**PLEASANT STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.**

**CONSTITUTION**

REVISION 2019

**ARTICLE 1: NAME**

The name of this organization shall be: “**Pleasant Street Baptist Church**” a church incorporated April 20, 2006, under the laws of the State of Maine.

**ARTICLE 2: POLITY AND AFFILIATION**

**Section 1: Polity**

The polity of this church is Baptist and is independent, as far as relates to its internal organization and the regulation of its affairs. Its government is vested in its leadership and members, according to its own understanding of the Word of God.

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501, (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship; and the building, maintaining and operating of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, print shops, day-care centers, camps, nursing homes, cemeteries, and any other ministries that the church may be led of God to establish.

This organization declares its adherence to the doctrines and teachings of Christ as set forth in the New Testament and the study and practice of godliness as revealed in the Sacred Scriptures (Old and New Testament).

**ARTICLE 3: STATEMENTS OF FAITH**

**Our Faith: What We Believe**

**God the Father:**

We Believe in One God, who exists eternally in three distinct persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe.

(Deuteronomy 6:4; I Timothy 2:5; Matthew 28:19; I Corinthians 13:14)

**God the Son Jesus Christ**

We believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus was manifested in the flesh and lived a sinless human life, offering Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people through His death on a cross. He rose from the dead thus demonstrating His power over death and sin. He ascended to Heaven and will one day come again to reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords.

(John 1:14; I Peter 2:24; I Corinthians 15:3-4; Acts 1:9-11; Matthew 25:31)

**God The Holy Spirit:**

We believe the Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and Son. He is present in the world to make people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation, providing the Christian with power for living a holy life, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He is the giver of spiritual gifts and the source of understanding and guidance for the effective use of those gifts.

(II Corinthians 3:17, John 16:7-13, 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 2:12, 3:16, Ephesians 1:13, 5:18; Galatians 5:25)

**About the Bible:**

We believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God to human beings. It was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and for living. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without any mix of error.

(II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20,21; II Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105, 160, 12:6; Proverbs 30:5)

**About Human Beings:**

We believe that man (male & female) was created holy by God in His spiritual image, designed to be like Him in character. Although every human being has a potential for good, he now exists in a sinful, fallen state and can only be saved and made good through the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

(Genesis 1:26-27; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 3:6; Romans 5:8, 12; Acts 4:12)

**About Salvation:**

We believe salvation is God’s free gift available to all. It can only be found in Jesus Christ and must be accepted individually and personally into one’s life for it to be complete. Salvation is a result of Jesus offering His own life as payment for the penalty of sin, which is death, and is the work of God alone through the regeneration work of the Spirit. Although salvation is available to all, it is not received by all and can only be found in Jesus Christ.

(Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6, 1:12; Titus 3:5)

**About Eternal Security**

We believe that because God has provided eternal life through Jesus Christ, the true believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. If you have been genuinely saved by the power of God through the work of Jesus, you cannot lose it. Salvation is by the grace and power of God and is maintained by that same grace and power, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is this grace and keeping power of God that provides the believer’s security.

(John 10:29; II Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25, 10:10,14; I Peter 1:3-5)

**About Eternity**

We believe people were initially created to live forever. The result and penalty of sin has brought death (separation). Physical death brings separation of the soul and body; spiritual death brings separation from God. For those who have received the salvation of God through Jesus, there is forgiveness of sin and the promise of eternal life with God finding victory over death in its spiritual form. For those who reject the gift of salvation, eternity will mean separation from God with no hope of victory over death. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

(John 3:16, 14:17: Romans 6:23, 8:17-18; Revelation 20:15, I Corinthians 2:7-9)

**About the Church:**

We believe that every Christian of every generation since Christ ascended is a part of God’s family, the Church. We also believe it is very important for believers to be connected to each other by being part of a local church. It is in this local church setting that Christians are able to live out God’s purposes and experience God’s blessings. We believe the local church is to meet regularly in many different ways. It is these gatherings that the symbols Jesus gave of communion and baptism are to be practiced. We believe communion is for believers only and is to remember Jesus’ sacrifice. We believe baptism by immersion after salvation is a symbol of the believer’s new life and family in Christ.

(Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:41-47, 8:36-39, 18:8; Romans 6:3-4)

**Marriage:**

Marriage shall be defined as between one man and one woman as per Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:5-6. **All staff,** paid or otherwise**,** can only perform services of marriage according to Biblical definition Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:5-6 where one woman and one man are joined.

**ARTICLE 4:**

**Amendments To Constitution**

The foregoing constitution may be amended at any legal business meeting of the church by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of those present and voting. The amendment must be announced and discussed at a church service or special members meeting. The vote will then be held on a minimum of 14 days after announcement. A quorum of 51% of the current membership is required to amend the Constitution.

