

**CONSTITUTION**  
*of the*  
**RICE LAKE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
RICE LAKE, WISCONSIN

*Adopted by the membership on October 23, 2011*

**Preamble**

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants to unite here in Rice Lake, Wisconsin under the name Rice Lake Baptist Church of Rice Lake, Wisconsin for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and He has sustained and prospered this work to the present day; and

Whereas we, the members of Rice Lake Baptist Church, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Spirit, have recognized the need to reconstitute ourselves to more closely conform to His will for the Church in this age and prepare ourselves for greater efforts in His name; Now therefore we, the members of Rice Lake Baptist Church, do hereby organize ourselves and adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in the Second London Baptist Confession (1689).

**Article 1 – Name**

The name of this church is Rice Lake Baptist Church of Rice Lake, Wisconsin, Incorporated.

**Article 2 – Purpose**

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through:

- Worshipping Him
- Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study
- Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture
- Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work, local, domestic, and international
- Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion
- Encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers
- Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ

**Article 3 – Membership**

Section 1 – Qualifications

The membership process allows a means of maintaining the purity of Rice Lake Baptist Church and ensuring the administration of pastoral care (1 Peter 1:15,16). Rice Lake Baptist Church receives as members those who evidence faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Each member is expected to exercise personal and corporate study of all tenets of the Rice Lake Baptist Church Statement of Faith and not to undermine the

doctrine and practice reflected in the Constitution and Statement of Faith of Rice Lake Baptist Church.

We are a Baptist church and believe that water baptism is symbolic of the Christian's spiritual union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4). According to the Biblical pattern, a new Christian should be baptized after conversion at the earliest convenient time as an expression of personal faith in Christ and identification with the people of God. Full immersion is consistent with New Testament practice (Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:10, Acts 8:36-40).

A person desiring to be baptized should contact one of the Elders, who will arrange a meeting with the candidate at the earliest convenient time. At least two Elders are to interview the candidate to hear his profession of faith. The candidate for baptism should demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of sin, repentance, substitutionary atonement, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Particular care should be taken to ensure that the candidate understands the meaning of baptism as an important act of obedience and outward profession, but is not a condition of salvation. In addition, those conducting the interview should look for the fruit of faith and repentance as expected in the life of a believer. If the men conducting the interview determine that some of these issues remain unclear after the first meeting, further instruction and additional meetings may be required. Children who seek baptism must meet the same requirements as adults. If the one desiring baptism gives a credible profession of faith, arrangements shall be made for a public baptism service at the earliest convenient time. Baptisms shall be conducted under the supervision of the Elders. Before the candidate is baptized, he or she is to be given opportunity to give a public profession of faith in Christ either through a testimony or by answering questions asked by the one performing the baptism.

#### Section 2 – Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission and accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

#### Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership

- Each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God.
- Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders.
- Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for administrative purposes and professional consultation.
- This church is governed by Christ under the direction of elders by the consent of its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on major financial matters (such as the annual budget and land purchases), the election of officers, decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted by the elders to a vote.

#### Section 4 – Associate Membership

Students and others temporarily residing in the Rice Lake area who are members of an evangelical church may apply for associate membership. Qualifications are identical to

those for full membership as set out above, except that home church membership must be retained. A letter of commendation will be sought from the applicant's home church.

Prospective members who regard an alternate form of baptism (e.g. infant baptism) as valid may also apply for associate membership if they see the importance of accountability to a local church and if they attach no saving merit to the rite. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership as set out above, but they will be encouraged to study the Biblical support for believer baptism by immersion and to pursue full membership.

Duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for other members except that: (a) when absent from the Rice Lake area for extended periods of time they are released from the responsibility to attend our church services; (b) while they will be encouraged to participate in members' meetings they will not be eligible to stand for any office or to vote; (c) would be allowed to teach in the church upon meeting with and gaining the approval of the elders. Termination of associate membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other members, except that the elders shall notify the pastor or elders of the home church (if any) of that termination. Associate membership of temporary residents will normally terminate immediately upon the ending of the period of residence in the Rice Lake area.

#### Section 5 – On Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5). God's purpose of church discipline is repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15:5; 29:15; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26-27; 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13-14; James 1:22); For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24-25); For the purity of the church as a whole (see 1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 2 Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2); For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1-14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 2 John 3:10); and Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18:17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5-6; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12).

