**THE PREAMBLE, CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE**

**EFFINGHAM BAPTIST CHURCH IN RINCON, GEORGIA**

# PREAMBLE

For the purpose of preserving and making secure the principle of our faith and to the end that this Church body be governed in an orderly manner for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of the Effingham Baptist Church, we do declare and establish this Constitution.

# ARTICLE I. NAME

This church body shall be known as the Effingham Baptist Church of Rincon, Georgia.

# ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this church body shall be to provide regular opportunities for congregational worship; to sustain the ordinances, doctrines and ethics set forth in the New Testament for the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ; to nurture its members through a program of Christian Education; to channel its offerings to the support of the objects of the Redeemer’s Kingdom; and to preach and propagate among all people the gospel of the Revelation of God through Jesus Christ who is Savior and Lord. This body shall be supported by tithes

and offerings.

 The “tithe” is defined as 10% of our gross income.

“Offerings” are defined as 1) Any amount given to the church above the tithe, 2) Special building fund offerings, 3) Faith Promise offerings which is nominally used to support missions, and 4) Gifts which come from wills, offerings, estates, etc.

## ARTICLE III. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1: ADMISSION.**

The membership of the Effingham Baptist Church shall be composed of persons who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior, and have been baptized by immersion by a scriptural authorized church that is a church of like-faith or having been received by letter from a church of like-faith; or received by restoration; or received by statement of faith and baptism from a church of like-faith which has ceased to exist, or whose mailing address is unknown. In all cases applicants for membership must be received by an affirmative majority vote of members present an voting. Applicants not receiving such majority vote shall not be admitted to membership. Effingham Baptist Church reserves the right to reject membership to anyone without giving a reason for rejection.

### Section 2: DUTIES

It shall be the duty of the membership to attend regular meetings of the Church for worship and special called meeting for business, training, teaching, revivals, Bible conferences, Mission conferences and etc., as the Pastor deems necessary to carry out an effective Church ministry.

It shall also be the duty of the membership to contribute to the support of missions, maintenance and building programs instituted by the Church. The membership shall make their stewardship contributions upon the first day of the week (Sunday), and to conduct themselves always in the spirit of this covenant.

### Section 3: DISMISSAL

A letter of dismissal may be granted for members in good standing upon proper request to unite with another Church of like-faith. The church clerk shall present all such request to the Pastor, and the Pastor shall authorize the granting of all church letters. If there is sufficient reason to deny the granting of a church letter in good standing to another church of like-faith, the Pastor and Deacons shall be authorized to make this decision.

**Section 4: REMOVAL FROM CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.**

Church members shall be removed from the membership roster by one of the following conditions:

Death.

Uniting with another church of like-faith.

Uniting with a Church other than one of like-faith.

Failure to attend, or support the Church for a period of two years

Through Church discipline which requires a 2/3 vote of those present and voting.

**Section 5: INACTIVE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.**

Members who for a period of six (6) months neglect or refuse to support the Church through attendance and/or giving, unless prevented by the providence of God, such as sickness or physical inability, shall automatically be placed on the inactive membership list and shall not be permitted to have a voice in Church business affairs until restored to active membership by request and fulfillment of Section 7.

### Section 6: DISCIPLINE

1. If at any time a member finds that he cannot wholeheartedly support the Church and her policies,

 programs, and doctrines, that member must remove himself/herself from the membership by his

 own accord, or face removal by the Church by a 2/3 vote of the membership present and voting.

1. In cases where offense is given by one member to another, the offended member shall proceed strictly according to the rules established down by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17.

3. Evidence of unscriptural conduct or radical departure from the tenets of the faith held by the

 Church shall be considered sufficient grounds upon which to withdraw fellowship from any

 Member. 2nd Thessalonians 3:6,14-15.

1. If any member shall be publicly guilty of any crime of gross impropriety, or if common rumor charges such crime of impropriety, it shall be the duty of the member knowing and hearing of it to make it known to the Pastor or Board of Deacons. Unless corrected immediately such conduct shall be considered sufficient grounds for the Church to withdraw fellowship from said member.

It is to be noted that when incrimination rumors concerning a member are brought to the Pastor and Deacons, the offense must be supported by sufficient evidence, or the information will be considered as an unfounded rumor. The Pastor and Deacons are not obligated to play the role of a detective in an attempt to secure evidence against any church member.