**Bylaws**

**Article 1: Governance of the Church:**

All pastoral staff and all Elders shall be members of the governing body known as the Board of Elders.

Elders shall meet the New Testament character qualifications as given in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The total number of elders shall be determined by the Board of Elders. Each candidate for Elder shall be chosen by the Board of Elders and presented to the membership for a vote. Lay Elders will be voted in by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the church members present and voting. Elders will be male only.

 Duties:

* Cooperate with the Senior Pastor in giving spiritual oversight and determining the direction of the church.
* Shepherd the church. (I Peter 5:2-4, Acts 20:28, John 21:16)
* Determine the character, number, location, and hours of all services.
* Handle all matters of discipline.
* Be responsible for spiritual counsel as it in any way relates to the ministry of Pleasant Street Baptist Church.
* Each Elder shall be responsible for a ministry area/areas to which they will provide oversight, annual evaluation, accountability, and budgetary recommendations to the Board of Elders.
* Oversee membership classes
* Oversee the process of all candidates for membership and decide on each candidate’s approval.
* Annually evaluate existing ministries and assess the need for adding and/or expending church ministries.
* Serve as the search committee, or delegate as needed, for all Pastoral Staff, Ministry staff, and thus including the Senior Pastor.
* Give spiritual and general oversight and encouragement to the Pastoral Staff. Evaluate each member of the Pastoral Staff and provide constructive feedback regarding his overall ministry at the church.
* Hold each other accountable.
* Annually review the benefit package of the Senior Pastor and all Pastoral Staff and make recommendations to the church for approval.
* The Elders are responsible for presenting the annual budget for ratification by the church, as well as any revisions to that budget throughout the year.
* In the event of dissolution, handle the disposing of assets.
* Oversee the financial status of the church.

**ARTICLE 2: FORMAL MEMBERSHIP POLICY**

**Section 1: Qualifications**

Candidates for membership must meet the following requirements:

* Have personal relationship with God through the acceptance of Jesus Christ as our only way of salvation; to be born-again. (John 14:6, John 3:3, Titus 3:17)
* Be baptized by immersion after salvation. (Matthew 3:13-16) Any believer who desires to be baptized, but is prevented by disability from baptism by immersion, may be baptized in some other way at the discretion of the Board of Elders.
* Agree with the Statement of Faith and purpose statement.
* Complete the Pleasant Street Baptist Church membership class/classes.
* Agree with and sign the membership covenant.
* Be voted into membership by unanimous decision of the Board of Elders after completion of the prior steps.

**Section 2: Rights and Responsibilities**

All rights, privileges, and responsibilities of membership shall be regarded as beginning from the day candidates are accepted into membership by the Board of Elders. If any member does not exercise the following rights and responsibilities for one year or more they may be removed from the membership roll by a unanimous vote of the Board of Elders:

* Regularly attend the services of the church
* Contribute faithfully to the church’s support to include local and worldwide outreach programs.
* Adhere to the church covenant and abide by the church constitution.
* Contribute actively to the building of the body of believers.
* Exercise the privilege to vote.

**Section 3: PROCEDURE FOR MEMBER DISCIPLINE/MEMBERSHIP REVOCATION**

This church shall exercise discipline when necessary. The principle causes for discipline are recognized as follows: causing division (Titus 3:10), teaching false doctrine (2 Peter 2:1-12), and immorality of conduct (Romans 1:18-32) (I Cor. 6:9~~-~~20).

The goal of a church is always repentance and restoration. Within that process may be a time of separation, a time of healing, or a hearing to process through the claims and establish a biblical foundation on how to proceed.

The board of elders will handle complaints according to Matthew 18.

**Section 4: PROCEDURE FOR RESCINDING MEMBERSHIP**

Any church member who wishes to rescind membership can do so through a transfer of membership or communication with the elder board regarding the rescinding of their membership. Any church member who leaves the church for extended period of time without communication will also be considered rescinded.

**ARTICLE 3: MEETINGS:**

**Section 1: Meetings for Business**

The church shall hold regularly held business meetings for the conduct of regular and special business, including but not limited to: establishing or amending an annual budget, legal business, and other matters requiring the attention of the membership. All meetings must have at least 2 Sundays notice, announced in the church, online, or via bulletin.

 **Section 2: Quorum for meetings**

All meetings can be held with at least 25% of the church membership in attendance and a ratification approval of 75% of those in attendance.

**ARTICLE 4: Amendments:**

**Section 1: amendments to Bylaws**

The foregoing bylaws may be amended at any legal business meeting of the church by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of those present and voting. The amendment must be announced and discussed at a church service or special members meeting, announced for two more weeks, and then voted on a minimum of 14 days after announcement. A quorum of 50% of the current membership is required to amend the Constitution.

