



Scullville Bible

C H U R C H

"Simply Engaging"

Constitution, Bylaws, and Policies

Rewritten & Revised 2024

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Marriage Policy Amended July 2025

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Article 1. The Name of our Church

The name of this church is Scullville Bible Church. It is a corporation duly created by the Secretary of the State of New Jersey as a 501c3 Non-Profit Religious Corporation located in Scullville, New Jersey.

Article 2. The Brief History of Our Church – 1866-2024

Scullville Bible Church (formerly known as Palestine Bible Protestant Church) was formed somewhere around the year of 1866. According to local historians, members of this fledgling family of God originally met in a building known as the Union Valley Meeting House “nearer to English Creek than Scullville.” However, in the year of 1864 a lot was purchased on the northeast side of the Mays Landing-Somers Point Road for the sum of \$100. The work of construction was quickly begun and the building’s cornerstone indicates the dedication of our original church building in 1866. This is where our church family has met ever since.

Originally a part of the New Jersey Conference as a Methodist Protestant Church, Scullville was a part of the group of Methodist churches in the local area known as the “Egg Harbor Circuit.” This circuit included other local churches such as Steelmanville, Friendship, and Bethany Churches. Rev. T.B. Appleget was our first pastor on record.

Eventually, (around 1939) Scullville left the Eastern Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church and became a more independent, non-denominational church known as Palestine Bible Protestant Church. Under the leadership of Pastor Peter Dellas, the church (which was a part of the Fundamental Fellowship of Bible Churches at the time) eventually left that fellowship and became Scullville Bible Church in 1986. All associations and interactions with other churches and denominations from that point forward were purely voluntary and for the sake of fellowship and partnership in the gospel.

The bell and belfry were installed in 1910. The memorial windows of our sanctuary were installed in 1925. The parsonage and Sunday School building on our campus were built in 1952-53. And, with a bus ministry that was bringing in an average Sunday School attendance of 215 people per week, the decision was made in 1972-1973 to build and dedicate a multi-purpose building, which was named, Memorial Hall. These three buildings, the parking lots and grounds, and the historic cemetery of Scullville Bible Church are still in use today!

Our church has been blessed by the service and sacrifice of many faithful Pastors, families, and individuals over the years. Our current pastor (who grew up, got saved, and was commissioned/licensed in this church), James P. McCartney, Jr., joined us in 2023. We pray that in these last days, we will see more and younger people come to know and grow in Christ!

Article 3. The Mission, Vision, and Values of Our Church:

3.1 Our **MISSION** is to engage this and future generations with the Worship of Christ (Savior), the Word of Christ (Scripture), and the Work of Christ (Service) for the glory of Christ!

3.2 Our **VISION** is to become grace-filled, family-oriented church that actively and simply engages people where there are and helps them to go where God wants them to be.

We want to be a community of faith that:

*introduces more and younger people to Jesus,
teaches the life-giving truths of God's Word,
equips believers to use their God-given gifts in ministry, and
sends more and younger Christ-followers into their mission fields for Him.*

3.3 Our **VALUES** are as follows:

- **WE MAKE IT ALL ABOUT JESUS** – Apart from Christ we can do nothing that matters for eternity. With Christ (through His Spirit) all things are possible. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Eternal life is possible only by grace through faith in Jesus and His completed work on the Cross. Therefore, we will unapologetically engage ourselves and others with inviting others to faith in Jesus, worshipping Jesus, learning from Jesus, praying to Jesus, sharing about Jesus, serving for Jesus, following the example of Jesus, and loving others in Jesus' name.
- **WE SHOW & SHARE AMAZING GRACE** – We don't expect unbelievers to act like believers until they are believers. And, we don't expect "baby" believers to act like mature believers until they are. Even then, we recognize that mature believers don't always do the right things or refrain from doing the wrong things. So, while we will not embrace, endorse, or 'wink' at sin in any way, we will graciously welcome fellow sinners and strugglers while we gently engage and encourage, patiently and biblically instruct, lovingly confront and correct, repeatedly forgive (even as we have been forgiven), and appropriately discipline believers at every age and stage along the way.
- **WE BELIEVE IN & OBEY GOD'S WORD** – God's revealed Word is our ultimate authority and source of Truth. So, we will teach and share it plainly, boldly, creatively, and in culturally applicable ways to engage this and future generations. Our goal is to provide biblical knowledge and truth that positively guides and impacts what we believe, how we live in response to those beliefs, and how we share those beliefs with others.
- **WE PRAY LIKE IT ALL DEPENDS ON GOD** – Because it does. Again, apart from Him we can do nothing. We engage the heart of God, through Christ, in His Spirit as we pray. We pray as a matter of worship and as a way of living in relationship to Him. We pray so that we might humbly seek God's presence, hear and have His heart and His

wisdom, intercede on behalf of others, and request His power to do His Will as we seek to be obedient to His Word in His World.

- ***WE EXPECT HEALTHY GROWTH*** - Church growth, through new birth (outreach and evangelism) and through maturity (discipleship), is healthy and is to be expected. If a body is healthy it will reproduce and grow. Therefore, we will create systems, steps, teams, and engaging age/stage specific ministries to help people discover Christ and grow. In the same manner, we will seek to remove any impediments to growth that may be preventing it.
- ***WE INVEST INTO YOUTH*** – Every church is just one generation away from dying. So, intentionally engaging and equipping this and future generations with and for Christ is our urgent mission and mandate. Creating healthy relationships and church-based environments/communities that kids, teens, and young adults will connect to, mature in, and serve through is critical.
- ***WE EMBRACE CHANGE*** – Methods of worship, outreach, ministry, and communication may change to better reach and engage people with Christ, His Church, and His Word. But, the meaning and the message of God’s timeless and eternal Word must not. Short of sin, we will do whatever it takes to better lead people to Christ - we will become all things to all people so that by all means some might become saved.
- ***WE DO LIFE IN COMMUNITY*** – God exists in eternal community and created/redeemed us to live in community. We are saved as individuals, but are saved into an interconnected and interdependent family/His Body. We grow better together. Therefore, we seek to build healthy Christian communities and teams which engage, connect, and support people of different ages and stages.
- ***WE SACRIFICE & SERVE*** - Loving God by loving and serving People (both seekers and the saved) is God’s command. Therefore, we will equip people to discover, develop, and deploy their spiritual, physical, and financial gifts for the work of the ministry and to provide loving service to our broken world. We will learn to joyfully and freely give sacrifices of time, talent, and treasure for the sake of engaging the heart of Christ and His people.

Article 4. The Doctrinal Beliefs of Our Church:

4.1 About the Scriptures:

We believe that the 66 books of the Old Testament and New Testament (the Judeo-Christian Bible) are the only divinely inspired, inerrant, infallible, eternal, complete, and authoritative Word of God. Therefore, in an attempt to worship God, we seek regularly to hear it, read it, study it, meditate upon it, memorize it, accurately interpret it, share it, apply it, and submit to it in the areas of life and faith (specifically and principally) that the Scriptures address.

We believe that the Scriptures accurately reveal the identity, the personality, the heart, the will, the commands, the activities, the purposes, the instructions, and the plan of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit in this world and in the world to come.

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NLT)

As New Testament believers we recognize the Biblical continuity of God’s general revelation to the world in and through God’s chosen people, Israel. God’s people accurately recorded, deliberately and carefully preserved, and graciously passed on the divine history of God’s works and the Spirit-inspired words of God’s Law/God’s Prophets/God’s Poets (Genesis-Malachi). We see and recognize how they (under the unique inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit and using the personalities, contexts, styles, and vocabularies of the human authors) supernaturally pointed to and prepared the way for the specific revelation of God in the person, the work, and the teachings of Jesus, the Promised Messiah/the Christ. Jesus affirmed and accepted the Hebrew Scriptures. We recognize that continued process of divine revelation and inspiration as God breathed His Word to the World through His Son Jesus, His Holy Spirit, and His Spirit-filled disciples as they preserved and passed on the activities, the teachings, and the doctrines of Christ as revealed in the four Gospels, the book of Acts, the book of Romans, the Epistles, and the book of Revelation.

While both the Old and New Testaments are God’s eternally inspired Word, as New Testament believers under the New Covenant/the Law of Christ, we recognize that we are no longer under the authority of the Old Covenant/God’s Law to Israel. The history, truths, revelations, and principles of the timeless moral laws and commandments of God revealed in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible are indeed authoritative and meant to be obeyed (especially as repeated in the New Testament). However, we are under no obligation to keep the Mosaic Laws connected to the religious/dietary practices of the ancient Jewish culture, the Ceremonial Tabernacle/Temple Laws, or the National/Civic Laws that apply only to the historic Jews of the times prior to the resurrection of Christ and the birth of His Church.

We believe God’s people have liberty to choose a reputable and well-attested to translation of the Scriptures. However, if a Bible translation (old or new) deviates significantly (philosophically, theologically, or linguistically) from historic and accurate Biblical translation practices, adds to or subtracts from the inspired text, or denies orthodox Biblical doctrine or practice then our

elders will reject those translations and encourage our congregation to use more accurate options. Members and teachers in our church currently use translations such as the NLT, ESV, NIV, NASB, NKJV, and the KJV.

(Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:4, 5:17-18, 22:37-40; John 17:17; Galatians 3:23-25, 5:4; Romans 6:14, 7:4-9, Romans 10:1-4; II Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 1:1-3; I Peter 1:23-25; II Peter 1:20-21; Rev. 22:10, 18)

4.2 About the Trinity:

We believe that there is one true and holy God who is of one essence, nature, and glory, but which reveals Himself in three co-equal and eternally existent divine persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each member of the unified Godhead possesses equally all of the attributes of deity and the immutable characteristics of divine personality, but has different roles or activities in God's sovereign plan.

