

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
of the
DECATUR BIBLE CHAPEL

PREAMBLE:

As a fundamental and evangelical Christian testimony, organized and established as a non-profit, religious organization incorporated under the name of DECATUR BIBLE CHAPEL according to the laws of the State of Georgia, and which primary place of business is located at 3355 Snapfinger Road, Lithonia, GA, 30038, we do herein broadly outline our manner of organization and the basic principles upon which this organization shall operate.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT:

We, the members of DECATUR BIBLE CHAPEL, believing that the Word of God sets out those principles upon which we meet together for worship, mutual edification, and service in ministry, do hereby adopt this Constitution and its Bylaws under which this assembly¹ will operate. Our intention is to honor and obey our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and seek to make Him known in accordance with His commandments. Furthermore, in obedience to the scriptural instruction that all things be done decently and in order, we agree that it is only right and fitting that we publish this document, setting forth those principles to which we adhere and those policies by which we intend to administer the affairs of this Assembly.

SCOPE:

In any matter that shall come into dispute, whether herein contained or not, due consideration shall be given to past policy and practice. However, the supremacy of Scripture is to be recognized in all things both temporal and spiritual. Therefore, the Scriptures shall be the final authority on any matter affecting this assembly or its mission.

Article I – DOCTRINAL

- Section 1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, and as such, our final authority in any matter.
2. We accept God as being manifest in three Persons, co-eternal, co-existent, and co-equal in omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence, while remaining in Essential Being, ONE GOD.

¹ *ekklesia*: assembly or church – *Strong's Bible Dictionary*

3. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ to be the second equal Person of the Godhead, and while in Essential Being He is God and Creator, yet He became flesh that He might redeem man to Himself.
4. We acknowledge the Holy Spirit to be the third Person of the Godhead, Whose work it is to convict of sin, constrain to Christ, confirm in righteousness, and continually indwell the believer.
5. We believe the salvation of God is received only by faith in the finished Cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ and is not of man's works or efforts; it is sustained by Christ, and in Him will be consummated in God's will and time, when He, Who is our Savior, shall come.
6. We accept baptism as a necessary testimony to the believer's obedience to his Lord, but not as a prerequisite of his salvation.
7. We acknowledge the equal priesthood of all believers, the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church, and interpret this to indicate that it is not God's will for anyone to set himself up over the Church of God, but that Christ, Who alone is the Head, be given pre-eminence.
8. We believe in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ to receive His own people to the eternal joys of heaven and to the ultimate eternal damnation of the souls of the Christ-rejecters in hell.
9. We believe that it is God's will that we have fellowship with other Christians of like precious faith wherever they may be found, and to receive such into our fellowship, provided that there is no known sin or heresy which would bring the Gospel of Christ into disrepute; and that our reception of such is to be without regard to race, color, nationality, or social position.

This above statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of DECATUR BIBLE CHAPEL's faith, doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, the board of elders of the DECATUR BIBLE CHAPEL is the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Article II-A – AIMS AND PURPOSES

- Section 1. Our primary aim is to glorify God.
2. We also purpose to preach the Gospel of Christ, and all the tenets of our doctrines, to as many as possible.

3. It is our purpose to seek the conversion of those who are in their sins to the joys we have found in Christ, to teach them the Scriptures, and to bring them into the fellowship of believers.
4. We purpose to support, engender, initiate, sustain, as the case may demand, whatever we believe to be the will and program of God, as directed by the Holy Spirit and His Word.
5. We purpose to meet in remembrance of our Lord, in corporate worship, in prayer, in ministry, and in preaching the Gospel.
6. We purpose to use all means possible, as long as they are credible, biblical, and practicable, to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ locally and globally.

Article II-B

- Section 1. We are not a political organization. We shall never attempt to involve the assembly in politics beyond encouraging our people to exercise their rights as good citizens.
2. We are not a mere social organization. Our primary aim is to glorify God, (Art. II-A, Sec. I) which course may frequently run counter to the accepted standards of society.
 3. We are not a denominational organization. We can accept no obligation to do anything but what the Bible teaches and the Spirit of God impresses upon us to do. We cannot be pressured into contrary votes, decrees or adoptions of any council, denomination, or other organization.

Article III – Organization & Government

- Section 1. We believe the Head of the Church is Christ.
2. We believe that the Church is made up only of believers in Christ worldwide, and that in the local assembly we are to encourage such believers to assemble and fellowship, and be self-governing, under and according to the will of God.
 3. Such believers as are approved by the elders and received into fellowship shall be deemed as members of this assembly.
 4. We understand the Scriptures to indicate that the oversight of the assembly be in the hands of an eldership composed of a plurality of Godly men, chosen because of their love of God, their open Christian walk and testimony, and their ability to discern God's will, and feed God's people.