1. For the following reasons a member may be requested to meet with the Pastor, or/and the Pastor and Deacons:
	1. Un-Christian like conduct and constant violation of Church Covenant.

b. Holding or teaching doctrines contrary to those held by the Church as set forth in the

 Articles of faith.

1. Calling and holding or participating in secret meetings with other members of the Church

 that are unauthorized by the Church, or presided over by any person other than the Pastor,

 or in case of his absence the Chairman of the Board of Deacons.

1. Unbridled tongue. The definition of an unbridled tongue is set forth in James chapter three.

e. Active opposition to the policy or leadership of the Church, or conduct that creates

 dissension or division within the Church body.

### Section 7: RESTORATION

Persons who have been excluded from the Church may be restored upon confession of their errors, giving evidence of repentance, and the recommendation of the Pastor and Deacons, and with an affirmative 2/3 vote of the Church members present and voting.

### Section 8: VOTING QUALIFICATION

The legal voting membership of the Church shall consist of all members in good standing, who shall have met membership requirements of the Church and subscribe regularly to its formal support and whose name shall appear on the Church role. Persons who have presented themselves for membership by promise of letter from another church of like-faith, or by baptism may not participate in Church affairs and may not vote on any matters of the Church until their membership has been validated by reception of letter or by baptism. The legal age for voting is eighteen (18) years of age. In active members shall be excluded from voting.

# ARTICLE IV. CHURCH MEETINGS

**Section 1:**

Effingham Baptist Church shall hold regular meetings for worship, teaching, training and fellowship. Regular worship services of the Church shall be held on Sunday AM, PM, and Wednesday PM unless otherwise agreed upon by the Pastor, Deacons and membership.

**Section 2:**

Special meetings for business or otherwise may be called only by the Pastor, the only exception being when the Church is without a Pastor, or when the Pastor is incompetent. At such time the Chairman of the Deacons shall be authorized to call a Church meeting for the purpose of conducting Church affairs. No individual member is authorized to call for a Church meeting. Any meeting called other than by the Pastor or the Chairman of the Deacons shall be unlawful and will not be recognized by the Church.

The Moderator of all business meetings shall be the Pastor except under the condition stated in the first paragraph of Section 2, or except when the Church is dealing with matters relating to the Pastor, at which that time the Chairman of the Deacons shall moderate that part of the authorized meeting.

**Section 3:**

When the Church is without a Pastor, it will be considered imprudent for the Church to amend the Constitution and By-laws of Effingham Baptist Church. This should always be done with the /a Pastor present.

# ARTICLE V. THE ORDER OF BUSINESS MEETINGS

**Section 1:**

Every business meeting shall be opened and closed with prayer.

**Section 2:**

No second motion shall be entertained until the one under consideration has been disposed of, except a motion for an amendment, adjournment, or call for the “question” which ends discussion of the issue on the floor of the Church and clears the Church floor for a vote on the matter.

**Section 3:**

The Moderator shall rule any speaker introducing matter foreign to the subject under discussion out of order.

**Section 4:**

Discourteous language or remarks adapted to injure the reputation or feelings of any member shall be ruled out of order and shall forfeit the speaker’s right to the floor.

**Section 5:**

The Moderator may speak upon any subject under discussion on the Church floor.

**Section 6:**

Each member wishing to speak shall arise and respectfully make his/her request known to the Moderator.

**Section 7:**

Every proposition presented for action by the Church must be introduced by one member and seconded by another member before the Church can consider any proposition.

**Section 8:**

No member shall speak more than twice upon the same subject.

**Section 9:**

All questions shall be decided by 2/3 vote of voting members present and voting; an exception being the election of officers, which shall be by majority vote; or the change of constitution and by-laws which require a 75% of all voting members present and voting.

**Section 10:**

For any procedures that are questionable, Roberts Rules of Order shall be followed.

**Section 11:**

If a meeting becomes disorderly, the Moderator has the authority to dismiss the meeting until such time in the future as the Church can orderly meet together as brethren. The Pastor and Deacons shall determine such a time.

**Section 12:**

The Moderator cannot vote on any issue except when there is a tie vote and then he can vote to break the tie.

# ARTICLE VI. CHURCH OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

### Section 1: OFFICERS

The officers of the Church shall be Pastor, Deacons, Trustees, Treasurer, Church Clerk, and such other Officers as the Church authorizes and deems necessary to carry out the ministry of the Church.