(Genesis 1:1-2, 26, 3:22; Matthew 3:16-16, 28:18-20; John 1:1-5, 14, 10:30-36, 14:16-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Colossians 1:15-17; I John 5:20)

4.3 About God the Father:

We believe that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, is co-equal with God the Son and God the Spirit. He is of the exact same and eternal essence as the rest of the Godhead, and yet, a personality distinct from the other members. God the Father is revealed to be holy, sovereign, all-powerful, all knowing, everywhere present, eternal, and unchanging. The Bible also reveals that God is spirit, loving, just, good, righteous, merciful and true.

We believe that in the beginning, God (out of nothing) created the world and all the things therein, thus manifesting the glory of His power, creativity, wisdom, and goodness. By His sovereign providence, our Creator God (our Heavenly Father - as Jesus called Him) has been communicating and operating throughout all of time and human history to fulfill His redemptive and eternal purposes. Our Father God loves His children and is the eternal and true Father of every one who acknowledges, trusts, believes in, and obeys/submits to Him and His Word.

(Genesis 1:1, 26; Exodus 20:2-5; Deuteronomy 4:39, 6:4-5; Isaiah 44:6; Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 12:29; John 4:24; I Corinthians 8:6; II Corinthians 13:14)

4.4 About God the Son - Jesus Christ:

We believe that Jesus Christ is the pre-existent and eternal Son of God (the second part of the Trinity) who became human in order to both reveal God and redeem humanity. Although He is of the exact same essence, we believe that Jesus is a personality distinct from the other members

of the Godhead. We believe that Jesus Christ combined forever, full and undiminished deity, with true and perfect humanity, to become God-made-flesh.

Jesus Christ, co-creator of the universe, conceived of the Spirit, born of the Virgin, exists without the Sin of Adam and lived a perfect life of perfect obedience to God the Father. As the spotless, perfect, sacrificial Lamb of God, He once and for all, voluntarily atoned for the sins of humankind by dying on the cross as our substitute. Jesus' willing sacrifice on our behalf satisfied divine justice, paid our sin debt, and accomplished salvation for all who would trust in Him.

Jesus rose from the dead in the same, yet glorified and supernatural Body in which He lived and died. We believe that Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father, where He, being the only mediator between God and humankind, continually makes intercession for those who trust in Him for salvation. We believe that Jesus Christ will come again to earth, personally and visibly, to complete human history, to condemn Satan and his fallen angels, to judge the living and the dead, and to reign as He fulfills the eternal purposes of God.

(Matthew 1:21-23; John 1:1, 18, 8:58; Acts 1:9-11; Ephesians 1:2-21; Colossians 1:15-17; I Timothy 1:15, 2:5-6, 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-3, 4:14; I John 2:2)

4.5 About the Holy Spirit:

We believe the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, fully equal with God the Father and God the Son. Although the Spirit is of the exact same essence, we believe the Spirit is a personality distinct from the other members of the Godhead.

The Holy Spirit, eternal God and co-creator of the universe, has an active ministry to the world in general which includes the restraining of evil, revealing God's Truth, and bestowing God's goodness upon all humankind.

We also believe that the Holy Spirit has many specific ministries to every believer in the Body of Christ. These ministries are permanent and irrevocable for the purpose of providing assurance, strength, wisdom, and peace for the believer. The Spirit draws, convicts of sin, bears witness to the truth, is the agent of the new birth, indwells, seals, fills, guides, teaches, prepares, comforts, sanctifies every true child of God. We believe the Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding and applying the truth of Scripture to everyday circumstances. The Spirit's power and control are appropriated by faith, making it possible for the believer to lead a life of Christ-like character and to bear spiritual fruit to the glory of God.

We believe that every true believer is filled and gifted by the Holy Spirit at the time of their conversion. As that believer grows, matures, and submits their hearts to the Lord they may discover those gifts and use them effectively to edify and serve the Body of Christ as they glorify and serve the Lord and His purposes in this world.

We believe that God selects and distributes His gifts as He wills and that no one believer possesses every gift. We also believe that no one specific gift is required for (or is a sign of) salvation. Furthermore, we believe that no one gift is more important than the other or is to be required for every believer. Rather, we believe that God gives a diversity of complementary gifts to a variety of believers so that His Church may grow, be better equipped to serve one another, and to glorify God as we humbly point people to Him, together.

(John 14:16, 17; 16:7-11, 13; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:14, 16; I Corinthians 2:10-13, 6:19-20, 12:12-28; II Corinthians 1:21, 22; Ephesians 1:13, 4:30, 5:18; I Thessalonians 2:3-9; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 2:3-4; Romans 12 & I Corinthians 12)

4.6 About Sin and Salvation:

We believe that it is God's desire for all human beings (created in His image and for His glory) to spend eternity with Him. But, since Satan's temptation and the fall of Adam and Eve, all of humanity has been born under the curse of sin, has experienced a spiritual separation from God and one another, and will experience death. That inherited curse cannot be circumvented, cured, reversed, bridged, or changed through human or religious effort. As born sinners, we are all hopelessly lost and spiritually dead. There is nothing a person can do (through good works, moral achievement, national/religious status, religious actions or rituals) to escape God's righteous judgment or to attain salvation. Without God, we sinners are bound for a Christ-less, love-less, light-less eternity in Hell and utterly unable to save ourselves from it.

Therefore, our gracious and loving God provided the way for humans to be saved, to experience eternal life in Heaven, and to have renewed fellowship with Him through Jesus Christ (the second Adam/the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the World). Jesus paid the price for our sin (death) by offering Himself on the Cross as the perfect substitute and completely atoning sacrifice. His actions and ultimate victory over sin, death, and the grave has provided the only way of rescuing and restoring sinful humanity with our good and perfect God.

Believers receive that salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

(Romans 5:1, 8:29-30; Romans 9:14-16; II Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:4-12, 2:8-9, 4:32; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18-19, 2:24)

4.7 About Angelic Beings:

We believe that God created an order of spirit beings known as angels for the purpose of worshipping and serving Him. We believe angels possess individual personalities, are intelligent, powerful, and are inferior to God, but superior to humankind. Unfallen angels, known as elect or holy angels, continue to carry out the will of God in Heaven and on Earth.

Lucifer, we believe, was one of the highest-ranking angelic beings in eternity past. However, Lucifer sinned through pride and rebelled against God, thus becoming Satan/the Tempter.

Satan/That Serpent of Old, is the author of the fall and will be eternally punished. Until that time, we believe that the Devil's proclaimed purpose is to oppose the plan of God and to promote his own evil agenda by deceiving, attacking, and destroying humanity. He will successfully lead many astray and cause many to join him and his fallen angels in Hell.

We believe Satan is aided by other fallen angels, known as demons or evil spirits. We believe these demons can influence, tempt and control, and even "possess" unbelievers. We believe they may harass, torment, distract, and deceive believers, but as true believers which are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, Christians cannot be possessed.

(Genesis 3:1-19, Job 1:7, 38:6, 7; Isaiah 14:12-15; Acts 5:3; Ephesians 6:12; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:6; I Peter 5:8; II Peter 2:11, Revelation 20:10)

4.8 About Human Destiny:

We believe that death seals the eternal destiny of each person and that all humankind will be resurrected at God's appointed time with new bodies. Humanity is appointed once to die and then the judgement. Those faithful who were saved by God's grace through God's revelation (specifically, by faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior during their life on Earth), will spend eternity in Heavenly communion with God and the saved of all ages and will be rewarded for their faithful service in His name. Those who rejected God's revelation/God's Son and His free gift of forgiveness and grace remain in their sin/remain unsaved and will be sent to eternal condemnation, torment, and separation from God in the lake of fire, with Satan and his evil spirits.

While not dogmatic about it, we believe that the next major event in God's prophetic calendar is the rapture of the church, when living and dead Christians will be caught up to meet the Lord and receive rewards at the judgment seat of Christ. Following the rapture, we believe a seven-year period of great tribulation will take place upon the Earth, at which time God's wrath will be poured out on humankind and a remnant of new believers (Jews and Gentiles) will be saved. At the end of the Tribulation period, the Anti-Christ will be defeated, and Satan will be bound. God's millennial kingdom will be ushered in by Jesus Christ as He returns to the Earth in power and glory to rule over the world for a thousand years. After being loosed for a season, Satan will organize one final and foolish rebellion, which will climax with his ultimate defeat and eternal judgment.

The unsaved dead of all ages, we believe, will be raised after the millennium to face the judgment of the great white throne. Those who have rejected God – His Way, His Truth, His life, His Son - will be cast into the lake of fire where they will face eternal punishment. We believe that following the millennium, the redeemed of the ages will live with God in an eternal state of joy and bliss in the new Heavens and new Earth where they will worship and serve Him forever.

(Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15-25:46; John 14:3; I Corinthians 15:1-58, II Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 10:37; Revelation 19:1-20:10-14, 22:20)

4.9 About the Church:

As a result of our personal faith in and relationship with Jesus Christ, all true and born-again believers become eternal members of His (capital “C”) Church. His Church began on the day of Pentecost and will continue its distinct purposes until the Rapture. The Church, which is not a building but a Body, exists in both a universal aspect as the Bride of Christ and in a local sense as individual assemblies of believers.

The Scriptures instruct believers/the local church (the lower case “c”) to gather regularly and to devote themselves to the teaching of the Word, to worship, to prayer, to fellowship, to service, to generosity, and to evangelism for Christ. Members of His Church are commanded to love God and to love people with all of our hearts, minds, soul, and strength. And, as the members of His Church, we are commissioned to go into our Jerusalem’s, Judea’s, Samaria’s, and into the entire world preaching the gospel of Christ and making disciples in His name.

