

**P O L I C I E S**

**AND**

**P R O C E D U R E S**

## PERSONNEL POLICIES

### 1. Non-Ministerial Staff/Employees

- A. Absences - A leave form must be filled out prior to taking annual leave, and after returning from sick leave.
1. Death of spouse – Three (3) business days with pay.
  2. Death of immediate family other than spouse. Three (3) business days with pay. Immediate family includes parents, children, and siblings.
  3. Election Day – No paid absences
  4. Marriage/Honeymoon – No paid absences
  5. Jury Duty – Must be arranged with Personnel Committee and no paid absence.
  6. Medical appointments – Make up time without additional pay.
  7. Personal – Option of vacation time or time without pay.
  8. Personnel must serve six (6) months on the job before they are allowed to use any leave.
  9. All hourly employees must keep a time sheet for hours worked per day for two week pay period.
  10. No employee who works less than 40 hours per week will be given annual/sick leave, unless requested by the Personnel Committee, approved by Stewardship Committee, and the church.

### B. Benefits:

1. Auto expense – Employees will be paid travel expense for job-related errands only when using their private vehicle and required by their supervisor; however, a mileage report must be submitted in order to be paid. See secretary for travel expense form.
2. Bonuses – The church will not pay for any type of bonus to any person unless previously approved by the church. However, when the budget is approved, if there are funds placed under Minister and Support Staff Recognition it will not need prior church approval.
3. Holidays – Employees will be paid for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day (observed), Independence Day (July 4), Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (A holiday which falls on Saturday will be observed on the previous Friday; a holiday which falls on Sunday will be observed the following Monday)
4. Vacation – Employees will receive vacation time with pay (see job description). After serving five (5) and ten (10) years in the position, consideration will be given for additional week/days of annual leave.
5. Insurance – The church may negotiate insurance/annuity, provided it is part of their package and agreed upon prior to hiring the individual(s) or the church votes approval by (2/3) members present.
6. Sabbaticals – There will be no sabbaticals
7. Training/Development – Employees will be encouraged to participate in and shall be reimbursed for training relating to their field of work. All absences must be pre-approved by their supervisor.

### C. Counseling/Evaluating

1. Abuse of approved leave of absence – (a) Employee shall be counseled, the incident documented and filed by Personnel Committee, which may take any necessary action.
2. Abuse of sick leave – Review by the Personnel Committee, which shall take any necessary action.
3. Personal Problems – The Personnel Chairman and Committee shall make themselves available for advice and direction

4. Safety violations – Every employee is responsible for practicing standard safety rules at all times.
5. Tardiness – All employees are expected to be present for work on time. Repeated tardiness shall be reviewed by the Personnel Chairman who shall make recommendations to the Personnel Committee.
6. Work Performance – Employees shall be evaluated annually according to the Bylaws. A written report shall be completed by the committee, reviewed and signed by the employee, and filed in their personnel folder. A copy shall be made available to the employee.

**E. Employment Practices**

1. Hiring – The Personnel Committee shall follow these procedures:
  - a. Advertise in the Associational Calendar in the Florida Baptist Witness, “The Plain View” and any other appropriate media.
  - b. Receive and screen all applications/resumes. A deadline, or cutoff date, for receiving applications will be established.
  - c. Interview qualified applicants
  - d. Do a back ground check.
  - e. Discuss financial package with Stewardship Committee.
  - f. Bring recommendation to the church.
2. Moonlighting – Any other employment is allowable if it does not interfere with church job or bring disrepute upon the church or our Lord.
3. Firing / Lay off – The Personnel Committee shall have authority to dismiss any employee whom they supervise and have documented justification for removal or due to budget constraints.

**F. Administration**

1. Job Descriptions – The Personnel Committee shall write job descriptions with input from the pastor.
2. Pay raises – The Personnel Committee shall recommend pay raises to the Stewardship committee and then bring to church and based on recommendations from the pastor’s committee members, and evaluations.
3. Accrued vacation – There will be no “unused” vacation pay for any employee who is terminated or resigns without a two (2) weeks notice.
4. Sick leave – Sick leave is allowed to accumulate annually for a maximum of thirty (30) days. No Sick leave shall be paid for any employee who has resigned, been terminated, fired, or laid off. Sick leave must be used for sickness and not additional vacation time.

**G. General**

1. Scheduled breaks – Since hourly staff is part time employees, no scheduled breaks are allowed.
2. Lunch time – limited to thirty (30) minutes for secretary and custodian and this is not considered time worked.
3. The copy machine is the only office equipment which may be used for personal use. The cost shall be 10 cents per copy and paid to the secretary. This shall apply to all church members.
4. Grievances – All grievances shall be addressed to the Personnel Committee and/or the pastor. Complaints are not to be shared with other members of the church.
5. Dress code – All job descriptions address dress code.
6. Moving expenses – Provided for full time ministerial staff only.
7. Office hours – To be determined by the Church.
8. Volunteer office assistance – Coordinated by the secretary.
9. Organizational charts – Responsibility of the pastor.

**Personnel Policies Cont'd.**

10. Telephone – No personal long distance calls shall be charged to church phones.
11. The secretary shall maintain a log of all issued keys. **KEYS MAY NOT BE DUPLICATED.**
12. Office cleanliness – Each staff member shall be required to keep his/her own work area clean and orderly. The custodian shall dust and vacuum all areas.
13. Confidentiality of Records – It shall be the responsibility of staff/church members to protect all personnel/tithe records.
14. Computer use – The secretary and only those persons authorized shall use the church computer.
15. Activity announcements – The secretary shall be responsible for insuring church activities are placed in bulletins/newsletters/letters, etc in a timely manner. It shall be the responsibility of the group needing the information published to insure the secretary has it available in a timely manner.

**II. Ministerial Staff**

All items above shall also apply to the ministerial staff and be supervised by the pastor. For hiring Procedures, see Constitution/Bylaws, Article IX, Section 2.

A ministerial staff member, other than the pastor, may be dismissed or asked to resign by the pastor with justifiable cause. This action shall require the support and approval of the Deacons and Personnel Committee.

Resignation shall require at least two weeks notice be given to the church, except by mutual consent of both the staff member and the church.

**III. Pastor**

To declare the office of pastor vacant, i.e. dismissal, a “special” meeting must be called for that purpose with at least one week’s notice. The meeting may be called upon the joint recommendation of the deacons and the personnel committee, or by written petition signed by not less than one half (1/2) of the resident church members. The vote shall be by secret ballot and shall require fifty-one (51%) percent affirmative vote of those church members present and voting.

## OFFICE POLICY/PROCEDURE

### I. Routine

- Monday: Prepare visitor letters and put on computer if local, and on mailing list, if requested. Begin gathering information for newsletter; update prayer sheet; pastor's letters; any other duties deemed necessary by the pastor.
- Tuesday: Prepare bulletin, agenda, and run newsletter and other items as needed.
- Wednesday: Write checks, with the exception at the end of month, write all checks that are due, and any bill that is due the following month dated due on the eight (8<sup>th</sup>), mail newsletter to shut-ins, when due, update Prayer list, print and place in foyer. Information must be in by 9:00 a.m.
- Thursday: Prepare and run Sunday bulletin. Information must be in by 9:00 a.m.  
Type and run agenda, when due.

