on the Administrative and Ministries teams to the Elder Board stating the reasons the candidates should be considered. The Elder Board will consider the nominees and recommend candidates to the church for approval by a majority vote of the Active Members present at a Church Business Meeting. Each term shall be three (3) years with one-third of the terms of the congregational members expiring each year. Members of the Administrative and Ministries teams may be re-elected to additional terms.
9. In the absence of a Senior Pastor, the Elder Board shall ensure that someone occupies the pulpit at all worship services. They shall also ensure that the church organizations are kept intact and functioning, and that the attendance and finances are properly promoted while the church is without a Senior Pastor.
10. The Elder Board shall work with the Church Administrator and the Administrative Team in managing the financial affairs of the church. The Elder Board shall present the proposed annual budget for approval at the Annual Church Business Meeting. The Administrative Team shall evaluate and recommend the compensation budget for staff members, including the Senior Pastor, which includes salaries and benefits proposed for the staff. The annual budget must be approved by a majority vote of the Active Members present at the Annual Church Business Meeting.
11. The Elder Board shall study and make recommendations for all proposed changes or amendments to these Bylaws prior to a vote of the church in a Church Business Meeting. Active Members may propose changes to the bylaws to the Elder Board in writing no less than forty-five (45) days in advance of a Church Business Meeting.
12. The Elder Board shall serve as the Pastoral Staff.

#### D. Deacon Body

1. Deacons shall consider themselves to be servants of the church in the spirit of Acts 6:1-6 under the authority of the Elder Board. Their primary focus shall be in providing member care.
2. There shall be no limit to the number of deacons ordained by the church.
3. The Deacon Body shall select from among themselves officers and shall organize teams as needed under the authority of the Elder Board.
4. Deacon Qualifications - In accordance with the scriptural parameters for selecting deacons, all men who are nominated for or elected to the Deacon Body shall:
  - a. Meet the qualifications of a Deacon contained in Scriptures (For example: Acts 6; 1 Timothy 3; II Cor. 9:6-15; and Mal. 3:10).
  - b. Be an Active Member of Ridgecrest Baptist Church for at least 2 years.
  - c. Abide by the Articles of Faith contained in the Ridgecrest Baptist Church Constitution and Bylaws
5. Structure of the Deacon Body:

The Deacon Body shall consist of all deacons who have been ordained by Ridgecrest Baptist Church and those deacons who have been ordained by another church of like faith and order and approved by Ridgecrest Baptist Church by a majority vote of Active Members present at a Church Business Meeting.

6. Deacon Term of Office:

A deacon's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two (2) Active Members with reason to believe that a Deacon should be dismissed should express such concern to the Elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Any Deacon may be dismissed by an 80 percent vote of the Active Members present at a Church Business Meeting.

7. Election and Ordination to the Deacon Body:

Periodically, the Elder Board will solicit nominations from the Active Members for deacon candidates. The Elder Board, in conjunction with the Deacon Officers, will submit questionnaires to those nominated, review the candidates' responses and interview each potential candidate. Those deemed to be qualified candidates will be recommended to the congregation for approval. Each candidate must be individually approved at a Church Business Meeting by an 80 percent vote of the Active Members present. The newly elected candidates will be ordained by the church in a timely fashion.

#### E. Church Clerk

The Church Clerk shall be elected from the Active Members by a majority vote of the Active Members at a Church Business Meeting upon recommendation of the Elder Board

The Church Clerk's duties shall be as follows:

1. To keep a correct record of the proceedings of all Church Business Meeting.
2. Act as custodian of all papers and records pertaining to such proceedings.
3. Prepare and forward letters of transfer of church membership or changes in the church roll, as directed by the church.
4. Prepare and present the annual report of the church for the Hunt Baptist Association and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Term: The Church Clerk shall be elected for a term of two (2) years or until a successor is elected.

#### F. Church Treasurers

Three (3) Church Treasurers shall be elected from the Active Members by a majority vote of the Active Members present at a Church Business Meeting upon recommendation of the Administrative Team. The Treasurers' duties shall be as follows:

1. Responsibility for all funds belonging to the Church, acting in cooperation with the Administrative Team and the Church Administrator.
2. Disperse by check or other approved method such funds as provided by the church.

Term: The Church Treasurers shall be elected for a term of three (3) years. Terms shall be staggered so that one (1) term expires annually.

#### G. Church Trustees

Three (3) Church Trustees shall be elected from the Active Members by a majority vote of Active Members at a Church Business Meeting upon recommendation of the Elder Board to serve in accordance with the church charter or amendments thereto.

Term: The Church Trustees shall be elected for a term of six (6) years or until a successor is elected. Terms shall be staggered so that one (1) term expires biennially.

#### H. Church Administrator

The Church Administrator shall be an employee and Active Member of Ridgecrest Baptist Church.

The Church Administrator shall work as a member of the Administrative Team in conjunction with the Elder Board in preparation and submission of the annual budget. Other duties shall be as described in the job description of the Church Administrator and as assigned by the Elder Board.

## **Section 8 – Rules of Procedure**

### **A. Moderator**

1. A member of the Elder Board shall preside at all Church Business Meetings.
2. The Moderator shall preserve order, state and put all questions, take the vote and shall cast the deciding vote in case of a tie.
3. In all cases of order or parliamentary procedure, the Moderator shall decide, but an appeal may be made to the Active Members present, and a majority of two-thirds may reverse the decision.

B. All matters of parliamentary law and practices not provided for in these Bylaws shall be decided in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*.

C. All questions shall be brought before a Church Business Meeting by motion and seconded before they shall be discussed and voted upon. Recommendations from the Elder Board or a team are considered motions from a committee that do not require a second.