**ARTICLE 5: FINANCIAL**

**Section 1: Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of this church shall begin January 1st and end on December 31st.

**Section 2: Financial Policy**

All monies for the support of the church and its missionary enterprises are to be raised on the biblical principle of tithes and offerings. Other forms of fund raising may be allowed with approval of the Board of Elders.

**ARTICLE 6: QUALIFICATIONS AND RELIGIOUS GROUNDS FOR LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

**Section 1: General qualifications**

Called to Leadership: 1 Timothy 3:1

Above Reproach: Having an established reputation of living a Biblically consistent lifestyle. 1 Timothy 3:2

Peaceable lifestyle: Living a life that leads to biblical humility. 1 Timothy 3:3

Husband of one wife: Greek literally means “One woman man”. Divorce cannot be recent, as an established pattern of leading well is necessary for leadership. Past divorce demonstrated a time of healing, and a process of restoration. 1 Timothy 3:4-5

Established Walk in Christ (timeframe). Not a new believer: 1 Timothy 3:6

Walk with Christ is evident to others: 1 Timothy 3:7

Agree with church statement of faith.

**Section 2: Senior Pastor**

The Senior Pastor must meet the character qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4 and must, by conviction, agree with the Statement of Faith and abide by the Constitution and Policy and Procedures. The Senior Pastor will be male only.

The Senior Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite term by three-fourths vote of the members present and voting at a legally called meeting. Said meeting shall be held as soon as possible following the completion of his candidacy. One candidate at a time is to be presented to the church for a vote.

**Section 3: Pastoral Staff**

All pastoral staff must meet the character qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and I Peter 5:1-4 and must, by conviction, agree with the Statement of Faith and abide by the Constitution and Policy and Procedures. Pastoral staff will be male only.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Elders to be the search committee for Pastoral Staff or to delegate this task. They shall also establish the ministry description. The Elders shall make their recommendations to the church body for a vote. Pastoral Staff shall be elected for an indefinite term by three-fourths vote of the members present and voting at a legally called meeting.

**Section 4: Ministry Leadership**

Ministry leadership is described as someone empowered by the elders to lead a specific ministry. Ministry leadership positions must meet the character qualifications as spelled out in Section 6.1 and may be male or female. It is the responsibility of the Board of Elders to be the search committee for ministry staff or to delegate this task. They shall also be responsible to establish the ministry description. The Board of Elders shall have the responsibility for establishing, hiring, firing, or eliminating ministry staff positions.

**All staff,** paid or otherwise**,** can only perform services of marriage according to Biblical definition Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:5-6 where one woman and one man are joined.

**ARTICLE 7: DUE DILIGENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS, MINISTRY AND STAFF**

* Elders must approve all volunteers who have connection with children.
* Elders must examine the walk of the volunteer.
* Elders will run background checks as needed.

**ARTICLE 8: Officers of the Corporation**

 **Section 1:** Trustees are voted in by member vote of 2/3rds vote, called and presented by the Elder board of the church.

Three (3) Trustees shall hold title to, manage and control all real estate owned by the church, provided that all such property shall be used, managed and controlled for the sole and exclusive use and benefit of the church. The Trustees shall have the right, power and authority to perform the following tasks, provided that the members of the church shall first approve all such conveyances and transactions by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present at a business meeting of the church called by the Elders.

* Buy real estate for the use and benefit of the church
* Sell, exchange, transfer and/or convey any real estate belonging to the church
* Borrow money and pledge or mortgage any real estate belonging to the church for the repayment of loans.
* Make any single expenditure of funds.
* Execute all necessary deeds, promissory notes, and other documents on behalf of the church, in their capacities as Trustees, which shall be fully binding upon the church.

There is no term limit for Trustees of the Corporation; however, they must continue as members in good standing to remain as Trustees.

**Section 2: Church Clerk**

Church clerk shall be duly appointed, by Elder Board, to serve as needed and where needed to meet the requirements for filing and records of the state.

**Section 3: Church Treasurer**

Church treasurer shall be duly appointed by the Elder Board to serve and manage the finances of the church.

**ARTICLE 9: Private Gain:**

**Section 1: Earnings**

 No part of the net earnings or assets of the church shall inure to the benefit of its individual members, officers or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions to accomplish the purposes.

**Section 2: Dissolution**

In the event of dissolution of the church, the members shall (after making provision for payment of all liabilities of the church) dispose of all the assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operating exclusively for religions purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Code) as the Board of Elders shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to organizations that agree with the church’s statement of faith.

**Section 3: Sale of Buildings and Land**

If it becomes necessary to sell buildings or land owned by the Pleasant Street Baptist Church, the final decision shall be made by a 2/3 vote of members present and voting at a legally called business meeting.