### II. Publication Deadlines

- Newsletter: Prepare and Print Newsletter. Articles to be submitted to Secretary by 20<sup>th</sup> of each month in order for them to be placed in the vestibule on the last Sunday of the month
- Bulletin: Thursday by 9:00 a.m.
- Business Meeting Agenda Reports/Recommendations: Thursday 9:00 a.m. (week prior to meeting.
- Calendar: By 9:00 A.M. the 20<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.

### III. Retention Schedule for Records

Church Minutes, Financial Statement, Loan Records and Bonds, Deeds & Titles, Ledger Books, Files for Accounts Payable, Incorporation Papers, Insurance, Claims, Employee Earnings Records, 941 IRS Statements and Correspondence: Permanently

Bank Statements and Cancelled Checks: 5\_years

Contribution Statements on disk: 7 years

Contribution Envelopes: 5 years

General Correspondence: 3 years

### **SUPERVISION AND EVALUATIONS**

1. The pastor shall supervise and evaluate the ministerial staff annually in September. The church secretary shall be evaluated by the pastor annually in September. Additional evaluations shall be at the discretion of pastor.
2. The Music Director shall supervise and evaluate the instrumentalist annually in September.
3. The Building and Grounds Committee shall supervise and evaluate the Custodian annually in September.
4. The Personnel Committee shall supervise and evaluate all other personnel annually in September.

### **PULPIT HONORARIUM AND INTERIM**

1. The pulpit shall be filled at the discretion of the pastor.
2. Remuneration for pulpit honorarium shall be \$75; music honorarium \$50; for organist and pianist \$25 for each service (morning and evening services), secretary \$8 per hour; and custodian \$8 per hour.
3. When the church is without a pastor, it shall be the responsibility of the active deacon body to see that the pulpit is supplied.
4. It shall be the responsibility of the deacons to recommend an Interim Pastor and his salary.

### **COMMITTEES: GENERAL**

1. The rotation system of committees shall be followed: When a new committee is formed, the nominating committee shall name three (3), six (6), or nine (9) members to each committee, depending on the needs of the committee. One-third of the committee shall serve one year rotate off, one-third shall serve two years and rotate off; one-third shall serve three years and rotate off. Members of all committees who rotate off shall not be eligible to serve on the committee again for one year. If unable to fill the position, and a individual has agreed to be placed back on the committee prior to the one year, when presented to the church, the church shall be informed of this. However, that person could serve on any other committee.
2. A copy of all committees and their responsibilities will be filed in the church office and maintained as an integral part of this manual.
3. Each standing committee shall serve from January 1 through December 31, unless stated otherwise.
4. Vacancies shall be filled as needed to complete terms.
5. Committees shall meet within thirty (30) days after election to select a chairman, to review their purpose, and to set goals for the coming year. When this information has been decided it shall be the new chairman's responsibility to file it with the church secretary and the nominating committee.

## CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS

### A. Regular Church Business Meeting

1. The Regular Church Business Meeting shall be held on the Wednesday evening after the second Sunday in each month.
2. Monthly reports shall be received from church staff, officers, organizational leaders, committees, and other committees, and other individuals. Reports will be written and turned in to the church secretary by 9:00 A.M. Thursday prior to the meeting.
3. The church shall transact any business that is proper to come before the assembly and has been placed on the agenda.
4. The membership shall have an agenda made available to it the Sunday prior to each meeting. The agenda will be printed on the preceding Thursday.
5. All items of business must be in writing and turned in to the church secretary by 9:00am on Wednesday.
6. Recommendations should be brief but to the point. Please include all essential information such as names, dates, places, action, etc.
7. Emergency Items includes only those items of business that arise between the printing of the agenda and the time of the meeting. They must be presented to the Pastor and the Moderator **PRIOR** to the business meeting. These items must be in written form and will require a second
8. The regular business meeting in September shall be the annual meeting.
9. A business meeting may be postponed by any two of the following; Pastor, Moderator, and/or Deacon Chairman.
10. Postponed meetings will be rescheduled at the earliest possible date.

### B. Special Called Business Meeting

1. Special Business Meetings may be called at any time by the pastor or the chairman of the deacons. In either case each must have the consent of two other active deacons. Exception: See Pastor Search Committee.
2. Notice of a Special Called Business Meeting and the purpose for which it is called shall be:
  - a. Announced from the pulpit during two (2) regular worship/prayer services prior to the called meeting; **OR,**
  - b. By mail to each resident member so that the members receive it at least three (3) days prior to the meeting.

### C. Parliamentary Rules

The church shall use Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised as her guide for parliamentary procedures.

## DEACON NOMINATION, ELECTION AND SERVICE POLICY

There shall be no established age requirement for a man to serve as deacon but must meet the criteria set forth in the New Testament, specifically Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Other additional guidelines may be approved by the church after consideration by the deacons.

1. Nominations for upcoming deacon vacancies, which will be determined annually by the active deacon body, will be accepted only during the regular worship services of the first Sunday in August each year. Each church member present will be allowed to nominate as many men as necessary to fill these positions.
2. After nominations have been made by the church, the deacon chairman, vice chairman, and church clerk will compile a single list of all nominees.
3. The deacon chairman will make the first contact with each nominee to determine his willingness to serve. If the nominee agrees to serve, then both the pastor and the chairman or vice chairman, will make a personal visit with the nominee to determine availability and eligibility for service.
4. All nominated men who have been previously ordained and agree to serve will meet with the active deacon body at their regularly scheduled meeting in August for a full review of the deacon ministry.
5. A ballot will be developed from the list of all eligible and willing men, and made available for election during the last Wednesday evening service in August. Only those men receiving a majority, i.e. at least 51% affirmative vote will be elected.
7. An ordination council will be held on the second Sunday in September for all newly elected men not previously ordained. This council will consist of all ordained man of the church and others who may be invited.
8. An ordination service will take place during the last Sunday evening service in September.
9. All men who have been elected to serve on the active deacon body will meet in conference with the pastor prior to the new church year to elect new officers. No man shall serve in any office for more than two consecutive years.
10. Whenever possible, the ratio of active deacons to the number of active resident church families will be maintained at 1 to 12.
11. An active deacon will normally serve the church for a period of three consecutive years. For a deacon's service to be extended beyond three years the following criteria must be met: a) The deacon in question must agree to serve an extended period; b) the deacon body must recommend the extension; and c) the church must approve the extension at the time of deacon election.
12. Under NO circumstances will a man serve as an active deacon for more than six (6) consecutive years.
13. Any man elected to fill a vacancy and has served less than two years shall be eligible for reelection for three additional years.



