

Constitution of Pillar Church Jacksonville

Updated September 22, 2019

Preamble:

This Constitution has been created in order to:

1. preserve and secure the principles of our faith,
2. preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church,
3. ensure freedom of action and independence from any religious body or organization, and
4. provide for orderly conduct of internal affairs, in dealing with others, and of governing church members.

Article 1 – Name:

The name of this church shall be Pillar Church Jacksonville.

Article 2 – Purpose:

This church exists to bring glory to God and display His character by knowing Jesus and making Him known. This church shall endeavor to accomplish this purpose by:

1. loving God and obeying His commandments,
2. equipping the saints through biblical preaching, instruction, and study,
3. proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching, personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Scripture,
4. encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work and the establishment of new churches – local, domestic, and international,
5. administering the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper,
6. encouraging biblical fellowship among believers, and
7. serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Article 3 – Governing Documents:

The governing documents of this church shall be the Statement of Beliefs, Membership Covenant, and this Constitution.

Article 4 – Affiliations:

This church shall be affiliated with the Praetorian Project, the New River Baptist Association (NRBA), the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC), and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Article 5 – Membership:

Section 1 – Qualifications:

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be:

1. a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration,
2. baptized by immersion, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and
3. willing to commit themselves to serve Jesus Christ through the ministry and vision of this church.

The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence as the elders deem appropriate.

Section 2 – Admission:

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall:

1. attend a membership class,
2. interview with at least one elder and one member to give credible evidence of repentance of sin, faith in Christ, and understanding of the gospel,
3. commit to uphold, be governed by, and submit to the governing documents of this church, and

4. be recommended by the elders for admission and be presented before the gathered membership (weekly worship gathering or duly called members' meeting)

Section 3 – Duties and Privileges:

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Membership Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of this church consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Further, members are privileged and expected to regularly attend its Lord's Day meetings, faithfully observe the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and submit to the church's discipline and instruction.

Only those who are members of this congregation shall serve in positions of leadership within the church. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation. Under the oversight of the elders, persons from outside of the church may give instruction from the Scriptures for worship services, conferences, and other specifically determined occasions.

Under Christ, the members of this congregation shall have the final word in matters of doctrine, membership, discipline, and direction. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all Members' Meetings and participate in the affirmation of officers (thereby affirming doctrine), decisions regarding membership status (thereby affirming membership), the discipline of unrepentant members (thereby upholding discipline), the annual church budget (thereby affirming direction), and in other such matters that may be submitted by the elders to the congregation.

Section 5 – Discipline:

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her scriptural duties as specified in the governing documents of this church, or who is otherwise 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 elders and the discipline of the church. Any such action shall be done in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8; and any other pertinent Scriptures.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from participation in Lord's Supper, removal from office, and/or removal from membership. See Matthew 18:15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15; 1 Timothy 5:19–20; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5.

If private efforts to bring about the member's repentance and reconciliation are unsuccessful, one or more members shall bring the matter to the attention of the elders. The elders shall review and investigate the matter. After prayer and deliberation, the elders may:

1. dismiss the matter,
2. take disciplinary action, or
3. submit the matter to the members at a duly convened members' meeting for a decision.

If the members vote to discipline the member, it shall be announced to the members to carry out the biblical admonition to bring about repentance and restoration of the disciplined member. Members who have been removed from membership by the church shall be restored to full membership privileges according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8 when their conduct is judged by the elders and the members to be in accordance with the governing documents and biblical repentance.

Section 6 – Removal:

This church shall recognize the removal of a person's membership:

1. upon the voluntary resignation of a member by letter,
2. upon joining in membership with another church,
3. upon the death of the member, or
4. as an act of church discipline, upon the recommendation of the elders, when three-quarters of the present members vote to terminate membership.

This church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation from membership for the purpose of:

1. proceeding with a process of church discipline,
2. to protect that member from following false teaching, or
3. for any other reason the church deems necessary or prudent.

In these instances, this church has the right and responsibility to bring any disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, and to make final determination as to the person's membership status in connection with that process.

Article 6 – Offices and Staff:

The biblical offices in this church shall be elder and deacon. All officers shall be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Section 1 – Pastors/Elders:

The leadership of this church shall be vested in the pastors/elders who are responsible to govern the church, giving themselves to the ministry of the Word and prayer, thereby tending the flock of God in this church. The purpose of this office is to lovingly guide, give oversight to, care for, and equip the membership to do the work of the ministry. The pastors/elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. This church shall maintain a plurality of elders, exemplifying the biblical model for church leadership as described in Acts 15:4; Acts 14:3; Acts 20:17; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1; James 5:14.