The local church practices two ordinances: Believer’s Baptism (which we generally practice by immersion) and the Lord’s Supper. We provide these ordinances to believers who profess a true faith in Christ and who are old enough to understand what they mean and what they are. We invite believers to participate in these ordinances, but understand that in no way do they (the actions or the elements) impart saving grace or become a pre-requisite for salvation. They are outward symbols which help us to testify to and remember the truth of what God has already done inwardly (at the time of our conversion) in our hearts.

We believe that the local church is ultimately under the authority of Christ and His Word. Scripture affirms that the local church is also to be under the watchful care and shepherding of elders, pastors, deacons, and other supportive and spiritually mature leaders that it may appoint. Its servant-leaders and members are to work together in love and unity, to submit to one another out of love for Christ, and to be intent on the one ultimate purpose of glorifying Christ.

(Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:9-11, 2:1-4; I Corinthians 11:17-29, 12:13; Ephesians 1:21-23, 4:4-6)

4.10 About Dispensations:

We believe that God administers His saving grace in the world through humanity under varying dispensations, such as (but not limited to) the age of innocence, the periods of Abrahamic Promise, of Mosaic Law, this present age of grace, and the future millennial kingdom. We believe that these dispensations span the entire history of humankind, but that the dispensations are not different ways of salvation. Rather, they are different seasons which test the responsiveness of humanity to God’s revelation during that particular time. Therefore, while God revealed himself and His word/will differently to faithful Jews and faithful Gentiles of the past, those who responded to the revealed Word of God were ultimately saved by the same sacrificial grace of Jesus that we in the church age have received. We believe that it is necessary to understand this dispensational distinction in order to properly interpret the teaching of the Scriptures with regard to the Church and Israel. (Galatians 3:6-9, 23-25; 4:2-5; Ephesians 1:10, 3:2; Hebrews 12:22-24)

4.11 About this Statement of Faith and Practice:

We believe this Statement of Faith to be an accurate but incomplete summary of what Scripture teaches. These are our core beliefs.

We recognize that there are true followers of Christ in this church and from other churches and denominations who believe differently on disputable matters of life and faith. While we may disagree on some matters of polity and practice, we choose to focus on the core agreements we share, and wherever possible, humbly strive to treat those brothers and sisters in Christ with loving respect for the sake of the Gospel and His Testimony.

In the “essentials” we will strive for unity. In the “non-essentials”, we have liberty. And, in all cases, we will choose to show charity towards our brothers and sisters.

We believe that God’s Word/Scripture is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. This church recognizes its own fallibility and that it cannot bind the conscience of individual members in areas where the Scripture is silent. Rather, each believer is to be led in those areas by the Lord, to whom he or she is ultimately responsible.

Whenever a church, an organization, an individual rejects or denies the core tenets of our Christian and Biblical faith, we cannot endorse, support, or partner with them in those areas of conflict. Additionally, the members of our church will refrain from advocating doctrines that are not included or addressed in this Statement of Faith in such a way as to cause dissension and division in this local Body.

(John 13:34-35; Romans 12:5, 16-21, Romans 14; Ephesians 4:1-6; I Peter 3:8)

Article 5. The Ordinances & Practices of Our Church:

5.1 The Dedication of Children:

Scullyville Bible Church believes that human life begins at conception and is therefore committed to the protection of, the health of, and the faith of children inside and outside of the womb.

Scullyville Bible does not perform Christenings or infant baptisms. Rather, Christian parents at Scullyville (seeing their children as a gift from God, having been interviewed and counselled by church leadership, and following the patterns set in both the OT and the NT) often choose to publicly dedicate their infants and children (and really themselves) to the Lord. In this service, which provides no saving grace for the children or the parents, Christian parents give thanks to God for the life of their children, publicly dedicate their children for the Lord, and pledge themselves (with God as their helper and ultimately trusting in the grace of Christ) to raise their child/children up in the church/in the Word. They pledge to point them to a saving relationship with Christ when they are old enough to understand the gospel and to help them make that personal and informed decision to trust Him as their Savior and Lord.

(Exodus 20:13; Psalm 127:3-5, 139:13-16; Proverbs 6:16-19, 22:6; Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 18:5-7, 10, 19:14; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 1:41-42; John 16:21)

5.2 Believer's Baptism:

Scullyville Bible Church, understanding that the biblical ordinance of baptism is for believers only, provides believer's baptisms for children, teens, and adults who have intentionally chosen and accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord and who comprehend what that means. Baptism doesn't save anyone. Rather, it is our biblical and obedient way of professing that we have already been saved, by grace through faith in Jesus. Christians participate in believer's baptism as a way of publicly expressing and proclaiming their allegiance to Christ as His disciple and follower.

Scullyville leaders may elect to perform different modes of baptism (sprinkling, pouring, anointing, etc...) for a believer who has a physical, emotional, or psychological limitations or infirmities. However, our preferred form of baptism is by immersion.

We believe that immersion is the most biblical way to baptize and that it provides the best symbolic picture of what has already happened to us in Christ: We've confessed our sins and our need for a Savior. We've accepted Jesus Christ as God's one and only Savior. We've died to self and our old nature and been buried with Him. We've been completely washed and cleansed by the blood sacrifice of Jesus on His Cross. We've been forgiven and raised to new life in, by, and for Christ Jesus. And as such, we've been saved from Hell/for Heaven and sent as His disciples and missionaries in this world.

(Matthew 3:11-17, 28:19-20; Mark 1:4-5; Acts 2:38-41, 8:12, 8:35-40, 16:31-32, 19:14; Romans 6:1-4; I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 2:12-13)

5.3 Holy Communion:

Jesus commanded His disciples/believers to participate in the ordinance of Holy Communion until He comes again. Therefore, believers who are old enough to understand what they are doing, who are in right standing with God, and who are in right standing with one another, are welcome to regularly and obediently participate in Communion/The Lord's Supper at Scullville Bible Church.

Those who do not believe, who have unconfessed sin issues, or who need to be reconciled to another believer are encouraged to do what they can to confess, repent, and reconcile prior to Communion or to allow Communion to encourage them to do what is necessary to make things right with God and others (as is possible with them) before taking Communion unworthily or again.

There is no Biblical requirement or limitation placed on the "when", the "where", or the "how often" of Communion. Only that we should take it until He comes again and that we should pay attention to the "who" (believers), the "why" (as a sign and celebration), and the "how" (in what manner of heart & spirit) of communion.

Taking communion does not save us. Nor does it dispense saving grace to the believer. Rather, participating in Holy Communion is Christ's way of calling believers/His Church to regularly remember, confess, and celebrate His saving, sacrificial, and substitutionary acts of grace for us on the Cross where His body was indeed broken for us and where His blood was indeed shed on our behalf.

(Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20; I Corinthians 11:23-32)

5.4 Marriage:

Believing that the life-long covenant of marriage between a believing man and a believing woman to be a sacred practice instituted, defined, & cherished by God, Scullville Bible Church and Scullville Bible Church's ministers may only perform Biblical & Christian & Legal (presuming the state does not require something immoral or anti-biblical) weddings for Christian men and women who meet the following criterion.

- a. They must be born-again believers.
- b. They must be active participants in a Bible believing church.
- c. They must be over the age of 18 (if not, they must be legally allowed to marry and have the blessing and permission of their parents).
- d. They must be willing to participate in 4-6 premarital counseling sessions with our church or its agent.
- e. They must be a heterosexual and biological male marrying a heterosexual and biological female.
- f. They must not cohabit or be sexually active (if so, they must confess their sins, change those behaviors, and take active steps to make things right before the Lord).

(Genesis 2:20-24; Exodus 20:14,17; Leviticus 18:22-24, 20:13; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Matthew 19:2-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; I Corinthians 6:9-11, 7:2, 8-9, 39; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; I Thessalonians 4:3-5; I Timothy 1:8-11; Hebrews 13:4; I Peter 3:1-5)

5.5 Divorce and Remarriage:

God hates divorce. He hates what sinful divorce does to the testimony of the believing spouses, the community and the family, and the hearts of all who are connected together in Him. Therefore, God's good and perfect will is that believers who are united in the covenant of marriage stay married: one man + one woman = one flesh for one lifetime.

But, because our sinful hearts get hard, God has permitted divorce and remarriage in certain circumstances:

- When a spouse dies, the widow/widower is permitted to (with wisdom, healing, and time) remarry a believer if they choose to.
- When adultery (sexual sin with someone who isn't your spouse and which breaks the bonds of trust and unity in a marriage) is committed (often repeatedly), a spouse may biblically divorce and (with wisdom, healing, and time) remarry another believer if they desire.
- And, when an unbelieving spouse deserts or wishes to leave their believing spouse the believer may let them leave/divorce and (with wisdom, healing, and time) remarry another believer if they wish.

People falling into these categories certainly do not HAVE to divorce and/or remarry. In many cases, it might be wiser and bring more glory to God NOT to. But, in these instances, the Bible gives permission for divorce and remarriage to occur.

In most cases, showing grace, mercy, forgiveness, and unconditional love to a spouse is the better and more God-honoring course of action. Certainly, seeking prayer, Christian counseling (personally and professionally), support, and godly wisdom is strongly advised for a marriage that is struggling.

In the case of abuse, adultery, abandonment, danger, etc... safety and security are priorities for the victimized spouse/children. In those cases, separation (for a season and a reason and hopefully leading to counseling, healing, and potential reconciliation) may be considered, divorce may occur, and any appropriate biblical discipline and legal actions should be taken.

Lastly, we understand that there are unbelieving couples, unequally yoked couples, couples that got married or divorced before they became believers, and even believing couples who have gone through and have experienced the sin of divorce. While God holds marriage in extremely high regard and does indeed hate divorce, we do not believe that divorce is the unforgivable sin,

that divorced people are to be treated as second-class Christians, or that remarriage makes the forgiven sinner or remarried believer perpetually guilty of adultery. Repentant and forgiven sinners are not condemned, but rather, are called to go and sin no more. Forgiven sinners who have taken the time and the trouble to do the work of healing and restoration and which are now actively and humbly living for Christ may serve in the church.