## FINANCIAL DISBURSEMENT/REIMBURSEMENT POLICIES

1. Expenditure of funds from a ministry budget will be authorized by Purchase Order (available in the church office) which has been signed by the organizational leader or committee chairman. See No.12 below for exceptions.
2. Requests for reimbursement of purchases not previously authorized by the Budget Section may or may not be approved. Approval shall be considered only when request is accompanied by Purchase Order **and** receipts.
3. All requests for non-budgeted funds shall require approval by the church in regular business session.
4. The church ministry budget limits authorized spending to the stated ministry budget amount and NO ministry budget will be exceeded without prior approval by the church in regular business session.
5. Checks are written by the church on Wednesdays. Requests for funds must be turned into the church secretary by 12:00 noon on Tuesday.
6. All purchases must have a purchase order and submitted to the Stewardship Committee prior to their meeting on the second Sunday in the month. A purchase order may be picked up in the office.
7. All checks must be signed by two persons. This shall be the normal duty of the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. Both the Stewardship and Counting Committee Chairmen will be authorized to sign checks on as needed basis.
8. Charging of items to the church credit accounts is allowed only by committee chairmen or organizational leaders or their designated representative.
9. The Treasurer, or in his/her absence the Stewardship Chairman, may approve emergency expenditures. In any such case, the issue must be reported to the Budget Section for review.
10. The following priorities for payment are mandated by Federal Law and/or Church Policy: (a) Salaries and associated taxes, (b) Missions, (c) Notes/Loans.
11. Budgeted amounts not spent or obligated are not carried over from one year to the next. Exception: Designated Funds-funds not spent, **MUST** be carried forward, unless specified otherwise.
12. Organizational Leaders/Committee Chairmen are responsible for making budget requests each year and for exercising good stewardship principles.

## COLLECTING AND COUNTING MONIES

Integrity and confidentiality are of paramount importance for all members of this committee. The church is “counting” on you to perform this job correctly. **Two members** of this committee **MUST** be present at all times. When you are unable to perform the following duties due to illness, out of town, etc., it will be your responsibility to contact another member of this committee to take your place.

1. During Sunday School, the Sunday School Secretary will place offering envelopes and/or loose monies into a locked bank bag and place in safe in floor and lock the safe. If the Sunday School Secretary is out, a substitute will perform his/her duties. They shall place a bank bag under the pulpit prior to church services for the counting committee to place envelopes and/or loose monies to take to the safe and lock up.
2. Following the Morning and Evening Worship Service, two members of the Counting Committee will collect the monies from the offering plates, take to safe and lock contents in bank bag and lock safe. If for some reason the counter who works with you is not present, ask another member of the counting committee to assist you.
3. On Monday, two members of the counting committee are to unlock the safe, and begin the procedure for balancing the money.

### **Balancing the Money:**

4. Separate all envelopes from loose money and checks. One member will prepare the checks and one member will prepare the loose money.
5. Count the loose money and mark **cash** on an envelope in the upper right hand corner. Name: Unknown; Amount \$ put the amount of cash you counted. The second counter **MUST** verify that the cash is correct before intermingling with the other cash when envelopes are opened.
6. Fill out an envelope(s) for all loose check(s). If the individual is not a member of our church; or you are not sure, put their address on the envelope in the upper left hand side, and the check number in the upper right hand corner. This is important, so at the end of the fiscal year an acknowledgement will be sent to that individual. You shall now begin to fill out the Weekly Receipt Income Report.
7. As envelopes are opened, **it is imperative they be checked for accuracy**, make sure the amount of the check or cash agrees with the amount on the envelope; place the check number or write cash in the upper right hand corner; this is imperative in order to record the correct information into the computer for that individual; if the individual is **not a member of the church**; or if you are not sure, make sure that you put their address in the upper left hand corner of the envelope. If this is “**designated**” amount, place this envelope in a stack, if it is for the “**general fund**”, place it in another stack.
8. As the envelopes are opened, place the cash by denominations in individual stacks. Place the checks in a stack. When all envelopes are opened, run two tapes on the checks, the written amount and the dollar amount and place the tape, date the tape, and you are ready for recording the checks in the computer. We now have members who are giving envelope(s) marked **debit**; if there is an amount on the envelope, this will be entered on the Receipt report under Direct Deposits. **You need to check with the Bank to determine this has gone into the church’s bank account.** When the debit envelopes are entered into the computer, it recognizes this as **cash**.

COLLECTING AND COUNTING MONIES CONT'D.

9. One counter will begin to fill out the Weekly Receipts Income Report. When report is completed, **“Total Receipts,” “Total Deposits” and “Envelope Totals”** must agree. Do not **look these totals out, subtract the totals out.** The deposit to the bank will be the cash deposit slip only to be taken to the bank and the other deposit slips will be taken from the check report from the computer; the **debits** will be another deposit. When you have completed the check report, place the checks in the safe with date marked on top. When checks are 30 days old, they will need to be destroyed by shredding.
10. When the Financial Information Report is completed by the counter, he/she is to place **all** envelopes in alphabetical order with envelopes marked **cash unknown**, on top of the stack. Run a tape on the envelopes, and the tape on top with the date marked on the tape. Verify that this tape agrees with **Total Receipt** that this tape agrees with the **“Total Deposits”** on the Weekly Receipts Income Report. File these in the locked two drawers file cabinet.
11. When he/she has completed the deposit slip, (the one with cash only), he/she is to place this in the bank bag and lock the bag to go to the bank. By this time, The Secretary thru her “E-Mail” should have the report back that all checks have been received at the bank. This is very important, if a report has not been received; call 1-877-266-5083, operator No. 2, and they will inform you if the report needs to be resubmitted or what is the problem. **DO NOT EVER SUBMIT THE CHECKS THE SECOND TIME UNLESS THE BANK HAS INFORMED YOU TO DO SO.**
12. When everything is completed, one counter will take the bag to the bank, and the other counter will stay at the church and begin keying the “tithe” records into the computer. The counter will bring the deposit slip back to the Secretary. When they have completed keying in the “Tithe” records, be sure and get a report, this report **must** agree with the **envelope totals** on the “Weekly Receipt” report. Be sure you subtract one total from the other, rather than looking out the totals. These reports are **CONFIDENTIAL** and are to be filed in the lock two-drawer file cabinet. Just members of the counting committee have keys to the file cabinet. The tithe envelopes are to be placed in the locked file cabinet.
13. **It is imperative that each counter check the work of the other counter to avoid errors.**

## USE OF CHURCH BUILDINGS

All buildings located on the church property of Plainview Baptist Church have been dedicated to the service of our Lord. Since the buildings are set aside primarily for religious purposes, the following policy exists.

### 1. Use by Non-Church Members/Groups

Any non-church member or group that wishes to use any of the church buildings must submit a written request to the Church Council. The request shall include:

- a. who is making the request
- b. what the facilities will be used for
- c. dates and time for use of facilities
- d. approximate number of persons involved

The Council shall insure there are no conflicts with the church calendar.

### 2. Use by Church Members

- a. If the event is church sponsored or related then the requesting individual or group must insure the calendar is clear.
- b. If the event is not church sponsored or related then follow paragraph No. 1 above.