D. All motions, resolutions, and reports shall be submitted in writing to the Elder Board no fewer than fifteen (15) days prior to the Church Business Meeting at which such motions, resolutions and reports will be considered.

E. Only one (1) Active Member shall speak at a time and preference shall be given to the Active Member first addressing the Moderator.

F. Every Active Member wishing to speak shall rise from his or her seat and respectfully address the Moderator.

G. No Active Member may speak more than once upon the same subject until every Active Member wishing to speak shall have the had the opportunity to do so nor more than twice without the consent of the Active Members.

## **ARTICLE IV – THE ORDINANCES AND OTHER MEETINGS**

### **Section 1 – The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least four (4) times per year as determined by the Senior Pastor or at other times considered wise within the discretion of the church.

### **Section 2 – Baptism**

The ordinance of Baptism shall be observed as often as necessary.

## **ARTICLE V – AMENDMENT**

These Bylaws, with the exception of Article IX, may be amended or repealed (together “amendment(s)”) by an 80 percent vote of the Active Members present at a Church Business Meeting, provided, however, that written notice of such amendment(s) must be submitted to the Elder Board and, after consideration by the Elder Board, the proposed amendment(s) shall be made available to Active Members at least fifteen (15) days before a Church Business Meeting at which the amendment(s) will be submitted for a vote.

## **ARTICLE VI – CHURCH FINANCES**

### **Section 1 – Budget**

The Church Administrator, the Elder Board, and the Administrative Team shall jointly prepare and submit an annual budget to Active Members for approval at least fifteen (15) days prior to the Annual Church Business Meeting.

### **Section 2 – Accounting**

- A. All funds received for any and all purposes shall be properly recorded in the books and records of the church.
- B. All funds of the church shall be accounted for in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

### **Section 3 – Fiscal Year**

The Fiscal Year of the church shall be April 1 - March 31, but may be changed by an amendment of these Bylaws.

### **Section 4 – Contributions**

It shall be the duty of Active Members to contribute regularly for the expenses and ministries of the church.

### **Section 5 – Solicitation**

No person shall solicit funds, goods or services or sell to the public goods or services in the name of the church or any of its organizations without the express approval of the Elder Board.

### **Section 6 – Indebtedness**

Committing the church to indebtedness shall require a resolution of the church with an 80 percent approval of the Active Members present at a Church Business Meeting.

## **ARTICLE VII – RECORDS**

The church shall keep (1) adequate and correct books and records of accounts, (2) written minutes of its business meetings, and (3) a record of each Active Member's contact information.

## **ARTICLE VIII – GENERAL**

### **Section 1 – Licensure**

When an Active Member announces to the church that he feels the call to the ministry, the church by a majority vote of the Active Members present at a Church Business Meeting, may license him as an acknowledgment of his call to the ministry and encouragement to make preparation for it. The Church Clerk may furnish the Active Member with a copy of the minutes or a certificate of license as his credential. It is understood that the performance of civil duties by the licensed member shall be governed by laws of the State of Texas.

### **Section 2 – Ordination**

In the event this church has been requested to ordain an Active Member who has been called to the pastorate, the following procedure shall be followed: The Elder Board will convene a council to examine the candidate concerning his fitness for ministry. If the candidate is deemed qualified, he shall be presented to the church for ordination.

## **ARTICLE IX – Ownership and Distribution of Property**

- A. The Church shall hold, own, and enjoy its own personal and real property, without any right of reversion to another entity, except as provided in these Bylaws.
- B. “Dissolution” means the complete disbanding of the Church so that it no longer functions as a congregation or as a corporate entity. Upon the dissolution of the Church, its property shall be applied and distributed as follows: (1) all liabilities and obligations of the Church shall be paid and discharged or adequate provision shall be made therefor; (2) assets held by the Church upon condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the dissolution, shall be returned, transferred or conveyed in accordance with such requirements; (3) assets received and not held upon a condition requiring return, transfer or conveyance by reason of the dissolution, shall be transferred or conveyed to one or more domestic or foreign corporations societies or organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the responding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), and are engaged in activities substantially similar to those of the corporation; this distribution shall be done pursuant to a plan adopted by the Elder Board; and (4) any assets not otherwise disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, for such purposes and to such organizations as said court shall determine, provided such organizations are in agreement with the Church’s Articles of Faith and basic form of government.



## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX A – Transitional Recommendations

#### Elder Selection

Selection of the initial Lay Elders will be administered in accordance with the following procedures:

- A. The initial group of men nominated by the Active Members to serve as Lay Elders will be vetted by the Senior Pastor and a Vetting Team appointed by the Senior Pastor for that purpose. Vetting will be performed in a manner determined by the Pastor and the Vetting Team to ascertain if each candidate exhibits the qualifications necessary to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of a Lay Elder as outlined in Scripture and in the Constitution and Bylaws of Ridgecrest Baptist Church.
  1. Those determined to be qualified to serve as Lay Elders by the Senior Pastor and the Vetting Team will be presented to the church for consideration and confirmation.
  2. Candidates, to be ordained as Lay Elders, must be confirmed by an 80% affirmative vote of the Active Members present at a Church Business Meeting.
- B. After the election of the initial group of Lay Elders, all subsequent Lay Elder identification and vetting will be administered by the Elder Board as follows:
  1. Vetting of men nominated by Active Members will be performed in a manner determined by the Elder Board to ascertain if the candidate exhibits the qualifications necessary to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of a Lay Elder as outlined in Scripture and in the Constitution and Bylaws of Ridgecrest Baptist Church.
  2. Those determined to be qualified to serve as Lay Elders by the Elder Board will be presented to the church for consideration and confirmation.
  3. Candidates, to be ordained as Lay Elders, must be confirmed by an 80% affirmative vote of the Active Members present at a Church Business Meeting.