(Genesis 2:18-24; Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Jeremiah 3:8; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 5:31-32, 18:15-17, 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; John 8:1-11; Romans 7:1-3; I Corinthians 7:8-16, 17-28, 39; 2 Corinthians 6:9-11)

5.6 The Discipline of Believers

Godly, loving, and Biblical discipline is for believers. God disciplines those whom He loves. And, His church does the same. When it becomes apparent that a believer is caught in sin, is willfully, knowingly, or repeatedly living in sin, or is openly causing disunity or others to stumble on account of his/her sin *, loving believers should seek to humbly and gently correct, patiently instruct, and faithfully direct the believer towards Scriptural repentance, reconciliation, and restoration.

- a. Following the pattern established in Matthew 18 and in a spirit of humility and personal examination (we are all sinners), that process should always start out personally and privately. It should not be a matter of sinful pride or gossip. A believer should go to the offending believer and speak to them lovingly, biblically, and directly. If the offending believer hears the Word, receives the correction, and changes the behavior, praise the Lord!
- b. If the offending believer does not receive that conversation or correction, another believer or a few believers (preferably ones who are mature or who have also witnessed or been affected by the sin) should join in that correcting conversation. Again, this should be done as personally and privately as possible.
- c. If that caring conversation with a community of godly friends has no effect, then the offending person's sin should be brought privately to the attention of the elders/leadership of the church and they should seek to carefully confront the sinning brother or sister in the Lord, counsel them in Christ, and bring about corrective and biblical discipline as needed.
- d. If even then, the stubbornly sinning believer still will not confess, repent, and do the right things, then that believer and their sin is to be lovingly brought before the church. The church should be made aware of the seriousness of the biblical infraction, should pray and intercede for their fellow sinner, and the sinning believer should be given the chance to repent.
- e. If they insist on remaining in their sin, then the church will tearfully disfellowship from that believer (and potentially communicate that action to the elders of like-minded

churches) in the hopes that the offending believer will be broken by their sin and the negative effect upon their worship and their fellowship with other believers. It is our prayer, that as a result of Biblical discipline, the dear brother or sister will confess their sin, repent, and once again obey the Lord and His Word.

- f. If and when they repent, a restoration process should be joyfully initiated and the offending believer should be forgiven and restored into fellowship. Wisdom and discernment (over time) should be used to determine how quickly that person should be restored into Christian service, ministry, or leadership.

** It should be noted that there are biblical transgressions that are clearly and always sin for everyone. Those transgressions should be addressed as a matter of biblical discipleship (teaching) and discipline (correction). However, what may be a matter of personal conviction and considered a “sin” or even a stumbling block for one person may not always be a so for another. Therefore, great wisdom and discretion should be used in determining whether or not to address those situations as “sin” since we or others may have convictions or biblical liberties that differ from one another.*

(Matthew 18:15-19; Romans 16:17-8; I Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:5-8; Galatians 1:8-9, 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Hebrews 12:5-11; James 5:20)

Article 6. The Leadership of Our Church:

Christ is the Leader, the Head, and Chief Shepherd of this church. The Spirit is the church’s source of power. And, God’s inspired Word gives the church His Mission, His Commission, and His commands.

This independent, non-denominational congregation is not under the jurisdiction of any ecclesiastical body or person. Our association with other congregations or organizations is purely voluntary and only for purposes of Christian fellowship, increased learning/service opportunities, and more effective partnership in reaching people for Christ.

God’s plan for His Church’s leadership is revealed in Scripture. Upon establishing the NT Church, God gave certain individuals specific gifts as “apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.” These believers, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, led and taught the local church and brought new churches into existence through their evangelism, teaching, and preaching.

As churches were established in the faith, elders were appointed in each local church. The elders were given the responsibility for the oversight of that particular church body, the protection and passing on of Christian doctrine, and the shepherding of its members. Some elders would give more time to the spiritual leadership/teaching than others and would be called to fill more demanding responsibilities. They, therefore, would be worthy of “double honor” (usually understood as monetary compensation). At Scullville, that is our Lead Pastor/Elder.

As necessary, deacons/deaconesses were also appointed to serve the church, particularly in undertaking those areas of need that would otherwise prohibit the elders from performing their primary Biblical responsibilities.

These leaders, along with all members of each local Body, form a unique organism – a visible and functioning expression of the universal church. We recognize and affirm this Biblical pattern for the plurality of gifted and godly leadership, with the oversight and watch care of elders, and the supportive servant-leadership of qualified deacons/deaconesses.

The elders may serve as the legal and official trustees of the organization. However, they may also choose to select qualified servants-leaders from the church to fill roles connected to finances, facilities, or other legal matters. These servants and their work are to be under the authority and watch-care of the spiritual overseers of the church – the elders.

Members of the Body of Christ are taught in Scripture to lovingly pray for and support their leaders and to submit to their godly leadership. The Biblical qualification and character qualities of those servant leaders as well as the roles and responsibilities are given in Scripture.

6.1 Biblical Qualifications for Elders

“An overseer then must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping children under control with all dignity...and not a new convert, he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

1 Timothy 3:2-7

“If a man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion...above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word...that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict.”

Titus 1:6-9

We do not expect any human leader to be perfect or to meet every criterion perfectly, but these Biblical qualifications are what we are instructed to look for and affirm in our spiritual leaders.

1. **Above Reproach:** Elders must be blameless, presenting no patterns of Scriptural disobedience or grounds for accusation.
2. **Husband of One Wife:** Elders must be morally and sexually pure, and if married, must be a devoted and faithful husband.
3. **Temperate:** Elders must be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excess.
4. **Prudent:** Elders must be sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.

5. **Respectable:** Elders must demonstrate a well-ordered life and good behavior.
6. **Hospitable:** Elders must be unselfish with their personal resources. They must be welcoming and willing to share blessings and time with others.
7. **Able to Teach:** Elders must be able to communicate the truth of God and encourage sound doctrine with great patience and careful instruction. (2 Tim. 4:2)
8. **Not Given to Drunkenness:** Elders must be free from drunkenness, addiction, excess, and must be willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
9. **Not Violent but Gentle:** Elders must be gentle and characterized by forbearance and tenderness – not having a quick temper.
10. **Not Argumentative:** Elders must not be given to quarreling or selfish argumentation.
11. **Not a Lover of Money:** Elders must not be stingy, greedy, or out for dishonest gain. They should not be preoccupied with amassing material things, but rather should be a model of generous and faithful giving, financial integrity, and self-less living.
12. **Manage a Household Well:** Elders must have a well-ordered household, a healthy family life, and generally well-behaved children. (Pertains to those children still under the authority of the parents.)
13. **Not a Recent Convert:** Elders must not be new believers. They must have been Christians long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion, the depth of their spirituality, and their maturity/wisdom in Christ.
14. **Good Reputation with Outsiders:** Elders must be well respected by unbelievers and must be free of hypocrisy.
15. **Not Overbearing:** Elders must not be stubborn, insensitive, or prone to force opinions on others. They must be more interested in service than selfish desires.
16. **Not Quick Tempered:** Elders must be able to exercise self-control and patience in difficult situations.
17. **Loves What Is Good:** Elders must desire the will of God in every decision.
18. **Upright:** Elders must be fair and impartial. Their judgments must be based on Scriptural principle.
19. **Holy and Disciplined:** Elders must be reverent, continually desiring to be separated from sin. They must be devoted to prayer, the study of Scripture, and the guarding of their own spiritual walk. (Acts 20:28)
20. **Hold Firm to the Trustworthy Message:** Elders must be stable in the faith, obedient to the word of God, and continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

6.2 The Biblical Role/Responsibilities of Elders

1. **Shepherd the Flock:** Serving in all humility, elders are to guide, direct, guard and protect the members of the Body, seeking to meet their needs and assist in any way possible, warning against harmful influences and guarding against false teachers. (Acts 20:28-35; 1 Peter 5:1-3)
2. **Lead Through Example:** Elders are to provide a spiritual role model and are to set a pattern before the flock of a rightly ordered life – with a single purpose, to glorify God. We do not expect perfection but believe that our elders should be steady attenders,

diligent learners, faithful givers, ready participants, and dedicated servant-leaders for the church. (1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 5:3)

3. **Teach and Exhort:** Elders are to see that the flock is led, fed, and counseled through insightful and accurate Biblical instruction and admonition. (1 Timothy 3:2, 4:13; Titus 1:9)
4. **Refute Those Who Contradict the Truth:** Elders are to confront those who are teaching what they should not teach or who are continuing in a pattern of behavior contradictory to Biblical truth. Therefore, elders are to keep closing potential entrances for Satan, so that the truth of Christ will remain credible to both the congregation and the community. (Matthew 7:15-20; Acts 20:29-31; Titus 1:9)
5. **Manage the Church of God:** Elders are to oversee the life of the church, with the assistance of deacons/deaconesses, finance and facilities leaders, and other godly leaders they appoint. They must be people who can “rule well.” (1 Timothy 3:5, 5:7)
6. **Pray for the Sick:** Elders are to pray for, anoint, intercede on behalf of the spiritual and physical well-being of the members of this congregation. (James 5:14)

6.3 Selection Of Elders

Scripture gives evidence of the first elders being appointed by the founders of the church. Based on the example in I Timothy 1:3-4, it is implied that the existing spiritual leadership of a church be intimately involved in the process of selecting elders to ensure selection is based on spiritual, not superficial qualifications. Beyond this, there are no specific guidelines given regarding the selection process. It would, therefore, appear that freedom is given to the individual church to develop a process that will best serve its own special needs and situations. Our process is as follows:

Each year, the elders currently serving will determine if additional elders are needed for the following year, and if so, shall initiate the following process for elder selection.