3. A fee of \$30.00 for two (2) hours or \$75.00 all day per building shall be charged for use by non-members or groups and approved by the Church Council. The fee may be waived at the discretion of the Church Council; however this is to be stated when presenting to the church. The fee is payable in advance of the planned activity.
4. Alcoholic beverages shall not be permitted on the church property in any form.
5. Smoking is not allowed in any of the church buildings. The person or group requesting the use of the church facilities shall be responsible for picking up and properly disposing of all cigar/cigarette butts left on the grounds.
6. It shall be the responsibility of the requesting person/group to secure a key or to make arrangements for having the facility opened for their event.
7. The sanctuary, or main auditorium, shall not be used without the prior approval of the church in a regular monthly business meeting. Exceptions shall be for weddings and associational/state convention meetings which may be approved by the church staff as long as the event does not conflict with events already calendared.
8. No alterations shall be made to any of the church facilities without prior approval of the church decided in business meeting. This shall include drilling of holes, nails driven into structure, removal of curtain/shades, etc. Exception: The Building and Grounds Committee shall have authority to make any necessary modifications.

## USE OF CHURCH EQUIPMENT

1. Members of the church may borrow equipment/furniture at any time by submitting a request form (see secretary for form). The form must be submitted to the church office at least two weeks in advance of need.
2. No church property may be borrowed for commercial use.
3. Non-members will not be allowed to borrow church property unless pre-approved by the church in a Business Meeting.
4. In no case will furniture or equipment be borrowed if it will interfere with any church function already on the calendar.
5. One of the following must also sign the request form and be physically present when the property is checked out and returned: Staff member, deacon, trustee, or chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee.
6. The witness will note physical condition of property on the request form.
7. The borrower is totally responsible for the proper care and return of the property until the request form is signed by a witness on return. Note condition.
8. Church property will not remain checked out during any church service time.
9. Church musical instruments will not be used without prior permission of the Minister of Music or, in his/her absence, the pastor.

## WEDDING POLICIES

A marriage ceremony is a holy and joyous occasion in which a man and a woman invoke the presence and blessing of God as they pledge themselves to each other as husband and wife. It is never a social event.

It is the desire of Plainview Baptist Church, as well as its pastor and staff, to work with you in making your wedding ceremony a meaningful and memorable moment in your life.

These guidelines have been adopted in order to assist us in this important endeavor. They also establish a regular procedure regarding wedding ceremonies in Plainview Baptist Church, and make available to bridal parties the wedding policies of our church. For Wedding Policies and Forms see secretary

### I. PREPARATION FOR YOUR WEDDING

It is not required that the pastor of Plainview Baptist church officiate at your wedding for you to be able to schedule your wedding in the facilities of this church. However, should a pastor or minister of another church officiate at your wedding it will be your responsibility to acquaint him with all procedures and instructions in this policy. For the purpose of clarity, let us assume that you are using the pastor of our church to officiate at your forthcoming wedding.

#### A. Conference

Your first step in preparing for your wedding at our church is to contact the church secretary for an appointment with our pastor. The church number is (850) 476-3845. Pre-marriage counseling will be discussed during this initial conference. Other details will also be discussed and clarified at this time. It is desirable for this meeting to be held at least 90 days before the wedding and all couples are urged to make every effort to make an appointment with the pastor that far in advance.

#### B. Reservations

Unless the bride or groom, or the parents or guardian of the bride or groom are active members of the Plainview Baptist Church at the time the wedding is scheduled, the wedding is regarded as one of "non-member". In cases of conflicting dates, members will be given priority.

It is required that no weddings or rehearsals be scheduled during Sunday or Wednesday worship services, or during revivals and other special services.

#### C. Music

Private arrangements will be made by the family. All music is also subject to approval by the Plainview pastor and Minister of Music.

#### D. Corrections or Changes

Any corrections or changes in your wedding reservations should be cleared with the church secretary just as soon as possible. The secretary will also be able to help you with any questions you may have concerning policy.

### II. YOUR WEDDING REHEARSAL

The pastor or minister representing the church is in charge. Wedding services companies, bridal secretaries, and other persons of similar position must confer with this minister regarding all plans. The bride and groom are responsible for seeing that all members of the wedding party are prompt for the rehearsal as they are for the wedding.

The following suggestions will guide you as you prepare for the rehearsal.

- A. The minister and family will schedule the time of the rehearsal, usually on the day before the wedding.
- B. All members of the wedding party are requested to be present.
- C. Please have a list prepared by rehearsal time containing the following information:
  - 1. Names of attendants and the order in which they are to stand.
  - 2. Names of the candle lighters, if any.
  - 3. Names of the ushers who will seat the mothers.
  - 4. Number of family pews to be reserved.
  - 5. Number of Grandparents to be seated.
- D. The marriage license must be delivered to the pastor or minister-in-charge no later than the time of the rehearsal.

### III. YOUR WEDDING CEREMONY

#### A. **Flowers and Decorations**

All flowers and decorations are the responsibility of the bride and groom. An appointment must be scheduled with the church custodian to discuss these matters at least 30 days prior to the wedding.

#### B. **Building Use**

The church cannot be responsible for personal items such as wedding dresses, wraps, purses, silver or glass brought to the church for use in the wedding or the wedding reception; nor can the church be liable for such items if lost, stolen, or damaged. However, every reasonable effort will be made to assist the wedding party in the protection of such property.

#### C. **Do's and Don'ts**

The following is a list of detailed rules which the church feels it must suggest, with the expectation of receiving full cooperation:

- 1. Nails, tacks, staples, pins, or anything which can mar the woodwork or walls must not be used.
- 2. Only wrapped wire or ribbons that will not mar the pew ends shall be used to fasten bows.
- 3. Candles furnished by the florist must be drip less type or candles placed in cup-type candelabra. There must be ample polyethylene or similar plastic material used under the candelabra to protect the carpet and furniture.
- 4. The wedding party is expected to remove decorations and equipment immediately following the ceremony. The sanctuary must be cleaned and ready for Sunday morning worship service by Saturday evening.
- 5. The church properties must be left in the condition in which they are found. This includes the fellowship hall.
- 6. Moving and replacing of furniture is the responsibility of the wedding party under the direction of the minister-in-charge and/or sound technician.

#### D. **Photographs**

The photographer may take pictures before or after the ceremony in any part of the building. He is permitted to take pictures freely in the foyer of the sanctuary. Pictures are permissible during the wedding ceremony. The bridal party may reassemble in the sanctuary after the ceremony to take any other pictures desired. The photographer is cautioned about marring the furniture by standing on it, or by placing camera equipment on the pews or other furniture in the church.

**IV. Your Wedding Reception**

**A. Scheduling your reception**

If you are planning a wedding reception in the church facilities it must be scheduled at the time you schedule your wedding with the secretary.

**B. Rice Throwing**

Rice is a safety hazard and may be destructive to the church floors. You are responsible for insuring that no rice or bird seed is thrown anywhere in the church buildings. All family members and friends must wait until they are outside of the buildings should they desire to throw rice or bird seed. Bird seed is preferred.

**NOTE:** If rice is thrown, the wedding party must clean up off all side-walks and parking lots before leaving.

**C. Alcoholic Beverages**

**No alcoholic beverages** may be served or consumed on church property. This shall include the parking lots.

**D. Smoking**

**NO smoking** is allowed in any of the church buildings. The wedding party shall be responsible for picking up cigar/cigarette butts left on the church grounds and properly disposing of them.