The officers of the Cooperation shall be President, which is to be filled by the Pastor; and the Secretary, which is to be filled by the Church Clerk.

The Pastor is authorized to sign all legal and financial documents on behalf of the Church and cooperation when accompanied by a letter from the Church Clerk stating the Church has authorized the specific transaction.

**Section 2: ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES.**

1. **PASTOR’S CALL**

The call of the Pastor shall be held at a special called meeting for the specific purpose of extending a call to a Pastor. A written notice to all active members notifying them of the special meeting to call a Pastor shall be mailed at least one week before the meeting is to take place.

The call of a Pastor shall be upon the recommendation of the Pulpit Committee, which Committee shall be made up of three Deacons appointed by the Deacon Board. The Committee of Deacons serving as the Pulpit Committee shall prayerfully and earnestly seek out a Pastor to recommend to the Church. It is advisable that the Pulpit Committee seek the advice of a well-known Pastor or Pastors, who are in a position to know of Pastors who would be available to the Church. When the Pulpit Committee has come to an agreement on a candidate to recommend to the Church, the Committee shall present their findings to the Deacons and seek their approval of the candidate; then the Pulpit Committee and Deacons may present only one name at a time to the Church for the Churches consideration. Until the recommendation of the candidate has been disposed of by the Church no other recommendations can be considered.

No nomination of a pastoral candidate will be received by the Church expect that which comes from the Pulpit Committee. The Pulpit Committee must have the recommendation of at least two well known and respected Pastors; a credit report, a report on the marital statue of the candidate and if possible, a letter of recommendation from the last place of employment of the candidate, before presenting a minister to the Church for consideration to become Pastor.

When the Pastor or the Church desires to terminate their relationship a 30 day notice shall be presented in writing; unless otherwise mutually agreed upon by the Pastor and Church.

1. **PASTOR’S DUTIES**

The Pastor shall have the charge of the welfare and oversight of all affairs of the Church, both spiritual and material in accord with Acts 20:28. The Pastor shall be a member (ex-officio chairman) of all organizations, departments, and committee’s established by the Church. He shall conduct religious services as stated and special occasions, administer the ordinances, minister to and counsel with members of the Church and perform other duties that usually pertain to the office of a Pastor. He shall have special charge of the pulpit, and have the authority to appoint a speaker to the pulpit in case of his absence. The Pastor is authorized to seek out and engage speakers for revival meetings, conferences, and other services deemed necessary for the welfare of the Church. The Pastor shall moderate all Church meetings and Church ministries, except when the Church is without a Pastor at which time the Associate Pastor shall moderate the meetings. If there is no Associate Pastor the Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall serve as Moderator.

The Pastor shall be responsible for the coordination and supervision of all Church employees. The Pastor has the authority to employ, remove, and supervise all personnel employed by the Church. The Pastor in consultation with the Deacons shall recommend new positions of employment to the Church as the need arises. The Pastor and Personnel Committee made up of Deacons appointed by the Deacon Board to assist the Pastor in establishing the salary range of employees of the Church.

The Pastor’s salary shall be established by the Board of Deacons. The Deacons shall review the Pastor’s salary each year to make sure that it is sufficient and just. The budget of the Church shall not list individual salaries, but will list the combined salaries of all employees in the annual budget under the category “Church Personnel.”

1. **DEACONS**

The term of the office of a Deacon shall be three years. A nomination form shall be presented to the Church members giving each member the opportunity to nominate one (1) person for the office of Deacon (regardless of how many deacons needed for the ballot) two weeks prior to the election of Deacons. The Ballot will be prepared from the nomination forms. The person receiving the most nomination will be considered first and on until the Ballot has been completed.

The ballot will be prepared by the Pastor and Deacons. In order for a member to qualify to be placed on the ballot for Deacon he must meet all the requirements specified in 1st Timothy 3:8-13. “The husband of one wife” as stated in verse 12 must be interpreted by the Church as to whether it means bigamy or married only one time. The Pastor and Deacons have the authority not to place any person on the ballot for Deacon if they have sufficient reason to believe the person to be unqualified.

The Ballot for the Election of Deacons will be presented to the Church on the third Sunday in January at both the AM and PM services.