- 1) The congregation shall be provided with information regarding the ***biblical qualifications*** of elders and their ***spiritual role***.
- 2) With the ***biblical qualifications*** in mind, elders and members of the church shall be asked to prayerfully submit the names of men for consideration as an elder. Men who have a desire to serve are also allowed to present themselves (I Timothy 3:1) for consideration as an elder.
- 3) Men whose names are submitted shall be so notified by the elders, and they shall be asked to engage in ***prayerful self-appraisal*** and ***personal evaluation*** in light of the ***scriptural qualifications for Biblical eldership***. He may withdraw his name at this point, if he does not aspire to the position of elder or if he does not believe he adequately meets the qualifications.

- 4) Nominees wishing to/selected to continue in the process shall enter into an ***‘elder apprentice’*** process which allows time (usually 6-12 months) for the candidate and the existing elders to explore the role, responsibilities, and character issues needed to determine if the candidate has the right ***Character & Competencies*** (*as well as chemistry and culture*) to be a part of the elder team.

After prayerful consideration, examination, and apprenticing, the existing elders shall make the final selections of elder candidates. Nominees not selected at this point shall be given a confidential explanation by the pastor and the elders as to why they were not selected and be encouraged to work on those areas for possible service in the future.

Affirmation of the accepted elder candidates shall involve the following:

- 1) The names of the prospective and current elders shall be brought before the members of the church for prayers. The participating members shall be given two weeks to show just and biblical cause why any one of the prospective and/or current elders would not be scripturally qualified to serve/continue to serve. Any member with such “cause” must express his/her concern ***in writing*** to the pastor and/or other elders for consideration and action. Individual or anonymous accusations, rumor, or unsigned letters/emails, will not be received. Instead, we will follow all of the Biblical discipline patterns as given to us in Matthew 18 and in 2 Corinthians 13:1 and I Timothy 5:19-20. If the accusations are found to be credible, those elder candidates and existing elders will not be affirmed or asked to step down so that they may complete the work of repentance and restoration.
- 2) Elders and elder candidates who have been evaluated and affirmed shall then be presented to the members of the church during a time of ***dedication/commissioning*** in our worship services.
- 3) The ***process*** of selection/reaffirmation shall begin (usually) in October-November of each year, and may take many months to complete. In the event of vacancy or special need, the elders may call new nominees and re-engage the selection process at any time throughout the year, as they deem necessary.

6.4 Term Of Elders

Since Scripture indicates no fixed time for elders, no specific fixed term of office is recommended. Instead, each elder, upon appointment, shall be asked for a one-year commitment, subject to review, recommitment, and reaffirmation by the other elders and the Body (as described above) each year.

During the period of annual review (or any other time deemed necessary by the elders), both the individual and the other elders shall evaluate his continued service as an elder, again considering the Biblical qualifications as well as any personal factors that might affect his service. An individual’s service as an elder may wisely be paused/discontinued by his own decision or by the unanimous decision of the other elders for the sake of health, rest, family needs, work needs,

moral infractions, etc. Leaving the elder team would not necessarily preclude his service as a future elder, subject to the regular elder review and elder selection process.

Those elders renewing their commitment to serve would again be presented to the members of the congregation during the dedication service.

6.5 The Biblical Roles Of Deacons:

“And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable for us to neglect the Word of God in order to serve tables. But select from among you brethren, seven men of good repute, full of spirit and of wisdom, who we may put in charge of this task.’”

Acts 6:2-3

Deacons/Servant-leaders are to serve under the direction of the elders, undertaking those areas of service necessary for the church’s functioning that would otherwise prohibit the elders from performing their primary Biblical responsibilities.

No specific, ongoing roles for deacons are mentioned in Scripture, probably because service needs of a local church and ministry change so frequently. As such, the role of the deacons/servants should be flexible and in accordance with the identified needs of the church. Perhaps this is why qualifications for deacons are stressed rather than specific tasks. In contrast, the function of the elders is more spelled out, as spiritual needs are relatively constant.

While there is actual equality between elders, deacons, and (in fact) all members of the Body, for the purpose of order, Scripture indicates that elders are entrusted with the final authority within the local church. Deacons do not necessarily meet as a “board” but will most often meet with and answer to their respective ministry team leaders, staff member, and the elder team.

6.6 A Word on the Ministry of Deaconesses and Female ‘Elders’:

We believe in a Biblical ministry of Deaconess (Romans 16:1-2, I Timothy 3:10.) While there is not as much scripture dedicated to the ministry and responsibility of the Deaconess, we do believe that the characteristics listed below are necessary for services regardless of the gender of the individual concerned.

We believe that God has equally gifted and biblically called women for ministry. Therefore, we affirm the value and the calling of our women partners as gifted teachers, effective small group facilitators, and wise ministry leaders in this church. And, as such, have joyfully appointed and affirmed women for the vocational and a-vocational ministry of service as a part of our ministry team.

However, while we believe that the inherent value, calling, and giftedness of men and women are equal, we maintain that God has established complementary (not egalitarian) roles for men and women – both at home and in the church. Therefore, we believe that the pattern and partnership

of mutually submitted ‘male headship’ in both families is God-ordained. As such, we will only call qualified men to serve in the roles of elder and lead pastor/teaching elder.

6.7 Qualifications Of Deacons/Deaconesses (as applies):

“Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and household well.”
I Timothy 3:8-12

As Deacons/Deaconesses are extensions of the Pastor’s/Elders’ ministry, these servant-leaders must also seek to maintain a biblical standard of leadership.

- 1) **Respect:** Deacons/Deaconesses must be mature, of sound mind and character, yielded to the Holy Spirit.
- 2) **Sincere:** Deacons/Deaconesses must demonstrate verbal consistency. They must not be prone to saying one thing to one person and something else to another.
- 3) **Not Addicted:** Deacons/Deaconesses must be free from addictions and must be willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
- 4) **Not Pursuing Dishonest Gain:** Deacons/Deaconesses must be purely motivated in their service.
- 5) **Keeping Hold of the Deep Truths of the Faith With a Clear Conscience:**
Deacons/Deaconesses must have a sound knowledge of Christian truths and a lifestyle in accord with them. They must not be easily swayed from the truth.
- 6) **Nothing Against Them:** Deacons/Deaconesses must display a lifestyle free from ongoing patterns of Scriptural disobedience.
- 7) **First Be Tested:** Deacons/Deaconesses must have proven over time that they are faithful and that their walk is credible.
- 8) **Spouses Worthy of Respect:** Deacons/Deaconesses, if married, must have spouses that are also devoted to the Lord and yielded to the control of the Spirit.
- 9) **Husband Of One Spouse:** Deacons/Deaconesses, if married, must be devoted, faithful spouses.
- 10) **Manage their Household Well:** Deacons/Deaconesses must have well-ordered households, a healthy family life, and well-behaved children. (Pertains to those children still under the authority of the parents.)

6.8 Selection Of Deacons/Deaconesses:

As various ministries of the church expand and develop, the need will arise for the supportive ministry of Deacons/Deaconesses. Under the authority of the elders, it shall be the responsibility of the staff and individual ministry teams to identify that need, determine the number/type of

deacons/deaconesses needed at that time, and to screen, train, evaluate, and release those servants as called.

6.9 Term Of Deacons/Deaconesses:

The same term and evaluation process applies to the deacons as the elders.

6.10 Responsibilities Of Deacons/Deaconesses:

- 1) The deacons/deaconesses shall minister in a serving role, working with the elders of the Church in a specific ministry or task.
- 2) Those seeking to serve as deacons/deaconesses should already be serving in some capacity of ministry and should demonstrate the qualities of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
- 3) Deacons/Deaconesses who serve in teaching/leading roles within the church should be Participating Members of the church who are under the authority of the elders.
- 4) Deacons/Deaconesses shall serve as long as they biblically qualify and are needed to serve in their particular role.
- 5) Deacons/Deaconesses (and their ministries) shall be evaluated regularly by their supervisors.
- 6) Deacons/Deaconesses must support the philosophy, ministry, leadership, and financial needs of the church.
- 7) There shall be no particular number of deacons/deaconesses to serve – only as is needed to oversee and serve in a particular ministry.
- 8) The deacons/deaconesses do not typically meet as a “group” or as an authoritative “board” but rather, meet in connection to their particular roles and responsibilities within their given teams or departments.

6.11 Questions To Be Asked Of Elders, Deacons, and Deaconesses:

- 1) Do you have a testimony of a personal conversion to Jesus Christ?
- 2) Are you an active member of this church?
- 3) Why do you want to be an elder/deacon/deaconess?
- 4) What gifts do you bring to that position?
- 5) In what areas of the church are you currently demonstrating leadership/service?
- 6) Are you in agreement with our doctrinal statement?
- 7) Are you in agreement with our philosophy/style of ministry?
- 8) Are you a member of a small group/Bible study and a growing student of the Word?
- 9) Could you teach God’s Word (one on one, to children, to a small group, in a class, or from the pulpit?)
- 10) Do you regularly support (tithes, gifts, offerings) the financial ministry of Scullville Bible Church?
- 11) Does your spouse and family support your call to serve in this way?

12) Is there any reason that you would feel biblically or personally unqualified to serve in this position?

6.12 Role Of the Lead Pastor (also called Leader Pastor/Teaching Elder)

Consistent with the New Testament concept of the Spiritual gifts, it is evident that the Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder, like any member of the Body, is gifted and should seek to minister primarily within the areas of his giftedness.