**V. Fees**

A deposit of \$150 (to be placed in designated funds) is required for all non-members using our facilities. It shall be refunded only after a satisfactory inspection has been made of the church facilities and property. It may also be retained to cover expenses for any additional clean-up and/or repair.

<u>Facility/Service</u>	<u>Church Member</u>	<u>Non-Church Member</u>	<u>Fees Paid</u>
Deposit	No charge	\$150.00	\$ _____
Sanctuary	No Charge	\$300.00	\$ _____
Fellowship Hall	No Charge	\$100.00	\$ _____
Custodial Fee	\$75 (Sanctuary)	\$ 75.00	\$ _____
Custodial Fee	\$50 (Fellowship Hall)	\$ 50.00	\$ _____
Sound Tech. Fee	\$50	\$ 50.00	\$ _____
Pastor's Fee	Honorarium	\$150.00	\$ _____

Note: Request forms are available in the church office.



## FELLOWSHIP HALL POLICIES

The leader/chairman of the group or committee using either fellowship hall(s) shall be responsible for the following:

1. All spills shall be cleaned up immediately, this will prevent permanent staining.
2. Sweep entire fellowship hall after your function.
3. Sweep kitchen after each function. Mop if spills or tracking occurred.
4. Empty all trash cans into large dumpster cans outside fellowship hall.
5. Wipe down all tables used for your function.
6. Check and clean chairs for food crumbs/spills.
7. Remove all tacks and tape used in decorating for your function.
8. Clean all counters and remove any leftover food after your function. Please **DO NOT** store food leftovers in the refrigerator. Foods left in the refrigerator will be disposed of by the Hospitality Committee.
9. Launder all dish cloths and towels after your function, and return them to the fellowship hall the following Wednesday or Sunday.
10. All church dishes, utensils, appliances shall be washed accordingly after your function. **DO NOT** use the dishwasher for small loads.
11. Please note on the checklist how much paper goods your group used. If any item was depleted please inform the Church Hostess.
12. If stove(s) was used, **PLEASE** clean accordingly and insure it is **OFF**.
13. **VERY IMPORTANT:** Turn off both AC/Heater thermostats after your function.
14. Fill out a Fellowship Hall Request Form at least two weeks prior to your function. Put on church calendar. Without the form, you will not be guaranteed use of the hall.
15. **Cost of Fellowship Hall is:** \$30.00 for two (2) hours use **OR** \$75.00 for all day. The fee is payable in advanced of planned activity.

NOTE: Request forms are available in the church office.

## CHURCH NURSERY POLICY

1. Two adults must be present at all times when the nursery is open.
2. Paid workers only are to assist the children to the restrooms.
3. For Worship Services: Children older than nursery age four (4) years or discretion of nursery worker in charge are not permitted in the nursery.
4. For Sunday School and other venues: Children are to stay in nursery to the age of four (4) until promotion day (first Sunday of September). If a child has a birthday before October 31<sup>st</sup>, that child may be promoted to the next level during promotion day.
5. Any youth 13 years of age or older, who is a church member, may volunteer to assist the nursery workers/volunteers with toddlers, not bed babies, only during church services. They may do this just once each month. The youth must attend regular church services to be eligible to volunteer.
6. Nursery workers will be on hand and ready to receive children at least 15 minutes before services.
7. All workers in the nursery will assume the responsibility of keeping the rooms picked up and trash cans emptied **AFTER EACH SESSION**.
8. All nursery children will be registered and special needs indicated.
9. Children in the nursery will be released to a **PARENT/GUARDIAN ONLY**.
10. Nursery workers **ONLY** will be in the nursery rooms with the small children. Nursery children are not kept or baby sat, but rather, they are **TAUGHT**. Unauthorized visitors make teaching impossible.
11. All food items used as snack for the children will be properly sealed and stored.
12. Toys used will be sterilized at the end of each session. Crib sheets used will be changed at the end of the Morning Service, the Evening Service and on Wednesday nights. (The Nursery Coordinator will be responsible for seeing that they are laundered.)
13. All workers will insure that all babies are given the proper care in all respects. This includes feeding, burping, and assuring that they have clean and dry diapers, etc.
14. Assure that all children are treated in such a manner that a sincere **LOVE AND DESIRE FOR CHRIST AND THE CHURCH** can be instilled in their hearts.
15. If a child becomes ill, the parent or legal guardian shall be located and notified immediately.
16. Cleanliness and good behavior will be maintained in the nursery area at all times.
17. Nursery care is available only to children of parents participating in services of the church.
18. It is essential that each child's name be written on his/her personal belongings—especially bottles and drinking cups.

## **DEATH IN CHURCH FAMILY**

1. When a church member or a member of their immediate family (parents, guardians, spouse, or children) passes away, the church will provide a family Bible to the next of kin. The Bible will be delivered to the family by a deacon.
2. In the event the next of kin has received a Bible for an earlier death, or if the next of kin does not wish to receive a Bible, then the church may present a gift agreeable to all.
3. When a church member loses a family member other than immediate members, the church shall send a sympathy card.

**Every member should help in making sure the pastor and church secretary are aware of these circumstances.**

## **BAPTISM RESPONSIBILITY AND RECOGNITION**

The active deacons and their wives shall be responsible for preparing the baptistery for baptism, insuring each candidate is assisted as needed, adequate towels and robes are available, and that towels and robes are laundered after baptism services.

The church shall present to each person baptized, a Certificate of Baptism and a nice Bible. Both the certificate and Bible will indicate the person's name and date of baptism. The cost of the Bible should be reasonable and not exceed \$15.00

## **HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE GRADUATION RECOGNITION**

Upon graduation these individuals will be duly recognized and presented with a personalized study Bible or Bible reference book. The cost should not exceed \$35.00.

## **CHURCH KEY POLICY**

The Church Council, in agreement with the Building and Grounds Committee, shall determine who shall have what keys made available for use. Needs should be directed to the Church Council. The secretary shall be notified, so she will make sure they sign out for the key(s).

## **TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

1. The clerk shall not be authorized to grant letters unless the request comes from the church to which the member, or members, are applying for membership, AND this church votes to grant such a request.
2. If any member shall join a church of another faith and order, their name shall be removed from our church roll.
3. A member will be removed from the roll in the event of his/her death.
4. Should it become necessary to consider disciplinary termination of one's membership, charges will be reviewed by pastor and deacons. They will make a joint report to the church of their findings within thirty (30) days, and any recommendations of action to be taken
5. When it becomes necessary to dismiss a member for disciplinary reasons, the church will follow the guidelines set for in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised Edition.