5. Likewise, a plurality of deacons, similarly chosen, shall assist the elders in the oversight of the Assembly, focusing primarily on the temporal needs of the church.

6. The DUTIES of the ELDERS shall be:
 - (a) To map out programs for the assembly that will best carry out its aims and objectives.
 - (b) To protect the assembly from doctrinal heresies and encourage each believer to personal Bible study and a closer walk with God.
 - (c) To be themselves an example to the believers in word, in deed, and in daily life.
 - (d) To approve for membership in the assembly those they regard as qualified in the light of scripture.
 - (e) To withhold from membership or the privileges of fellowship those they regard as unqualified.
 - (f) To discipline in the assembly those whose lives bring into disrepute the testimony of Christ. The purpose is to protect the church body against behavior, either moral or doctrinal, that would discredit its testimony, threaten its mission, or cause conflict in the assembly. Said discipline shall be:
 - Biblical – based on the model of Matthew 18: 15-17
 - Balanced to the particulars of the situation at hand
 - Goal-oriented toward bringing the erring party to repentance and restoration within the fellowship.
 - As transparent as possible.
 To this end, the eldership shall maintain a formal discipline policy which shall be made available upon request.
 - (g) To maintain the high moral and ethical standards of Christ in the assembly.
 - (h) To meet as elders at least once a month.
 - (i) To nominate men to join their number as the need arises.
 - (j) All other matters should be brought to the attention of the assembly for their action.

7. The DUTIES of the DEACONS shall be:
 - (a) To administer all finances and property of the church.
 - (b) To manage all church accounts in accordance with standard accounting practices.
 - (c) In accordance with the programs and goals established by the Board of Elders, the Deacons shall prepare an annual budget for approval by the membership.
 - (d) It shall be the duty of the deacons to keep the elders and the membership informed, on a quarterly basis, about the financial state of the Assembly.
 - (e) The deacons shall meet at least once a month.
 - (f) Subject to the approval of the Board of Elders, the Board of Deacons shall nominate men to join their number as the need arises.

8. The RESPONSIBILITIES of the MEMBERS shall be:
 - (a) To be actively engaged in the life of the church by attending regularly, and by contributing their own spiritual giftedness and financial support towards the operation and work of ministry of this assembly

- (b) To honor and submit to the leadership of this assembly as the Word of God requires.
 - (c) To recognize a personal responsibility to continue to “Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” and to live a life that is spiritually and morally pleasing to Him. The biblical requirements for Christian character are no less than for those in leadership.
 - (d) To abide by the Constitution and Bylaws of this assembly and its Statement of Faith, as long as remaining a member.
9. The RIGHTS of the MEMBERS shall be:
 All members of the assembly who are 16 years of age or over, shall have the right to submit constructive suggestions to the elders or the deacons and to be involved in the following administrative matters:
- (a) Approval of the annual budget.
 - (b) Approval of any major alteration of the building(s).
 - (c) Relocation of the assembly.
 - (d) The members shall be notified of the men who are nominated by the Elders to serve as elders or as deacons at least 30 days before the Elders vote to confirm their nomination.
 - (e) The members may amend this Constitution by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present at a special congregational meeting called for that purpose with the consent of the Elders. For this special congregational meeting, at least two-thirds of the membership must be present for the vote to take place. If the minimum requirement of two-thirds of the membership being present can't be met after calling two (2) consecutive special congregational meetings, then the Elders will have the right to vote on the amendment and that vote shall be final.
 - (f) Any member who has transferred his or her membership by joining another church shall not have voting privileges unless reinstated.
 - (g) Except for circumstances deemed by the elders to be beyond their control, any member not attending services for six months shall be considered a lapsed member and shall not have voting privileges until reinstated to full membership.
10. Anyone filling the office of elder or deacon in the assembly, or anyone holding the office of CEO, CFO, or Secretary assumes it for as long as his health permits or until:
- (a) He moves from the locality.
 - (b) He deems himself unfit for that office by reason of health, or circumstances, or a personal problem. At the discretion of the elders, such a one may later be restored to office.
 - (c) He is deemed unfit by the Brethren because of known sin or heresy and is therefore discharged from his office as a disciplinary measure.

Article IV – Financial

- Section 1. We shall be set up and registered as a non-profit, tax-exempt, religious organization.