In addition to his shepherding/leading role, as a fully vested elder/member (the Lead Pastor is automatically accepted as a Participating Member), the Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder is to be a leader and a teacher of the Word of God. He is to teach and exhort by precept and example. His goal is to effectively lead the church and to help equip the saints for the work of ministry through insightful and accurate presentation and proclamation of the Word. As a teacher, he must stress both the understanding and application of God's truth. Thus, the Pastor Teacher should not be unduly responsible for ministering in areas unrelated to his primary function as a leading/teaching elder so that he can focus accordingly.

The Lead Pastor oversees the Staff, leads the elder team, teaches the Word, and directs the church in the fulfillment of its biblical mission and mandate.

6.13 Selection Of the Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder

In the event of vacancy in the office of the Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder, the remaining elders shall be responsible for conducting a search for possible candidates to fill the position. They may choose to select a search team to assist them in the selection process. Once a candidate has been identified, he shall have opportunities to interview, preach, and share his testimony, his doctrinal statement, and his philosophy of ministry with the church and its leadership teams. Upon the unanimous recommendation of the elders and the search team, the participating members shall then vote on whether or not to call this pastor. A 3/4ths majority of the participating membership vote is required for the call to pass. Once called, the Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder shall be presented to the congregation for a service of affirmation and dedication.

6.14 Departure, Discipline, or Dismissal of the Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder

If the Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder chooses to resign or retire in good standing, we request a period of two-months (2) notice. That pastor may communicate his decision (in agreement with and in concert with the elders) accordingly. A severance package for pastors serving over 5 years may be negotiated between the Lead Pastor and the elders, but shall include at least 3-6 months' severance pay, 3 months to vacate the parsonage (if used), and the option for the pastor to continue paying into appropriate/legal health-care coverage. No salary, benefits, or obligations (other than love, honor, and gratitude) are required beyond that.

A retiring lead pastor who leaves in good standing and stays in the church community may (by the unanimous decision of the elders) be given the honorific title of Pastor Emeritus and be called upon by the next lead pastor/teaching elder for counsel and to voluntarily serve occasionally in areas of need, desire, or giftedness. The Pastor Emeritus, however, no longer holds governing authority over the church (unless he is called to serve as an unpaid elder), but must submit completely to the authority of the lead pastor and elders.

In the event of major doctrinal problems, moral infractions, or other disqualifying actions leading to potential dismissal, the Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder (presuming the terms of 1 Timothy 5:19-21 have been followed and until the pastor has had the chance to hear and respond to any accusations or allegations) may, by the unanimous decision of the other elders, be placed on immediate and paid suspension (no teaching, no office hours, no unapproved congregational communication) until all of the evidence has been fully reviewed.

During that investigation phase, personal and private matters shall be dealt with personally and privately (as appropriate) in order to protect all involved parties and to promote healing. If any congregational communication is required, it will be done by the remaining elders of the church.

Whenever possible, care should be taken to assist the suspended pastor (and his family) with counseling, support, Biblical discipline, and restoration if possible. If these attempts prove unsuccessful, impossible, or further action is necessary, the elders may take the next and necessary congregational steps to have the pastor released/removed.

If sufficient evidence is found that the suspended pastor must be released from his position due to a legal infraction or criminal behavior, the elders may (by unanimous decision) suspend him immediately, without compensation, without severance, and pursue appropriate legal action.

Otherwise, the Lead Pastor/Teaching Elder may only be released from his position by the unanimous decision of the other elders and a 3/4 majority of the informed and voting quorum of the participating members as duly notified and called to a Special Member's Meeting. All communications regarding that meeting, its purpose, and specifics of the reasons for dismissal shall be done by the elders in writing and from the pulpit at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

If dismissed/released, the lead pastor/teaching elder will cease preaching/communication with the congregation immediately, must vacate his office and turn in all keys and passwords within two weeks, and will be given a period of no longer than two months to vacate the parsonage (if applicable).

The suspended, now dismissed, pastor will be paid for time served up to and including the congregational vote. But all other financial benefits, benefit hours, severance, etc. are forfeit. The pastor is entitled to keep copies of any and all of the documents, sermons, curriculum, or emails generated while in office, but may not delete or destroy or take originals of any of those work products. Personal emails (unless legally prohibited) and personally purchased and owned books, computers, decorations, etc. may be taken/deleted by the pastor. But, church owned books, products, office supplies, furniture, art, resources must remain with the church.

The elders may decide (depending on the infraction and the heart of the pastor) to provide additional help to the dismissed pastor and his family in the form of counseling, financial assistance, additional time in the parsonage, etc...on a case-by-case basis.

6.15 Staff Members:

Selection/Dismissal of Other Pastors/Staff Members

The elders, Lead Pastor, and other staff shall submit requests for needed staff (part-time or full-time) to serve and lead in various areas of ministry need (Youth/Children, Worship, Technology, Counseling, Administration, etc...). These potential staff members must complete the appropriate applications, background checks, and interviews. They must meet the Biblical criteria for leadership and service in the Church, be in agreement with the Church doctrinal statement and constitution, and be able to perform the duties and responsibilities of the written job description. If hired (by the unanimous decision of the Lead Pastor/the Elders and with the support of the interview team), they should take the next available Membership Class, become Members, and become active participants in the church.

They shall work directly with, and report to, the Lead Pastor or designated supervisor.

The Lead Pastor (in accountable communication with the elders) shall be responsible for the overall watch-care of the staff, including staff selection and dismissal, when necessary. The specific roles and job descriptions for each staff member shall be determined by the Lead Pastor and the appropriate supervisory staff. Staff salaries (with the exception of the Lead Pastor's) shall be determined annually by Lead Pastor, supervisory staff, and affirmed by the elders to be voted on as a part of the annual budget which is presented to the congregation.

Staff choosing to resign in good standing, are asked to give a minimum of 2 weeks (preferably 1 month) notice. Long-term staff members (serving over 5 years/10 years) may be blessed with 2 weeks/1 month's severance accordingly.

Otherwise, dismissal/discipline of any staff member shall be at the discretion of, and under the direction of, the Lead Pastor, supervisory staff, and in consultation (as appropriate) with the elders. The staff member will be notified of the accusations or deficiencies, be given the chance to respond accordingly, and any further investigation needed will take place before the final decision as to whether to discipline or dismiss is made. As always, we will seek to protect the privacy of all involved (as much as is possible) while the investigations/decisions are being made. We will seek to love, help, and support those involved to the best of our ability. If it is determined that the staff member is to be disciplined/dismissed, the communication, the timing, and the severance (if applicable) will be handled by the Lead Pastor and the appropriate staff in consultation with the elders.

If dismissed/released, the staff member will cease teaching/leading/communication with the congregation immediately, must vacate his/her office and turn in all keys and passwords within two weeks, and will be given a period of no longer than two months to vacate the parsonage (if

applicable). The suspended, now dismissed, staff member will be paid for time served. But, all other financial benefits, benefit hours, severance, etc. are forfeit. The staff member is entitled to keep copies of any and all of the documents, sermons, curriculum, or emails generated while in office, but may not delete or destroy or take originals of any of those work products. Personal emails (unless legally prohibited) and personally purchased and owned books, computers, decorations, etc. may be taken/deleted by the staff member. But, church owned books, products, office supplies, furniture, art, resources must remain with the church.

Legal infractions or criminal activity leading to immediate dismissal will lead to legal action on the part of the church.

Article 7. The Membership of Our Church

The moment we accept Christ as Savior and Lord, we become members of the universal church of Christ. However, the New Testament also presents a picture of definable groups of people who, once committed to the Lord, identified themselves with and committed themselves to a particular local body of believers, called the Church.

We believe in the principles of accountability and commitment to the local body of Christ, as defined in the New Testament and practiced in the early churches. We recognize that we are “members one of another” as well as “members of the Body of Christ.” We believe that, as Christians, we are to function together in harmony and purpose. (Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1; Ephesians 4:25, 5:30; Philippians 1:1)

Therefore, it is the practice of Scullville Bible Church to regularly offer opportunities for followers of Jesus Christ to formally join the Church by becoming Members of this local body.

1) **We believe the concept of membership is biblical.** While the term “church member” is never used, the concept is implicit throughout the New Testament. Believers clearly identified themselves with a specific local body and were challenged to become devoted participants of that local body so that they could impact the world!

2) **Formal membership is valuable to the leaders of the church as they seek to fulfill their God-given task of shepherding.** These “core” attendees of Scullville Bible Church can be counted on to build and sustain the ministries of the church. These members submit to a mutual accountability that is healthy and needed in the Church today. These family members also receive priority in the allocation of finite church resources (Gal. 6:10).

3) **Membership benefits the individual.** It compels the believer to take a step of faith and to plunge into the active ministry of the Church. It is also a ‘counter-cultural response that affirms our call to Christian community vs. secular individualism or even passive consumerism. It presents the challenge for each believer to publicly affirm their connection, identification, and submission to Christ and His mission at Scullville Bible.

7.1 Defining Membership:

Positional Membership

It seems that there are two ways that we can define “membership” in the Church of Jesus Christ. Scripture clearly teaches that when we are converted an instantaneous once-and-for-all union takes place between Christ, the new believer, and His body. This is called “Positional Membership.” At that moment of new birth you become a “positional member” in the universal Church of Jesus Christ, based solely on His merit and saving grace. Positional membership is eternal and unchanging. (I Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 2:13-22; 4:3-6; Colossians 1:13-22)

Participating Membership

We believe that positional members are called to continue growing in Christ by becoming participating members in a specific local body of Christ. Obviously, the nature of this relationship is not necessarily permanent, as one can become a participating member of several churches over the course of his/her lifetime. However, we believe that it is the duty of every Positional member of the body of Christ to seek out and join a local body of Christ where he/she may discover, develop, and deploy their spiritual gifts in the context of a loving and “connected” community of faith. (Romans 12:4-8; I Corinthians 12:25-31; 14:12, 26; Hebrews 10:24-25; I Timothy 3:14-15)

7.2 Stages of Participating Membership

1. **Investigation** – The prospective member (over the age of 18) is invited to attend classes or discussions where they will be introduced to the church’s Doctrine, Philosophy, Strategy, Constitution, and other appropriate teaching/literature so that he/she may carefully investigate the beliefs and practices of the Church.