## **PASTOR SEARCH: COMMITTEE SELECTION AND FUNCTION**

1. Primary nominations will be made by the active deacon body. Additional nominations from the floor shall be considered.
2. The church shall elect five to seven members to serve on this committee.
3. Once elected the committee shall begin its work immediately by selecting its own chairman, vice chairman, and secretary.
4. The committee should acquaint itself with acceptable and non-acceptable guidelines for securing a pastor, and PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.
5. The committee should draw up a questionnaire to be completed by the church membership. This will give the committee a general profile of the type of pastor for which the church is searching. For example, age, education level, etc.
6. The committee should contact the Associational Director of Missions for both a resource of information and also available resumes.
7. The committee should narrow its prospects to two (2) or three (3) and begin doing intensive research. This may take several weeks or months. The goal is to "key in", with God's guidance, on one strong prospect.
8. The committee should never bring a man before the church unless they are prepared to recommend that person as pastor. Consider one man at a time.
9. When the committee presents a man to the church for vote, a statement of consideration (salary, vacation, revivals, etc.) must also be presented for vote.
10. A Special Business Meeting shall be called by the chairman of the committee and the chairman of deacons for the purpose of voting on the prospective pastor. The time of this meeting will be announced by the committee chairman at least one week in advance and vote shall be by secret ballot.

## Worship Choir Policies and Procedures

### New Members of Plainview Baptist Church:

Welcome to Plainview! We are glad that you are interested in our Worship Choir. Our choir is an exciting group, dedicated to quality ministry through music. We consider ourselves a family and are always excited to have new people join this ministry.

### Worship Choir Policies:

#### Worship Choir . . . what is it?

Our choir has the privilege of leading this church in worship each week and with this privilege comes responsibility. You will notice that faithfulness will be the recurring theme throughout these policies. II Samuel 24: 24 states, "I will not give unto the Lord that which costs me nothing." Based on the Word of God, faithfulness to the ministry God has called us to be crucial. God has put our church in a strategic place for ministry and we want to be well equipped for the tasks He has for us.

The priorities of the Worship Choir of the Plainview Baptist Church are to grow spiritually, numerically, and musically.

#### How Do I Join the Worship Choir?

We invite you to attend at least two rehearsals as our guest. You may sing with us on Sunday after attending the second rehearsal. During these weeks we ask that you sincerely pray and ask the Lord if He is calling you to a ministry through our choir.

If you feel that He is and you desire to become a regular member, we will then enroll you as a fulltime member of the choir. A musical audition is not required. Membership is open to all adults and youth.

#### Attendance:

Faithful attendance is encouraged and expected at all rehearsals, worship services and special events. Every member's attendance goal should be 100%. That is what the Lord gives to us and that is what He deserves from us.

The most important thing is to know that God has called each of us to the ministry and that it should be a priority in our schedule. Other than circumstances such as sickness, death of a family member, family vacations, family responsibilities and unavoidable work conflicts, you are encouraged to be present for all rehearsals and services. If you are going to be absent, realizing that you will be at times, please let the Minister of Music know. If there is an emergency and you need ministry assistance, please call the music office at 476-3845.

"Who receives the greatest benefit, then, from regular attendance at choir rehearsal? It is the choir member. As a result of your regular attendance, you grow spiritually, you cultivate good friends, and you grow musically. Knowledge of any subject brings a sense of security and pleasure, and as your knowledge and ability to read music improves, you will enjoy each rehearsal and each service even more." Copied from "How to Be an Effective Choir Member –Fred L. Kelly—LifeWay

#### Rehearsals and Singing Responsibilities:

Worship Choir rehearsal is each Wednesday night beginning promptly at 7:30 pm, and ending promptly at 8:30pm, (unless lengthened prior to special events).

Please allow time in your schedule to get your music and be seated by 7:25. An attendance sheet will be passed around during rehearsal for you to check.

Please allow time to be in the Choir room by 10:15am on Sunday mornings.

There will be some extra rehearsals planned prior to special events.

**Worship Choir Policies and Procedures Cont'd.**

**Robe and Folder Assignments:**

Robe and folder numbers are assigned individually. See the Minister of Music for your assignment.

**Child Care**

Child Care is provided for children, birth thru 6<sup>th</sup> grade, during all rehearsals and special events. Please let the Minister of Music know if you need this service.

**CHURCH VAN POLICY**  
**(All forms are available in Church Office.)**

**1. USAGE:**

- a. The Plainview Baptist Church van is for exclusive use of the ministry of the church and will not be loaned or rented to organizations outside the church. The van will not be used for personal use by church members or by anyone outside the church.
- b. A minimum of six (6) passengers, including the driver, is required before the van can be used for any activity. According to Florida law, a maximum of eleven 11 persons including the driver can ride in the van. **THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS.**

**2. DRIVERS:**

- a. All drivers should be mature and responsible adults with a good driving record, and meet the following requirements.
  - (1) Licensed Florida driver
  - (2) At least 21 years old
  - (3) Member of Plainview Baptist Church
- b. The driver is also required to maintain and complete a trip report (blank forms in glove compartment) and submit it to the Van Committee Chairman.

**3. SCHEDULING:**

- a. Use of the van must be scheduled with the church office on a first come, first served basis. A REQUEST FOR VAN form must be completed. Reservations to use the van are recorded on the church calendar by the church secretary.
- b. The driver will sign for the van key just prior to the trip and will return the key to the church office as soon as possible after the trip

**4. RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- a. The person in charge of the group using the van will have a completed and properly notarized permission form for each passenger 18 years of age or younger who lives with his/her parents. Also, the person in charge will have in his/her possession a completed record of emergency data for each passenger and will leave copies in the church office. The person in charge will insure that an adequate number of adult chaperons accompany the group, if appropriate.
- b. The driver will check the oil, water and tire pressure before departing on a trip. If needed, the driver will bring these elements up to proper levels. Mid-level (89) octane gasoline will be used in the van.
- c. The individuals signing out the key is responsible for the van at all times until the trip is terminated. All traffic violations are the responsibility of the driver. In the event of a breakdown, the driver will contact the church office or Van Committee Chairman. The driver is responsible for safety during the trip.
- d. When parking the van the driver will cut off the air conditioner.
- e. The group using the van is responsible for cleaning it and leaving it orderly after each trip.

**Church Van Policies Cont'd.**

**5. ACCIDENTS:**

In the event of an accident:

- a. A law enforcement officer **MUST** be called to investigate all accidents.
- b. The driver of the church van is the primary spokesman for the church.
- c. Obtain names, addresses, telephone number and insurance information of drivers of other vehicle(s) involved in the accident, as well as names, addresses, and telephone numbers of witnesses.
- d. Do not admit blame or assume financial responsibility.
- e. Insurance information is in the glove compartment.

**6. EXPENSES:**

- a. Groups using the van for “fun” and socials are responsible for leaving the van with a FULL tank of gas, at their own expense
- b. The Van Committee is responsible for maintenance of the van—both scheduled and unscheduled. The Committee shall submit a budget each year.

**7. EXCEPTIONS:**

All exceptions and variations of these policies must be presented to and approved by the Van Committee.



