



**THE CONSTITUTION  
Of  
REDEEMER BAPTIST CHURCH OF BLAIRSVILLE  
(as amended through May 1, 2016)**

**Preamble**

Since it pleased Almighty God, by his Holy Spirit, to call certain of his servants to unite here under the name Redeemer Baptist Church of Blairsville, for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we, the members of Redeemer Baptist Church, do hereby organize ourselves and adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and to bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the Statement of Faith and Covenant of this church.

**Article 1: Statement of Faith**

**1.1** *The New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith, 1833* (Page 10)

**Article 2: Church Covenant**

**2.1** Covenant of Fellowship (Page 14)

**Article 3: Name**

**3.1** This body shall be known as Redeemer Baptist Church of Blairsville, Georgia, incorporated.

**Article 4: Affiliations**

**4.1** Redeemer Baptist Church is in friendly cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention. We are thankful for the resurgence of biblical values within the SBC in the 1980s and are pleased to contribute to its causes, specifically the efforts of the International Mission Board to take the Gospel to all corners of the earth. As with all SBC churches, RBC understands its association with the SBC is entirely voluntary.

## **Article 5: Purpose**

**5.1** The foundation of this church is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20). He guides his Church in all affairs through the Holy Scriptures (Psalm 119; 2 Tim. 3:15-17). Therefore, the purpose of this church is to glorify God through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit (Isa. 43:7; Eph. 1:6, 12, 14).

**5.2** The priorities of ministry of this church flow from the vision of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ. We exist to savor this vision in worship (John 4:23), to strengthen the vision in nurture (1 Cor. 14:26; 2 Peter 3:18), and to spread the vision in evangelism, missions, and loving deeds (Matt. 5:16; 28:18-20; 1 Pet. 2:9; 3:15).

**5.3** In order to remain true to our Lord and to his word, this church must be marked by preaching the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27; 2 Tim. 4:1-2), administering baptism (Matt. 28:19; Rom. 6:1-4) and the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:17-34), loving one another (John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:11-24; 4:7-12), and practicing formative (1 Thess. 5:14; 1 Tim. 5:1-2; Tit. 2:15) and corrective discipline (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-5).

## **Article 6: Membership**

### ***Section 1 – Qualifications***

**6.1.1** To qualify for membership in this church, a person

1. must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration,
2. who has been baptized in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration,
3. and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible.
4. Each member must sustain the doctrines of our church and not hold any settled convictions contrary to them, in accord with our Statement of Faith,
5. and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant.

**6.1.2** The normal process for becoming a member is

1. completion of all sessions of the New Members' Class,
2. an assessment of a person's qualification for membership in an interview with at least two elders (pastors),
3. answering of five questions that will be published for the members to access for at least one week before the vote,
4. and finally, a vote by the entire church on the basis of the person's profession of faith.

### ***Section 2 - Admission of Members***

**6.2** To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders (pastors) for admission and accepted by vote of at least 75% of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. At that point, newly elected members shall relinquish their membership in other churches. Those applying for membership will be received as members by baptism or by letter of transfer. A statement of faith may suffice in the event that a letter of transfer is not obtainable.

### ***Section 3 - Duties and Privileges of Membership***

**6.3.1** In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those who are members of this congregation shall be entitled to lead in the ministries of the church.

**6.3.2** It is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters submitted to a vote.

### ***Section 4 - Watchcare Membership***

**6.4.1** Students and others temporarily residing in the Blairsville area who are members of an evangelical church may apply for watchcare membership. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership as set out above, except that home church membership must be retained. A letter of commendation will be sought from the applicant's home church.

**6.4.2** Duties and privileges of watchcare members are the same as for other members except that:

1. when absent from the Blairsville area for extended periods of time they are released from the responsibility to attend our church services;

2. while they will be encouraged to participate in members' meetings, they will not be eligible to stand for any office or to vote.

**6.4.3** Termination of watchcare membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other members, except that the elders (pastors) shall notify the pastor or elders of the home church of that termination. Watchcare membership will normally terminate immediately upon the ending of the period of temporary residence in the Blairsville area.

### ***Section 5 - On Church Discipline***

**6.5.1** Formative discipline is inherent in the preaching, teaching, and exercise of other ministries in the church. When formative discipline fails due to sin, corrective discipline is then necessary. Corrective discipline is for the good of the church and the member who has sinned. It is never to be entered into lightly or quickly. The goal of corrective discipline is always remedial, that is, the goal is always the salvation and holiness and good of the one being disciplined.