Having taken that introductory/exploratory course, shared their testimony, and filled out the Membership Application, the prospective member will be considered for Participating Membership in our church.

Minors under the age of 18 may not become Participating Members and hold no voting privileges.

2. **Affirmation** – *The prospective candidate for Participating Membership, having given evidence of their conversion, having taken steps of obedience into the waters of baptism (if possible), having completed the membership exploration class, and having signed/returned the Membership Application stating their agreement with the doctrines, philosophy, practice of the church, and their submission to the church leadership will prayerfully be notified and affirmed, postponed, or directed by the elders as a Participating Member of the church*
3. **Celebration** – The successful candidate for participating membership shall be joyfully

presented to the congregation at a worship service where they will be officially welcomed as a participating member of the local body of Christ, complete with all the rights and responsibilities thereof.

4. **Re-Affirmation** - Members may be given the option of renewing their membership (in important seasons or seasons of change) at a Participating Membership Re-commitment service.

7.3 Removal, Withdrawal, or Transfer of Membership

At times, it may be necessary for individuals to leave the Church. Members may be removed from the participating membership list as a result of Biblical discipline, inactivity/non-attendance (*for a period of over one year*), or as a result of a request for withdrawal, resignation, or transfer of membership.

It is the practice of Scullville Bible Church to grant letters of transfer to all participating members in good standing who submit a request for such a letter to the elders. It is also the practice Scullville Bible Church to communicate with other churches regarding Church members who have left the church as a result of conflict, sin, or discipline.

We do not maintain a list of ‘inactive’ or ‘associate members’ as it is our belief that each member of the body of Christ is called to actively and currently participate in some way in the mission and worship of Christ at Scullville Bible Church. Members who are removed from the membership list and return, may be re-examined for participating membership, re-affirmed by the pastor and the elders, and re-presented to the congregation.

7.4 Privileges of Participating Membership

With responsibility often comes privilege or benefit. We believe that this is true of the church.

- Participating members have the right to influence the key decisions of the church, most importantly the annual budget and the selection of Elder/Lead Pastor candidates and their affirmation.
- Participating members also receive priority for facility usage and staff members’ time (such as weddings, funerals, benevolence needs, personal support in ministry, etc.) – although all Biblical/organizational requirements for such must still be met regardless of membership status.
- From time to time, meetings or other functions are held that are for “members only” and require a “members only” vote.
- Finally, all of our key leadership/teaching positions, teen and children’s ministries, and many service ministries require participating membership as a prerequisite.

The primary reason to become a participating member, however, is not to gain a personal advantage, but to identify ourselves with the characteristics, or marks, of biblical maturity. The primary privilege of participating membership is to follow after the example of our Lord Jesus, to serve.

7.5 Decision Making Processes

Biblically speaking, we believe that God is our leader, His Spirit-inspired Word is our guide, and that God calls and uses qualified and spiritually mature people in positions of authority and service to lead and direct His church.

We don't believe that the democratic processes of "voting/majority rules" are the best and most biblical ways to make God-honoring decisions or to biblically lead God's church. In fact, believers in both the old and the new Testaments went well out of their way to avoid voting (even preferring providence and 'chance'). When they did resort to voting or to making decisions based on majority rules or popular opinion, it didn't usually go very well. Therefore, at Scullville Bible Church, we actually vote on very little as we believe that voting tends to create division, classes of winners/losers, and often does more harm than good.

Instead, the elders will prayerfully seek wisdom from God and His Word. They will regularly consult with and seek the input and insights of staff, volunteer leaders, active ministry teammates, and qualified experts who can help make the wisest decisions. Once those overarching decisions are made, those leaders will delegate authority to the servant-leaders and the teams they serve to make wise decisions under and within Biblical & budgetary parameters as they implement those policies and decisions in their particular ministry applications.

7.6 Congregational Meetings & Congregational Communication

As a matter of accountability and communication, Scullville Bible Church leaders will share regular verbal and written reports regarding our ministries and transparent/accurate financial reports to our members and congregation. Questions and requests for clarification (as well as suggestions or concerns) are always welcomed and will be addressed on an individual basis.

Additionally, at least two weeks prior to the announced Annual Sunday/Member's Meeting (usually in January), we will provide our members with the Annual Member's Report, an Annual Financial Report, a Proposed Annual Budget, and access to any other Agenda Items that will be discussed or voted on at the Annual Sunday/Annual meeting. Our Annual Sunday/Member's meeting will not require "Robert's Rules" but rather, biblical rules for loving, listening, recording, and communicating.

Special meetings may be requested by the elders and the members of our church as needed. However, the elders must approve the meeting and must notify the members of the congregation online, in writing, and via public announcements at least two weeks before the scheduled meeting.

7.7 Voting

If a vote is required, the number of members who attend a duly called and duly notified annual members' meeting or a special members' meeting (which may be requested by any member of the church, but must be approved by the elders and requires at least two weeks written, published, and announced notice) represent the voting quorum. Active members who have been regularly participating in church services (at least 50% of the previous two quarters) are welcome to vote. Non-members or inactive members may attend open meetings, but may not vote.

The elders recommend that the members of Scullville Bible Church vote on the following matters:

- 1) The approval of the annual budget (requires a unanimous decision of the elders and a 3/4ths majority of the voting quorum)
- 2) The dismissal and hiring of the Lead Pastor (requires a unanimous decision of the elders and a 3/4ths majority of the voting quorum)
- 3) The purchase, sale, or mortgaging of church property (requires a unanimous decision of the elders and a 3/4ths majority of the voting quorum)
- 4) A merger or dissolution of the Church (requires a unanimous decision of the elders and a 3/4ths majority of the voting quorum)
- 5) Any other major financial, facilities, or spiritual matters on which the elders deem it wise to have the Participating Members vote (requires a unanimous decision of the elders and a simple majority of the voting quorum)

Article 8. The Dissolution and Amendment of Our Church

8.1 Dissolution

If at any time, the membership of this ministry shall be so reduced as to not have sufficient members to fill its offices and funds to pay its bills or has ceased to hold its regular meetings, it shall not be declared extinct by the elders until our members and fellowship partners have met and have exhausted all possible means of keeping the work open. In the event that the ministry is at some future date declared extinct, the properties are to be sold, and after all existing bills and financial obligations have been met, the remainder shall be placed in trust to support other Bible believing/evangelical churches, ministries, and/or missionaries of our choice for the furtherance of the Gospel and the cause of Christ. The sale and dissolution of the ministry properties and holdings will be done by the elders (acting as the official Trustees of the organization) legally and in accordance with any provisions in its property titles.

8.2 Procedure for Amendment:

Should the need arise to revise this document in any way, the elders shall study the need for change and make the necessary revisions. Any changes shall be communicated/presented to the Participating Membership in a timely manner and be included in the latest version of the Constitution and Bylaws to be distributed as needed.

Article 9. Financial Policies

9.1 Funding Our Church/Financial Policies:

In general, our philosophy with regard to church finances/facilities (and most everything else) typically revolves around the following broad principles.

- 1) **Transparency** – we believe in telling the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth (good or bad). Especially, as it applies to finance. Trust and transparency are tied together. When it comes to non-personal/non-private/non-confidential finances, we believe that the church needs to see and know what is happening so that we can better pray, share, celebrate, or give accordingly
- 2) **Communication** – we believe that organizational surprises are not a good thing. When it comes to organizational leadership and direction, surprises are not ideal. Therefore, we will strive to do our best to communicate to (and encourage communication among) our staff, our leadership communities, and the congregation early and often. We always want to err on giving the respect of time and clear communication before something happens so that we can process information and change healthfully and give input accordingly.
- 3) **Good Stewardship** – We believe we are called (biblically) to be stewards/investors and not owners/hoarders. God has entrusted His Church – His people, His message, His resources – to US and will hold us accountable for what we’ve done with what He’s given to us. Therefore, we are fans of strategic planning, intentional budgeting, careful maintaining/improving of our facilities, continually evaluating the effectiveness of our services/ministries, and making strategic investments into people and programs that will help us do what God is calling to do. God rewards the stewards who attempt use what He has given to impact others and to bring Him increase.

9.2 Offering/Cash Counting Team Procedures for USHERS

The Finance Team offers the following policies and procedures as guidelines to follow. It is our hope that following these guidelines will help protect the members of the team and the resources that the people of God entrust to our church.

- 1) There must always be at least two unrelated ushers (usually vetted and trusted adults) and/or counters present whenever money is handled.

2) After the offerings are collected:

+ At least two unrelated adult ushers (teens and kids are welcome to help in the collection, but counting/recording should be done by 2 adults) should place the total amount of the offering into the bank bag and immediately take it upstairs to the old sound room together to count, doublecheck, and record.

+ COUNT THE CASH ONLY. If cash is loose or in an unmarked/unsealed envelope please count it and record it in ink on the cash/counting sheet.

+ If a gift is in a sealed envelope with a name or a number on it or in check form DO NOT open or count it. THOSE ITEMS ARE CONFIDENTIAL. The church's Secretary and church's Treasurer will count and record those items.

+ Have both ushers sign the cash/counting sheet in ink and date it.

+All cash, sealed envelopes, checks, and the current counting sheet should be placed into bank bag, locked, and then placed into the secured red box that has been provided.