## **DISPOSAL OF CHURCH PROPERTY POLICY**

See Constitution/Bylaws, Article V, Section 4 – Trustees

As stated, the Trustees shall have the power to dispose of (sell or transfer) any church property upon authorization of the church by specific vote. To eliminate the need for church approval for disposal of minor and insignificant items the following policies are set forth:

- a. The trustees shall determine the fair market value of all items which are to be disposed. This shall be done by and through any means or agency necessary.
- b. Items determined to be useless or of worthless value may be discarded or trashed.
- c. Items determined to be worth \$100.00 (one hundred dollars) or less may be disposed of without specific church vote.
- d. Items worth more than \$100.00 (one hundred dollars) must be brought to the church for a vote.
- e. Prior to disposal a complete list of items will be made available to the church membership. This shall include all items of value.
- f. Church members shall always have first opportunity to buy disposal items. This shall be first right of refusal.
- g. Proceeds from the sell of any item shall be entered into the church's general account unless previously predetermined by vote of the church.
- h. A log of all disposed items shall be maintained in the church office. Log shall contain a description of the items, final disposition (names, addresses, etc.), and selling price.

## CHURCH LEGAL POLICIES

### Introduction

Each year throughout the United States hundreds of churches and church ministries are sued for thousands, even millions, of dollars. Sometimes a suit is brought against a religious organization through no fault of its own, found to be innocent, and yet still be required to pay exorbitant legal fees. At other time the church may be sued because of negligence.

A “tort” is the legal terminology for an injury to another’s person or property caused either intentionally or negligently. This is the legal theory behind most lawsuits filed against churches.

Because legal action taken against a church, or individuals within a church, is becoming more commonplace, it is incumbent upon the church to take necessary and essential precautions to protect herself and her leaders as much as possible.

Fortunately, the courts allow churches and other religious organizations to govern and police themselves from within – **AS LONG AS THE GUIDELINES ARE WRITTEN AND FOLLOWED**. This court policy is known as “legal safe harbor”. This manual suffices as acceptable written policy.

As believers in God’s holy, inspired Word, including both the Old and New Testaments, we will follow four basic tenets as conflicts arise:

1. Pray earnestly seeking God’s direction;
2. Anticipate church leadership to determine whether the conflict arises from within or outside the church membership;
3. Allow church leadership to discover if the individual creating the conflict is saved or unsaved;
4. Abide by the basic belief that Christians are prohibited by Scripture from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church in order to resolve personal disputes.

This church is established for the purpose of engaging in religious, charitable, and educational activities. Therefore, it is incumbent upon every church member to make him/her aware of these policies, and to practice “good sense” judgment as we seek to advance the Kingdom of God.

Because the courts **EXPECT** the church leaders to know what the church does and why it does it, each of the leaders is expected to review both the Constitution/Bylaws and Church Policies **AT LEAST ONCE ANNUALLY**. Each of these leaders, including, but not limited to the Pastor, Deacons, Ministerial Staff, Church Council, and all Committee Chairpersons, shall certify their compliance to this requirement by their signature on a specific form to be kept in the church office. The Policy and Bylaws Committee shall oversee this function.

Legal Policies Cont'd.

**I. Discipline of Members**

All discipline instituted and conducted by the church shall follow scriptural guidelines and rules set forth in Matthew 18: 15-17, and explained here.

“Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he/she is to go alone to the offending party and seek restoration and reconciliation. Before he/she goes, he/she must first seriously examine him (herself). Then go with a spirit of humility and goal of restoration”.

“If reconciliation is not attained, a second member, either a deacon or the pastor is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step is also preceded by self-examination, and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration”.

“If the matter is still unresolved, it is then taken to the church. This shall be done through the deacons, as the spiritual representatives of the church body. If the matter is not resolved during the hearing of the deacons, the deacons should recommend that the church members, after self-examination, make a personal effort to restore the member.”

“If the matter is still unresolved, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the membership of the church upon majority vote of the membership present and voting at a special meeting called for the purpose of considering disciplinary action”. In agreement with Matthew 18:17, “if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man a publican.”

1. Although civil lawsuits between Christians are contrary to Scripture, legal action is often taken against the church based on any one of the following legal theories due to intentional torts:
  - a. Defamation of character.  
Libel—the defamation of someone’s character by means of print, writing, pictures, or signs  
Slander—the defamation of someone’s character verbally.
  - b. Invasion of privacy, which is the publicizing of someone’s private affairs with which the public has no legitimate concern, or wrongful intrusion into a person’s private activities, in such a manner as to cause mental suffering, shame, or humiliation to a person of ordinary sensibilities.
  - c. Intentional infliction of emotional distress.
  - d. Breach of confidentiality arising from clergy-penitent privilege.
2. Arbitration – The members of this church agree that arbitration will be used in preference to going to court. The following rules shall apply:
  - a. The arbitration will be binding on BOTH parties and shall not be waived.
  - b. The church’s attorney can be involved in the process, with the absolute freedom to ask questions.
  - c. The issues to be determined in arbitration must be agreed to.
  - d. Formal rules of discovery shall be waived and the discovery process agreed to.
  - e. The arbitration shall be handled by three Christian arbitrators, none of whom are close friends with either party or have knowledge of the facts leading to the dispute.
    1. Each party shall select one Christian arbitrator, who is not an attorney, with the other party having absolute veto power over the selection on up to three occasions.
    2. The two arbitrators selected by the parties select a third arbitrator who has a good reputation.

**Legal Policies Cont'd.**

- f. No arbitration agreement shall be signed until the arbitrators are agreed upon.
- g. Arbitration shall be held at a neutral site.
- h. A deadline for completing the arbitration shall be set forth in the agreement.
- i. The arbitration agreement shall clearly state who will pay which expenses, including the prevailing party's legal expenses.
- j. The arbitration agreement shall state that both parties waive any right to litigate matters once the agreement is entered into.

As Paul informed the Corinthians, "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (I Corinthians 6:7)

It is especially important that a journal or diary of the conflict/dispute be maintained. However, any notes that are presented will be scrutinized by the "other side".

**BE CERTAIN THAT THEY ARE ACCURATE WITH DATES INCLUDED.**

**II. Workplace Harassment**

Harassment of any sort will not be tolerated in the church

1. All items contained in the Church's Administrative Manual, including job descriptions are contractual
  - a. All members and paid staff are expected to abide by all guidelines and rules.
  - b. Failure to abide by the terms of the contract can result in a lawsuit for breach of contract.
  - c. All employment contracts shall have no definite term.
2. When hiring someone, the Personnel Committee must insure the employee understands fully all responsibilities and standards of conduct as set forth by the church.
3. The church shall explain to prospective employees that we believe homosexuality is a sin and that homosexuals cannot serve in the church.
4. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 makes it illegal for an employer to "fail or refuse to hire or discharge any individual, or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin." This applies to the church if,
  - a. Church is engaged in any industry affecting commerce, and
  - b. Has fifteen (15) or more employees

NOTE: The church could still be involved in an expensive lawsuit, even if unsuccessful, if it does not voluntarily comply with Title VII.

5. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) follows Title VII guidelines. Two concessions are made to religious organizations.
  - a. Churches may give preferential treatment to employees of a particular religion to carry out the organization's activities.
  - b. Churches and religious organizations may require applicants and employees to conform to their religious tenets.

**Legal Policies Cont'd.**

6. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, does apply to churches, even with only one employee.
  - a. The church may not hire illegal aliens.
  - b. The church shall collect I-9, W2, or W-9 forms from new employees.