Since the office of an elder is a biblical one, certain qualifications of spiritual maturity shall be met. Qualifications for elders are described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4. The Bible indicates that only men shall hold the office of elder; therefore, only male members shall be considered for this position. This church shall maintain a majority of the eldership as non-staff (unpaid) elders.

The responsibilities of the elders shall include:

1. examination and instruction of prospective members,
2. examination and recommendation of all prospective candidates for offices and positions,
3. overseeing the work of the deacons,
4. conducting worship services,
5. overseeing the administration of the ordinances of baptism and Lord's Supper,
6. equipping the membership for the work of the ministry,
7. encouraging sound doctrine and practice,
8. admonishing and correcting error,
9. overseeing the process of church discipline,
10. overseeing the ministries of this church,
11. mobilizing this church for world missions and the establishment of new churches, and
12. ensuring that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share this church's fundamental convictions as expressed in the Statement of Beliefs.

Section 2 – Deacons:

This church shall recognize men and women who are giving of themselves in service to this church, and who possess particular gifts of service. Qualifications for deacons are described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7.

The responsibilities of the deacons shall include:

1. freeing the elders to provide spiritual oversight to the congregation,
2. assisting the elders by performing services of administration, and
3. attending to the physical needs of the congregation.

Section 3 – Appointment:

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting.

Names of nominees to serve as officers shall be presented by the elders at the previous members' meeting provided the previous meeting occurred at least four weeks prior, and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

The moderator shall declare elected all officers receiving a three-quarters vote of the members.

The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

Section 4 – Removal:

An officer's term may be terminated by resignation or dismissal by a three-quarters vote of the members.

Article 7 – Staff:

Section 1 – Staff Pastor(s)/Elder(s):

The staff pastor(s)/elder(s) shall perform the duties of pastor/elder described above and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching, teaching, and/or equipping.

Section 2 – Support Staff:

The pastors/elders may create or dissolve paid support staff positions. Support staff shall serve under the supervision of the pastors/elders. Support staff shall affirm and support the governing documents of this church, and shall exemplify godly character.

Article 8 – Meetings and Voting:

Section 1 – Worship Meetings:

This church shall meet every Sunday (the Lord's Day) and may schedule any other meetings deemed necessary by the elders.

Section 2 – Members' Meetings:

There shall be a regular members' meeting at least three times per year, at some time apart from a public worship service. The date, time, and location of regular members' meetings shall be announced at the public service of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting.

Special members' meetings shall be called as required by the elders. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at the public service of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting.

An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of this church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

A budget shall be approved by the congregation at a members' meeting not less than one month before the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders' discretion, expenditures shall continue at the prior year's level. A fiscal year of the church shall be from January 1 to December 31.

Section 3 – Voting:

A three-quarters vote is necessary on all matters. All votes shall be cast at a regular or special members' meeting. Votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present. Upon the discretion of the moderator, a members' meeting shall be postponed if a sufficient representation of the congregation is not in attendance. Some matters presented to the congregation may require a period of consideration before voting. The elders shall determine the instances where this is the case.

Article 9 – Non-Profit Status And Disposition Of Church Property:

This church is not organized for profit.

Section 1 – Division:

In the case of organic division of this church, all assets shall belong to those members who abide by this document as determined by Pillar Church of Dumfries, VA.

Section 2 – Dissolution:

Should conditions arise when, for any reason, this church's work cannot continue, all assets shall be transferred to Pillar Church of Dumfries, VA for redistribution.

Section 3 – Consolidation:

Should the conditions arise where a consolidation with another church of similar biblical faith is advisable, the elders shall be authorized by a three-quarters vote of the congregation to negotiate the terms of such a consolidation. Should the terms of said negotiation be acceptable, the congregation shall approve the consolidation by a three-quarters vote.

Article 10 – Revisions and Amendments:

Revisions or amendments to the Statement of Beliefs, Membership Covenant, or this Constitution shall be made only in the following manner:

1. Any member of the church can provide a suggested revision or amendment to the Statement of Beliefs, Membership Covenant, or this Constitution in writing to the elders of this church.
2. For a revision or amendment to the Statement of Beliefs, Membership Covenant, or this Constitution to be effected, the elders shall confirm its consistency with Scripture and unanimously affirm the revision or amendment.
3. After approval from the elders, the revision or amendment to the Statement of Beliefs, Membership Covenant, or this Constitution of this church shall be presented at a members' meeting for affirmation.
4. Any revision or amendment to the Statement of Beliefs, Membership Covenant, or this Constitution shall be approved by a three-quarters vote.