The Church Clerk and the Chairman of the Deacons shall count the Ballots. The persons receiving the most votes will be elected to the Board of Deacons.

Should a replacement be necessary on the Board of Deacons, the person receiving the most votes but not sufficient to be elected as a Deacon shall be appointed to fill the vacancy in the order of the number of votes.

Immediately following the annual election of Church Officers the Deacons shall meet to elect a Chairman who shall serve a one (1) year term. The present Chairman shall moderate this meeting.

After serving a three-year term, a deacon must remain off the Deacon Board for one year before being presented to the Church for another term.

1. **TRUSTEES**

The same procedure used to elect Deacons will apply to Trustees. Their term of office shall be three years. The Trustees shall meet immediately following the annual election of Church Officers to select a Chairman who shall serve a one (1) year term. The present Chairman of the Trustees shall moderate the meeting to select a Chairman.

The Trustees shall hold all property of Effingham Baptist Church in trust. The Trustee must guard against anyone obtaining loans, mortgaging church property, purchasing any items not authorized by the Church; or selling or disposing of any item owned by the Church without the Church’s permission.

The Trustees are to guard against the use of Church property by any group outside of the Church membership or any unauthorized activity within the Church body. All non-Church groups (includes buildings and grounds) given permission to use Church property must provide the Church with evidence of liability insurance, or in the case of the construction of any item on Church property, the company constructing the item must provide the Church with a copy of liability insurance and workmen compensation.

The Trustees are charged with the responsibility of maintaining all Church property. They shall inspect the facilities in September of each year to list all repairs needed for the coming year. After consulting with the Pastor, they shall obtain bids for all work that needs to be done and submit their financial projections to the budget committee in January for consideration.

1. **TREASURER**

The Treasurer shall serve for a period of three years. The same procedure used to elect Deacons shall be used to elect a Treasurer. For one to qualify to be on the ballot to fill the office of Treasurer that person must have at least a working knowledge of the office of a Treasurer. The Pastor and Chairman of the Board of Deacons must interview all persons before they are placed on the ballot to make sure they qualify for the office of Treasury

The Treasurer of the Church shall oversee the financial affairs of the Church. A person employed in the Church Office shall be appointed Financial Secretary by the Pastor, in consultation with the Treasurer, and Chairman of Deacons. The Financial Secretary shall co-sign all checks along with the Treasurer of the Church.

The Financial Secretary shall make all deposits and keep all financial records of the Church, submitting a copy of all deposits to the Pastor and Treasurer.

The Financial Secretary shall prepare a monthly financial statement for the Finance Committee oversight.

The Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman of the Board of Deacons and Pastor shall prepare an annual financial statement for Church approval at the Church’s annual meeting on the third Sunday PM Service of each January. A 2/3 vote is required for approval of the Financial Statement.

1. **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

The Finance Committee shall be made up of one elected non-office holder from the Church, the Pastor, Treasurer, Chairman of the Deacons, Chairman of the Trustees, and the Financial Secretary. The procedure used to elect the Deacons will be used to elect the one non-office holder Finance Committee Member from the Church. See Amendments to this order.

Beside the normal requirements of Officers of the Church, the members of the Finance Committee must tithe their income, for it would not be appropriate for any person not tithing to oversee how the tithes of other members of the Church are spent.

The Finance Committee will meet once each month to make sure that all funds spent during the past month were within the budget and that it was spent as an authorized Church expenditure, and that all checks are accounted for, and that the financial statement of funds available is in agreement with the bank statement.

The financial statement will be signed by each member of the Finance Committee and placed in a Book labeled Financial Statement and placed in the Church Office for any member of the Church to examine during office hours.

1. **ANNUAL BUDGET**

An annual budget will be prepared under the supervision of the Pastor, Treasurer and Chairman of the Board of Deacons, by all Department Heads of the Church, such as Sunday School, Nursery, Trustees and by those who head up special ministries and activities of the Church. Each department head will prepare their budget for the year, which will include projected expenditures and projected income from their activities. These budgets will be presented to the Pastor, Treasurer, and Chairman of the Board of Deacons the Second Sunday of each January. Those presenting their budget must come with a ready mind to discuss their proposal and must not be offended if they are asked to reduce their request or withdraw their request altogether, in order to keep the Church Budget within the income that is anticipated during the current year. When the budget is agreed upon by the Pastor, the Treasurer and the Chairman of the Board of Deacons the proposed budget will be recommended to the Church at her annual business meeting on the third Sunday in January at the PM Service for approval.