**III. Child Abuse**

Child abuse and molestation is on the rise around the world and we never know when we may encounter it face to face. It, therefore, behooves each one of us that transport, counsel with, teach or work with children in any way to become very observant and patient in all aspects of contact we have with them. The following policies should be regarded as minimums for our own protection as well as that of the church. It shall be the responsibility of the Nursery Coordinator and Education Director to insure that these policies regarding children are strictly adhered to. Children are legally defined as persons under 18 years of age; adults are persons age 18 years or older.

1. Every person who works with children must be screened for previous allegations of child abuse. This may be accomplished by having each worker complete a confidential (see Secretary for form.), sign and date it.
  - a. Ask them if they have ever been accused of inappropriate conduct toward a child—either physical abuse or sexual abuse, and keep a written record of their answer.
  - b. Ask for written authorization to run a background check.
  - c. Annually re-interview them and document it.
  - d. Failure to screen may be considered “willful negligence” by the courts, and could lead to punitive damages for all church members.
  - e. Always have two adult workers present when working with children birth thru 12<sup>th</sup> grade or leave the doors open unless there is a window on the door.
2. Never leave children unattended.
3. Take accurate attendance records without fail, and note any unusual occurrence; e.g., one child strikes another, child comes to class with bruises. Keep these records in a secure file forever.
4. Suspected child abuse or neglect MUST be reported by law. Florida law recognizes only the communication between a clergyman and a counselor as privileged.

**IV. Dangerous/Unsafe Conditions on Church Property**

1. Construction areas must be blocked off and entry restricted.
2. Fence off large piles of sand/dirt and construction materials.
3. Stair railings and steps must be kept in good repair.
4. Barricade “attractive nuisances” when adult is not present. These include, but not limited to, swings, slides, monkey bars, gym sets, etc.
- 5 All members, including children, shall be warned against throwing objects at anyone for any reason, even in jest.

Legal Policies Cont'd.

## V. Church Vehicle Operations

Unintentional injury may occur to operations and passengers of vehicles. Certain precautions, therefore, must be followed in an effort to prevent such danger. Please refer to **CHURCH VAN POLICY**.

1. Each person who drives a church ministry vehicle must be fully trained as to its proper operation and care. Drivers **must** wear a seatbelt while driving any church vehicle.
2. A safety meeting will be held every six months. A record of all attendees will be maintained. Any one who drives the van must attend. This shall be conducted by the Van Committee Chairman.
3. Previous driving records of all operators will be checked and maintained in the church office.
4. No church vehicle shall transport children unless a minimum of two (2) adults (18 or older) are on board.
5. All children shall be required to wear seatbelts when the vehicle is in operation.

## VI. Loss of Property Tax Exemption

It is possible that the church could lose its Property Tax Exemption if certain rules are not followed. If this occurs the church may be required to pay all taxes due as a result of the ruling. This could amount to several thousands of dollars. Mere ownership by the church does not guarantee exemption.

1. All lands and facilities must be used for religious purposes.
1. Vacant land must not be allowed to lie dormant for extended periods of time. Future intent is unimportant to tax authorities.
2. Vacant land should be used periodically for some activity that is distinctively religious.
3. The church must abide by environmental laws. Loss may occur for destroying "wetlands", operating an incinerator without a permit, or putting unauthorized waste in dumpsters or garbage cans.
4. The church must also abide by certain fiscal rules (Section VIII).
5. If we lose our tax exempt status we are out of business. IT IS THAT IMPORTANT.

## VII. Preventing Harm by Others

1. No minor shall be baptized without consent of at least one parent. To do so could be considered "battery" by the courts.
2. No one will be forced to stay in class or counseling session against his/her will. Courts have been known to rule this as "false imprisonment:

## VIII. Financial

The following shall be considered an addendum to our existing Financial Policies already adopted and filed in the Church Administrative Manual.

1. **Receiving Funds** – The law is explicit on the proper methods for receiving and disbursing of funds. In an effort to preclude any allegations the church shall follow these specific guidelines for all monies.
  - a. The church shall not knowingly accept gifts from individuals (couples) who are going through financial difficulties such as bankruptcy or divorce. The courts may require the money to be returned if it is determined the gift was an attempt to bypass a legal obligation.

Legal Policies Cont'd.

- b. The church shall not knowingly engage in any laundering schemes such as accepting funds from a donor and then writing a church check to the donor's relative or friend.
  - c. The church shall not give tax receipts when credit for contributions is not due. For example, offering a tax receipt for the difference between a "sale" price and the asking price.
  - d. The church shall avoid "ministry exchanges" i.e. a minister, evangelist or missionary agree to "give" to the church the same amount that the church gives to him in support.
2. **Designating Funds** – Contributions that are made to the church and designated by the donor for a specific purpose, impose a trust obligation on the church. When this occurs the church has certain legal requirements. The church must determine whether the gift is acceptable and return the gift if it is not. **NOTE: The trust obligation is created only when the gift is deposited into the church bank account.**
- a. Maintain a strictly accurate record of the donor's name, the date of the contribution, to what it is designated, and amount given. If an account is not available, an account must be set up immediately to keep an accurate record.
  - b. Such funds must be used solely for the designated purpose. If any funds remain after project is completed; these funds will be placed into the general fund. However, if the funds are used for a specific family, such as their house burned down and et cetera, all the funds must be given to that family.
  - c. The church may NOT borrow from a designated fund even if the money is later returned.
  - d. The church may obtain a release from the donor of the designated funds. The release must be in writing. However, if it was designated in writing a general church vote can only release a designation by anonymous donors.
3. **Raising Funds** – The church shall avoid any and all illegal fund-raising schemes. The church shall avoid unrelated business income, i.e., activity that is not substantially related to the tax-exempt purpose, and which is regularly carried on by the church.
- a. Trade or business that produces income from sale of goods or services is prohibited.
  - b. "Regularly carried on" is situation specific. For example, if the activity is or can be normally conducted year-round, but the church only engages in the activity a few days out of the year i.e., sales booth, fund-raiser, yard sales; the activity is not regularly carried on.
  - c. "Substantially related" means does the activity contribute importantly to the accomplishment of the church's exempt purpose.
4. **Compensation "Safe Harbor"** – In order to maintain this privilege, we shall insure the following:
- a. Avoid "private inurement" i.e. treating the church facilities and real property as your (individual) own. It belongs to God and is entrusted to the body as a whole.
  - b. Maintain giving records for a minimum of five (5) years.
  - c. Obtain and maintain an "Objective Comparability Information" file for each paid staff member. This file shall include a written explanation of the pay scale/rate used.

Legal Policies Cont'd.

5. **Giving Records** – The individual member's Record of Giving can be corrected by use of written church records ONLY. All other VOID the record.

**REFERENCES**

1. 1996 Church & Law Seminar: Avoiding Legal Land Mines, Christian Law Association, Gibbs & Craze, P.A.
2. 1998 Church & Law Seminar: Maximizing Your Ministry & Minimizing Your Legal Risk, Christian Law Association, David C. Gibbs, Jr.
3. Legal Defense Handbook for Christians in Ministry, Carl F. Lansing, Navpress, 1992
4. Christian Ministries and the Law, H. Wayne House, Baker Book House, 1992