3) The weekly counting sheet (including checks) will then be processed and recorded by the church's Secretary and the church's Treasurer accordingly.

4) The weekly offerings will be deposited (within 24 hours) into the church's bank account and deposit slips given to the church's Treasurer.

9.3 Designated Fund Policy

Scullville Bible Church has only **two funds**: *an undesignated General Operating Fund* (which includes our checking and savings accounts) and a *designated Deacon's/Mercy Fund*.

All gifts given and all decisions related to the creation of, the maintenance of, and the disbursements of those funds will be determined by our Finance Team (under the authority of our elders and our financial policies) and by our congregationally approved budget - NOT the specific donor. Once given, gifts (financial or gifts in kind) will be the property of Scullville Bible Church and will not be refunded or returned to the donor. Should a designated fund be deemed "closed" all monies in that fund will be reverted to the General Operating Fund of the church.

Additionally, while the church may deem it wise to take advantage of grants or other sources of external funding (one-time gifts or planned giving from individuals, foundations, or estates) the church leadership and NOT the donor will determine the best use of those resources.

Donor initiated memorial funds, private funds for missionaries/pastors, funds for unapproved projects, go-fund-me type funds, or any other giver-designated funds/offerings will NOT be

accepted, maintained, or handled by the church and as such will NOT be credited as charitable gifts or tax-deductible gifts to Scullville Bible Church.

We support people's desire to help others (and may choose to help as well) but those unofficial funds will be the responsibility of the individual parties themselves and will NOT be accepted or forwarded by Scullville Bible Church.

From time to time, the CHURCH LEADERSHIP might suggest a special LOVE OFFERING for an individual's specific need. But those gifts would be typically NOT be tax deductible for the giver and would likely be taxable income to the recipient.

9.4 Fundraising Policy

It is the policy of Scullville Bible Church NOT to hold public fund-raisers or to ask the public for money (ie, car washes, cookie sales, paid dinners, concerts, benefits, etc). If we do/provide any of those things they will be done as a service or a blessing to the community, at no cost to them.

Church needs will be anticipated in the budget, met by the gracious hand of God (usually through the prayerful giving of God's people), or paid from our church's accounts. If special needs arise (such as a building campaign, a major church project, special missions giving, etc.), the church's leadership will communicate with the church family and call the church family to respond accordingly. Private fundraising for individual or personal projects that have not been approved by the church's leadership will not be accepted.

The church's leadership may elect to apply for appropriate financial grants, endowments, awards, rebates, or other appropriate sources of external funding that do not violate the Fundraising or Designated Fund policies.

Scullville Bible Church kids/teens/adults have liberty to ask individual church members to buy products or to support their personal (not church-related) fundraising efforts. But care should be provided not to do so during church services, on official church websites/social media, or through using church logos, letterhead, or insignia.

The church DOES support kids/teens being hired by individuals to do extra work around the church and for church families (safe and supervised) to help provide scholarship monies for their church camp, retreat, or missions trip experiences.

While we do support local Christian Schools and provide scholarships through our Missions budget, we do NOT currently provide additional scholarships or additional support through individual offerings or fundraising efforts for Christian Schools/Christian students/Christian teachers as a part of our church's ministry.

9.5 Mercy Fund Policy

It is the policy of this church to fund and maintain a Mercy Fund which will be used to provide emergency assistance to church and community members who either apply for the assistance or who are identified by our Church leaders/Church family as someone needing help. In either case, a Mercy fund application must be completed, reviewed, and approved.

As our resources are limited, we **WILL** attempt to help with the following categories of need:

- 1) Gift cards for emergency food or basic supplies;
- 2) Emergency healthcare needs (medicine, assisting with copay, emergency dental, etc.);
- 3) Emergency clothing (shoes, winter coat, undergarments, needed but unaffordable interview/job related clothing);
- 4) One-time emergency transportation needs (bus pass, Uber/Lyft, wawa gas card; minor repair);
- 5) Emergency one-time motel/hotel stay (1-5 nights depending on costs);
- 6) Emergency minimum costs to prevent shut-off for electricity or heat;
- 7) Emergency needs related to food, clothing, or shelter for our missionaries

We will **NOT** use these limited resources for:

- 1) Past due mortgage, rent, or vehicle payments (especially) when the person has no means of making those or upcoming mortgage or rent payments.*
- 2) Private school or college payments.
- 3) Cable or streaming services.
- 4) Phone or Internet services (with the possible exception of keeping those services for 1 month to allow for job-seeking or job-related needs)
- 5) Memberships or fees related to extracurricular adult/kids clubs
- 6) Most legal fees (although we might consider providing limited assistance to members who need emergency representation or support to provide for their immediate safety)
- 7) Cash requests. Gift cards or direct payments to creditors/companies will be made.

** we might consider assisting with a one-time emergency partial payment for a church member if it would save them from being evicted or having a necessary vehicle repossessed. But, that member must also show ability to make future payments and participate in some financial counseling.*

All applications will be reviewed and decided upon and checks/resources disbursed accordingly as soon as is possible – usually within 48-72 hours. The church leadership does not have authority to give out more than what is in the Mercy Fund. Any additional fund requests will have to be presented to the Finance Team and approved by the elders.

9.6 General Financial Policies

1. THE ANNUAL BUDGET:

It will be the policy of Scullville Bible Church Finance Team to present, approve, and operate from an annual budget (for the calendar year - January 1 to December 31st).

The annual budget is created by the combined effort of the Finance team which may include the Lead Elder, appropriate staff, the church treasurer, and other financial/facilities related leaders. It is to be presented to the congregation/members the two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting and voted on/affirmed by the congregation at January's Annual Member's Meeting.

The purpose of the annual budget is to faithfully support the ministries, missionaries, and the ministers of the church. The proposed budget (based on income projections, past expense records, and anticipated ministry costs) should seek to be faith-filled AND balanced.

The church's Finance Team will review the projected and actual income and expenditure reports monthly, quarterly, and annually. If needed, adjustments/amendments to the budget may be recommended, approved by the elders and Financial Team, and presented to the congregation.

As a general policy and goal, we shall seek (at a minimum) to set apart 10% of our income/annual budget for missions giving, 10% of our income for savings, and to operate on the remaining 80% annually.

2. GIVING RECORDS:

Individual givers who use checks, giving envelopes, or online giving that clearly identifies them as the giver will receive a confidential and private quarterly/annual giving record for tax purposes. Unmarked/Unidentified cash gifts will be gratefully received, but as we cannot identify the giver, tax records will not be provided.

3. EXPENSE ACCOUNTING:

Proper accounting procedures for all expenses should be followed. Which includes, but is not limited to: determining if the expense is budgeted or not, filling out the proper requisition/reimbursement forms (including which budget line item is to be used), using tax exemption forms where appropriate, attaching copies of all checks and cash/debit/credit receipts, and submitting those records to the church office/church treasurer in a timely manner so that they may be included in the monthly treasurer's reports and the annual records.

4. BUDGETED EXPENDITURES:

Expenditures approved in the annual budget do not generally require further approvals (unless we are significantly behind in our anticipated giving, our accounts will not support it, and/or the church leadership deems it wise to pause the expenditure). All expense accounting (including the proper use of church debit card/receipt) procedures apply to budgeted expenditures.

5. UNBUDGETED EXPENDITURES:

Unbudgeted and non-emergency expenditures (for projects, physical plant improvements, purchases, or other opportunities) of over \$1000 (whether from savings or operating accounts) must be presented to and discussed by the Finance Team before being approved.

The Finance and Facilities Team may agree to spend up to \$4000 on non-budgeted spending without prior approval in the case of a physical plant emergency. However, the Pastor and Treasurer should be notified of these expenditures ASAP and all expense accounting procedures (with regard to checks, receipts, and records) will be followed. All unbudgeted expenses will be identified and explained to the congregation in the quarterly business reports.

6. DEBT/EXCESS FUNDS:

The Finance Team is responsible to make sure that our expenditures are not MORE than our combined income sources and that the church does not go into debt. Scullville Bible Church will typically avoid consumer debt and seek to pay most expenses in cash. However, should a planned debt (such as a possible mortgage/construction loan, etc...) be required, it must be approved by the Elders and the Finance Team, appropriately communicated to the congregation, and voted on/approved in accordance with the church's constitution.

If there are excess funds, the Finance Team should seek to do the following:

- + Make additional payments on any outstanding debts.
- + Maintain a sufficient cushion of funds in the Operating Account to pay at least 3-months' worth of expenses.
- + Maintain an Emergency/Savings Fund sufficient to fund 6 months' worth of operating expenses and funds to replace/repair major systems or to fund other unanticipated expenses
- + Intentionally INVEST what remains into our staffing needs, our facilities and grounds, or our community/missions outreach

7. FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT PROJECT POLICIES:

Once a project is suggested and approved by the budget or the Finance/Facilities Team AND there is agreement as to the purpose and general direction of the project, it will be the responsibility of the team to do the following:

- 1) Seek bids/proposals on the project from at least 2 (preferably 3) qualified, licensed, and insured contractors or companies. Church members or volunteers may bid on jobs but must participate in the following steps as well.
- 2) Work/communicate with church leaders, impacted volunteers, and professionals to design the project proposal with regard to purpose, code/safety, layout, colors, materials, flow/access, ease of use, etc...
- 3) Review the bids/proposals as a team and select/present the one that is determined to be best for the church's timeline, budget, and purposes.
- 4) Enter into a signed and dated contract with the person(s) doing the approved work. The contract must spell out the price, the scope of the work, the anticipated timeline, the authorized agents of the church, the process for change orders/evaluation, the payment structures, and the consequences for non-compliance to the contract or non-completion/poor completion of the project.
- 5) The contractor should pull all appropriate permits and follow all rules with regard to current construction codes and proper inspections