1. **PURCHASING AGENT**

Once the Church has approved the Budget, the Pastor will act as purchasing agent using the purchase order system. Each department head desiring to purchase any item must present their request on a signed purchase order form identifying the item, cost and etc. The Pastor is responsible to see that the proposed purchase item is in the budget and that the funds are available in the department requesting the purchase and the General Fund Account can support the purchase of said item. Only then is the Pastor authorized to approve the purchase authorizing the Financial Secretary to make what arrangements necessary to purchase the requested item.

Anyone requesting the purchase of an item not in the budget must follow the same procedure to the church floor as the budget traveled for approval.

If Church activities and ministries require more funds than those approved in the budget the Church’s approval must be secured in a special called meeting by the Pastor before the item can be approved for purchase.

1. **DESIGNATED FUNDS**

All designated funds are to be routed to the person or institution the funds are designated for by the person making the contribution. If for some reason the church is unable, unwilling, or that the transaction would be unlawful, the funds will be returned to the donor with a brief explanation.

1. **LOVE OFFERINGS**

All love offerings that total $600.00 or more will be reported to the IRS on Form 1099 – MISC as per requirement. Copies of from 1099-MISC shall be sent to the appropriate agent of the IRS and to the person receiving the offering. The Church should give two checks to the guest, on for expenditures, and the other for the love offering.

1. **ALLOWANCES TO PASTOR AND STAFF PASTOR**

The Pastor and Pastoral staff is allowed to receive Housing allowance and Car expense, which they do not have to pay taxes on. The IRS requires that the Church have on file by January 2nd a signed request from the Pastor and Staff Pastors listing the amount requested for each allowance, and that the total allowances given by the Church must be listed in the Churches annual budget under the heading of Pastoral Car allowance and Pastoral Housing allowance. It is up to the individual Pastor and Staff Pastors to decide the amount they wish to claim for Car and Housing allowance, however, they must be able the justify their claim to the IRS should they be asked to do so. The Church is not required to justify the amount of each allowance, but the Church is required to list these allowances under a total sum titled Pastoral Car and Housing allowance in the Churches annual budget.

 **12. CHURCH CLERK**

The Church Clerk shall serve a term of three (3) years. The Church Clerk shall be elected using the same procedures as is used to elect Deacons. The duties of the Church Clerk requires that this person be able to take notes of all Church meetings and be able to present the minutes in a legible form. The Church Clerk shall sign the minutes and the Pastor shall sign the minutes attesting to their correctness. The Church Clerk shall place the record of the minutes of each meeting in the Record Book in the Church Office where they will be kept on file for future reference. Any member of the Church desiring to see the Minutes of the Church Meetings will be given permission to do so, however, these minutes must never be taken from the Church Office.

The Church Clerk should inspect the Church Membership for accuracy at least twice each year. One of the personnel in the Church Office will be assigned by the Pastor the responsibility of maintaining the Membership Records. Upon reasonable request the Church Clerk may request to examine these records for inspection to see that Membership Records are in proper order.

At the Annual Church Business Meeting, the Church Clerk shall give a report to the Church Body declaring the number of Active Members and Inactive Members, which report will include the number of additions to the Church during the past year and the number of members lost through death, granting of letter to another church of like-faith, and the number of those dismissed from the membership through Church discipline, or removed from Membership through the lack of attendance and support of the Church.

1. **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

A record of all members shall be kept at the Church Office. The Pastor shall appoint a person in the Church office to be responsible to keep the membership file up to date and available for inspection by the Church Clerk upon that officer’s reasonable request.

No officer or member of the Church is authorized to give the membership records to any company for solicitation, or any member of our Church for the same purpose.

**Section 3: DUTIES AND STANDARDS OF OFFICERS AND TEACHERS.**

In addition to those heretofore stated, the duties of all Church Officers shall be such as are considered biblical for their respective office, which qualifications are set forth in the Word of God.

All Officers of the Church, members of the Choir, workers in the Sunday School, and leaders of any other division of the Church shall seek to live honestly and boldly the Christ-life. Any person who fails to do so will be expected to resign his/her position in the Church or be removed by the Church.