2. No person or persons shall ever receive, divide, or share financial profits from any undertaking of DECATUR BIBLE CHAPEL. This does not, however, exclude a reasonable recompense for services rendered to the Church; but such financial compensation shall be decided upon by the deacons, with the concurrence of the elders, according to the amount of the expenditure.
3. No leader, officer, or other authorized signer shall sign checks drawing assembly funds for themselves or their family members.
4. Moreover, no person shall involve himself in a decision regarding assembly finances in which they, a family member, or their ministry, have a vested interest.
5. The elders and deacons shall be empowered to receive funds on behalf of the assembly, and to disburse these funds for the following reasons:
 - (a) For the expenses involved in the preaching of the Gospel or in ministry, directly or indirectly, as in advertising, literature, crusades, radio and other media, etc.
 - (b) For the purchase of equipment, vehicles, etc., necessary for the functioning of the assembly and its ministries.
 - (c) For the maintenance of our buildings and property, and to meet all bills for their repair, upkeep or improvement, for utilities, loans, and remuneration for practical work of the church, etc.
 - (d) For the salaries and practical fellowship with those of God's servants who minister to us of spiritual things.
 - (e) For the salaries of staff hired to perform temporal duties related to the operation of the assembly and its facilities.
 - (f) To aid those of our number who, because of illness, death in the family, or other circumstances beyond their control, are without other resources and in need.
 - (g) To foster the work of Christian missions and practical ministry both at home and abroad.
6. The CFO shall be directly accountable to the Board of Deacons in the execution of his duties.
7. In the event this organization shall be dissolved or discontinued, all material assets of DECATUR BIBLE CHAPEL shall be distributed among like-minded assemblies to be used for the same purposes outlined above. The assets may not be divided among its members or assumed by anyone. They are the Lord's.
8. The CFO is required to keep careful records of all receipts and disbursements, and to present semi-annual reports to make known to the assembly the financial condition of the assembly, in writing, signed by him.
9. The Secretary shall keep a copy of the CFO's semi-annual report on file.

Article V – General

- Section
1. The CEO of the corporation or his designated representative shall preside over all congregational business meetings, which must be held annually.
 2. Such meetings shall be orderly, seeking to be led by the Holy Spirit, to determine His will.
 3. The CEO of the corporation or the elders may call for a special congregational meeting of the membership. In addition, members may call for a meeting by presenting, to the elders, a petition signed by at least twenty percent (20%) of the membership. Such a meeting, and the reason for it, shall be announced and published to the membership at least one week prior to the scheduled date.
 4. The Secretary of the corporation shall be responsible for attending all corporate meetings of the assembly; for keeping and preserving the minutes, and for making them available to the leadership in a timely manner. No corporation officer shall presume to act upon his or her own prerogative in any assembly-related matter.
 5. The decisions of the Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons should be, as far as humanly possible, unanimous and of ONE MIND. No brother shall act unilaterally in any matter affecting the assembly or its policies. Notwithstanding the foregoing, fifty one percent of the Elders and/or Deacons in office shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the acts of the majority of the Elders and/or Deacons present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the acts of the Elders and/or Deacons. One or more Elders and/or Deacons may participate in a meeting by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other.
 6. Though we are an autonomous local assembly, the leaders shall have liberty, as they see the need and according to the pattern of Acts 15 and 16:4, to seek the counsel of like-minded brethren in matters requiring special consideration.
 7. These articles and their parts comprising this Constitution and Bylaws of DECATUR BIBLE CHAPEL are final as they are authorized in Scripture and can only be revoked or amended by approval of the Elders sustained by a two-thirds majority vote of all members present at a meeting called for that purpose. All current members must be notified of such intent to revoke or amend any article contained herein, at least one month before the meeting at which it will be approved or disapproved.
 8. The Statement of Faith, as included in this document, is foundational to the identity of DECATUR BIBLE CHAPEL, and therefore cannot be amended.
 9. Any and all additions or revisions to this document entitled, the Constitution and Bylaws of DECATUR BIBLE CHAPEL, once ratified by the congregational vote in accordance with Article V – Section 7, shall be attached as permanent numbered Amendments.

Article VI – Family

- Section
1. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male and female, and that these two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God.
 2. God designed the institution of marriage and gave it to mankind. Likewise, God ordered the family and assigned the various roles within the family as the basic unit of civil society. Therefore, neither the State nor the Church have the authority to legislate, alter, or ignore that which God Himself has established and ordained for the good order of society and the general benefit of mankind. Therefore, in this, or in any other case where the laws of men seriously contradict or violate the moral teachings of the Word of God, and in accordance with the example of the apostles of our faith, we are likewise bound to stand in obedience to God in resisting such laws in both our practice and in our teaching.
 3. We believe that God created marriage to be exclusively the union of one man and one woman, and that intimate sexual activity is to occur exclusively within that union.
 4. Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as a covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, DECATUR BIBLE CHAPEL will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the elders, pastors, and staff of DECATUR BIBLE CHAPEL shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one biological man and one biological woman. In addition, the facilities and property of DECATUR BIBLE CHAPEL shall only host weddings between one biological man and one biological woman.
 5. We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life.