**6.5.2** Any member consistently neglectful of his or her 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 elders (pastors) and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline, then, should only be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

**6.5.3** The purpose of such discipline should be:

1. For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (Heb. 12:1-11; Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 6:1);
2. For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (1 Cor. 5:11; 1 Tim. 5:20; Heb. 10:24-25);
3. For the purity of the church as a whole (1 Cor. 5:6-7; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 21:2);
4. For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (Matt. 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:10-14); and
5. Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting his holy character (Deut. 5:11; John 15:8; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 2:12).

**6.5.4** It is desirable in the case of public sin that a confession be made before the church in a specially called meeting, so that the church can freely extend forgiveness. Such public confession is especially necessary in the case of elders (pastors) and deacons (1 Tim. 5:19-20; Gal. 2:11-14).

## ***Section 6 - Termination of Membership***

**6.6** Termination of membership shall be recognized by the church following the death, transfer of membership, or voluntary resignation of any church member. Membership may be terminated as an act of church discipline at the recommendation of the elders (pastors) and with the vote of 75% of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members.

## **Article 7: Meetings**

### ***Section 1 - Lord's Day***

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

### ***Section 2 - Members' Meetings***

**7.2.1** 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.

**7.2.2** There shall be a regular members' meeting at least every quarter, at some time apart from the Sunday morning service, and at a time acceptable to the membership. The elders (pastors) 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.

**7.2.3** Special members' meetings may be called as requested by the elders (pastors), or at the written request, submitted to the elders (pastors), of ten percent of the voting membership. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders (pastors) shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

**7.2.4** There shall be an annual members' meeting, at which a budget approved by the membership no more than three nor less than one month prior to the start of the fiscal year. The fiscal year will commence on January 1.

**7.2.5** The chairman of the elders (pastors) shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church. In the absence or incapacity of the chairman of the elders (pastors), another elder appointed by the elders (pastors) shall perform these duties. The date, time, and purpose of any regular or special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church at least two weeks preceding the meeting. Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present.

**7.2.6** Meetings shall be run according to Robert's Rules of Order. On any matter that is brought to vote, a two-thirds vote is needed for it to pass (unless this constitution specifies otherwise). Abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. Only votes cast by members present at the time of the meeting will be counted.

**7.2.7** Resolutions adopted by the elders (pastors) shall be reported to the church at members' meetings and may be reversed by the church by a majority vote of the members present.

## **Article 8: Officers**

### ***Section 1 – Summary***

**8.1** The Biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of clerk and treasurer. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

### ***Section 2 – Elders***

**8.2.1** The elders shall be comprised of not less than three men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 6–9. A majority of the active eldership shall be composed of church members not in the regular pay of the church, and no elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6: 1–6 and I Peter 5: 1–4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.

**8.2.2** The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church triennially. After an elder, other than the senior or associate pastor(s), has served two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be elected to the office of elder after at least one year.

**8.2.3** An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two 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 I Timothy 5: 17–21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members' meeting of the church.

**8.2.4** The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

**8.2.5** The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of senior and associate pastor. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.

**8.2.6** The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

**8.2.7** Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons, and the membership, shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a specially-called budget meeting and called up for a vote at the following members' meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.

**8.2.8** The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings.

### ***Section 3 – The Senior Pastor***

**8.3.1** The senior pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

**8.3.2** His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out in Article 8, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 8.2.2.

**8.3.3** He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution.

**8.3.4** In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

#### ***Section 4 – Deacons***

**8.4.1** The office of deacon is described in 1 Tim. 3:8-13 (cf. Acts 6:1-7). The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, who possess gifts of ministry, and who are called to further service and care for the church's members. The number of deacons shall be determined by the needs of the ministry and the call and qualifications of men in the church. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church triennially. After a deacon has served two consecutive three-year terms, he shall not be eligible for re-election to the diaconate for at least one year.

**8.4.2** Deacons shall advise and assist the elders (pastors) in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the word, new and existing ministries of the church, and the care of the members of the congregation. The deacons may be organized in the most fitting way to accomplish the mission of the church. Thus the ministry of deacons may involve several diaconal committees. There is no requirement that the deacons meet as a committee of the whole.