# ARTICLE VII. COMMITTEES AND THEIR DUTIES

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The Church shall elect such standing and temporary committees as may be deemed necessary to effectively carry out the work of the Church. The Committee Members elected or appointed shall serve in the capacity stated and the term set forth by the Church.

**ARTICLE VIII. TEACHERS AND WORKERS APPOINTMENTS**

The Pastor and Sunday School Director shall appoint all Teachers and Workers to staff the Sunday School. Once the Pastor and Sunday School Director have appointed the Teacher or Worker they shall be presented to the Church for recognition, dedication and prayer of consecration.

# ARTICLE IX. GENERAL

### Section 1. LICENSE

When a member declares the Lord has called them to the Gospel Ministry, after meeting with the Pastor and Deacons, they may be presented to the Church for recognition and prayer support for their calling. At such a time when that individual has prepared himself and is ready to begin His ministry he will be presented to the Church to be licensed as a Gospel Minister. When He assumes a pastoral position, which calls for ordination, the Church will at that time ordain Him. After the proper interrogation of the candidate and approval by a special formed PRESBYTER by the Pastor, and upon a recommendation from the PRESBYTER that they have found the candidate qualified for ordination, the Church will authorize the ministers to lay the hands of ordination upon the candidate officially coordinating the candidate to the Gospel ministry.

In the case an ordained minister goes astray doctrinally or morally; the ordaining Church only is responsible to recall his ordination.

# ARITCLE X. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT

**Section 1:**

This Constitution shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect at the point of approval by a 2/3 vote of the Church membership, present and voting.

**Section 2:**

Any of the regulations in the Constitution may be amended, altered, or replaced by a 75% vote of the active membership of the Church present and voting at a special called meeting for this purpose, which requires that all active members be notified in writing 7 days prior to the Church meeting.

**Section 3:**

THE ARITICLES OF FAITH CAN NEVER BE AMMENED. If the Church elects to reject or seriously amend the Articles of Faith so as to change the doctrinal meaning of any particular doctrine, the Church will cease to become a Church and organization dissolved. The Trustees are thus authorized to sell all Church property and deplete the Churches bank accounts of all funds, after satisfying all liabilities against the Church, and to prorate the remaining funds to the Churches current Mission Projects.

**Section 4:**

A copy of this Constitution and Declaration of Faith shall be kept in the Church Office at all times for viewing by any active member of Effingham Baptist Church. The Church Clerk shall see that this order is carried out in the Church Office. The Church Clerk shall personally keep a copy of this Constitution and By-laws. This is for records sake and not for viewing by any member of the Church at the home or office of the Church Clerk.

The Church is under no obligation to provide members of the Church with this document, since it is available in the Church Office for their viewing.

A copy of the Constitution and By-Laws will be placed in the Pastor’s Office for reference and familiarity. A copy of the Constitution and By-Laws shall be at all meetings of the Deacons and Trustees, as well as all meetings of the Church. A copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Effingham Baptist Church will be made available to the Church attorney and the Churches bank for their knowledge of this document.

**Section 5:**

Articles of Faith are attached to this document and are thus a legal and essential part of this document.

**Section 6:**

The Church Covenant of Effingham Baptist Church will be attached to this document and is thus a legal and essential part of this document.

**Section 7:**

The Pastor needs all the good advise he can get to be the effective leader of Effingham Baptist Church,

therefore, the Pastor may select some members in the Church in whom he has confidence and respect for their business and managerial wisdom, with whom he can discuss and seek advice concerning matters of business and management. This committee will be called the Pastor’s Advisory Committee. This committee will have no authority to make any decisions, nor will they have the authority to make any recommendation to the Church or Deacon Board as a Committee.

This document was declared to be the will and testament of the Effingham Baptist Church by voice vote in a special called meeting for this purpose on Month February Day\_\_23\_\_ Year\_2000.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Church Clerk Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Tammy Mongin

Attested to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Pastor/Moderator. Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Cecil Hodges

**Amendment I**

**July 26, 2015**

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. (Genesis 1:26-27.) Rejection of one’s biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

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 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate 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. (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.)

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

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 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 Effingham Baptist Church.

This document was declared to be the will and testament of the Effingham Baptist Church by voice vote in a special called meeting for this purpose on Month July Day\_\_26\_\_ Year\_2015.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Church Clerk Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Elaine Moreland

Attested to\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Pastor/Moderator. Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Thomas Davis