**8.4.3** The responsibilities of deacons do not include preaching, teaching, or spiritual oversight, which are the responsibilities of the elders (pastors), or financial control of the church. Deacons exercise a ministry of service, not a ministry of spiritual leadership. Although they may teach and preach in contexts in which they are not infringing upon the oversight duties of elders (Acts 6-7:53; Titus 2:3), the responsibilities of deacons include the following:

1. The ministry of mercy is a particular responsibility of deacons. They shall see that the sick, the sorrowing, the aged, and the infirm receive spiritual and physical comfort.
2. Deacons shall also attend to the benevolence ministries of the church. They shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders (pastors) at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.
3. Deacons shall attend to the accommodations for public worship. Deacons may assist in providing for the elements during the Lord's Supper.



4. Deacons shall attend to the normal care and maintenance of church properties.
5. Deacons shall attend to the welcoming and greeting ministries of the church.
6. Deacons of finance shall attend to the budgeting process of the church.
7. At the elders' (pastors') recommendation, the church may recognize deacons to serve in other specific capacities as needs arise in the church.

**8.4.4** Each year the deacons of finance, with the approval of the elders (pastors), shall present to the church an itemized budget at the regular members' meeting preceding the annual members meeting. This budget shall be presented for discussion at that time and called up for a vote at the annual members' meeting.

**8.4.5** No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders (pastors) or the deacons responsible for the church's finances.

### ***Section 5 - Clerk***

**8.5.1** It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the elders (pastors), deacons, or the church.

**8.5.2** In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the elders (pastors) shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk.

**8.5.3** For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the state of Georgia, the clerk shall serve as the secretary of the corporation.

**8.5.4** The church clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members.

### ***Section 6 - Treasurer***

**8.6** The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder (pastor) or a paid church staff member, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as designated by the church. The 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 treasurer shall render to the elders (pastors) annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church. The treasurer shall also be

responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the church at regular members' meeting.

## **Article 9: Elections**

### ***Section 1 – Principles***

**9.1.1** Introduction - The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:

**9.1.2** Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process;

**9.1.3** Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;

**9.1.4** All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;

**9.1.5** The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### ***Section 2 – Selection of Officers***

**9.2.1** The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, clerk, or treasurer shall be presented by the elders at the previous members' meeting (providing that previous meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting.

The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a 75% majority of all votes cast for the office of elder. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

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

### ***Section 3 – Calling of the Senior Pastor***

**9.3** In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential senior pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as senior pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

### ***Section 4 – Calling of Associate Pastor***

**9.4** In the calling of any man to the position of associate pastor, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential associate pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as associate pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

### ***Section 5 – Calling of Assistant Pastor***

**9.5** The calling of any man to the position of assistant pastor requires that that man has been recognized and called by the congregation to the office of elder, according to the process described in Article 6, Section 2. Such a man may then be called by the elders to serve as assistant pastor with defined duties for a fixed period of time specified by the elders in the terms of his call.

## **Article 10 – Indemnification**

### ***Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification***

**10.1** If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would

exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

### ***Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification***

**10.2** At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

### ***Section 3 – Procedure***

**10.3** If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

## **Article 11 – Dispute Resolution**

**11.1** Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18: 15–20, I Corinthians 6: 1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities.

## **Article 12 – Amendments**

The Statement of Faith and Church Covenant may be amended by a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members by the church clerk.

### **Article 13: Marriage**

13.1 Redeemer Baptist Church will sanction or authorize official participation only in Christian marriages, as opposed to civil marriage ceremonies found and available throughout society. As is clear in Holy Scripture, and in the traditional covenants and statements of our faith, the Lord God designed marriage to be the union of one man and one woman for life. Our sincerely held faith convicts us that Christian marriage is intended for a man and a woman to glorify God together in reflecting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world through the marriage relationship and to provide an example of faithful obedience as the man and the woman seek to follow God's will together in covenant relationship.

13.2 Consistent with the Creator's design and purpose of marriage, only those proposed marriage ceremonies which could be considered Christian marriages consistent with His revealed design and purpose will be sanctioned by Redeemer Baptist Church.

13.3 Elders and other officers of Redeemer Baptist Church are not authorized to perform or officiate any marriage or civil union ceremony of any nature other than those recognized under this Article 13 to be a Christian marriage.

13.4 No facility or property owned by (or under lease by) this body may be utilized for any non-Christian marriage or for any marriage or union ceremony involving non-members of Redeemer Baptist Church.