#### Section 6 – Termination of Membership

Upon the death of a member that person's name shall be removed from the membership roll. The church shall also recognize the termination of a person's membership after he

or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the elders) upon the vote of at least three fourths of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. If an individual resigns from membership while under church discipline, that information will be duly noted by the church clerk in official church records.

## **Article 4 - Meetings**

### Section 1 – Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held regularly each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the elders determine.

### Section 2 – Members' Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. There shall be a regular members' meeting at least every quarter, at some time apart from a public worship service. An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members. Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present. A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members' meeting not more than three months after the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level. At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met. Special members' meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of five percent of the voting membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

## **Article 5 – Officers**

### Section 1 – Summary

The Biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. These two offices are staffed from the membership by congregational vote as outlined elsewhere in this constitution. The church treasurer, clerk, financial secretary and all other administrative positions shall be appointed as needed by the elders. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

### Section 2 – Elders and their authority

The elders shall be comprised of not less than three men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock. The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders.

This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church every four years, including the senior or associate pastors. Terms of service may be adjusted so that generally not more than fifty percent of the elders' terms expire in the same year. After an elder, other than the senior or associate pastor(s), has served two consecutive four-year terms, he may only be elected to the office of elder after at least one year. In the event that there are no qualified candidates to fill the vacant office of elder, the term may be extended in one-year increments until a qualified candidate can be secured. An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. In the event that the number of non-vocational elders is less than two, the elders shall seek input from the deacons in the exercise of their oversight and management of the affairs of the congregation. This shall be done in order to enhance the decision-making process and promote quality care of the congregation.

Because the elders' authority is human authority exercised in the house of God, this office comes with both high privileges and important limitations:

- As members of the church, elders are answerable to each other and to the other church members. Therefore, each individual elder is entitled to the same privileges, obligated by the same responsibilities, and subject to the same discipline as are all the other members of the church.
- Any two church members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21.
- Since eldership is a divinely-delegated authority, elders are also answerable to God for the exercise of this authority (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17). Therefore, elders are obligated to discharge all of the duties specified by God in the Scriptures (Matthew 18:17; 23:9; 26:31; Acts 20:17ff; 2 Corinthians 11:19-20; Galatians 2:11; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4; 3 John 9-10).
- When they exercise this authority, they must do so only through the humble ministry of God's Word (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Hebrews 13:17).
- The authority of the elders does not include the right to make certain decisions unilaterally. In major decisions of church life (such as the election of officers, the calling of senior and associate pastors and acquisition of property), the local church as a whole has a voice (Acts 6:2-6; 9:26; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; 13; 2 Corinthians 2:6). Yet the elders must provide definitive leadership to the church in the making of such decisions.
- The authority of the elders is limited to the sphere of the local church. Thus, they will not encourage the punishments for the sins of members beyond those of biblical church discipline, will not invade the biblically-defined spheres of other divinely-ordained human authorities (husbands, fathers, civil rulers, and employers), and will not command God's people regarding matters not specified in Scripture except to order the house of God by the application of His Word (Matthew 22:21; Luke 12:13-14; Acts 20:28; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Corinthians 7:25-28, 35-40; Ephesians 5:22-6:9; 1 Peter 5:3a).
- The authority of every elder is the same. Thus, every elder has equal rule in the church. Though gifts possessed and functions performed will vary from elder to elder, this diversity must not undermine real parity/equality among the elders (Act. 20:17, 28; Gal. 2:11; 1Ti. 5:17; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1Pe. 5:1-2).

- In the interest of order, the senior pastor shall retain the prerogative of serving as the chairman of the board of elders.
- A majority of the active eldership shall be composed of church members not in the regular pay of the church, and no elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure. The elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church.
- The elders shall be considered the corporate board of directors of the corporation according to the incorporation laws of Wisconsin. If there are less than three elders, then the elders will appoint another member from the congregation to serve as director.

### Section 3 – Elders and their responsibility

The elders shall take particular responsibility to:

- The elders shall examine and instruct prospective members.
- The elders shall examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions.
- The elders shall oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees.
- The elders shall oversee worship services.
- The elders shall oversee the administration of the ordinances of baptism and communion.
- The elders shall equip the membership for the work of the ministry.
- The elders shall encourage sound doctrine and practice.
- The elders shall admonish and correct error.
- The elders shall oversee the process of church discipline.
- The elders shall coordinate and promote the ministries of the church.
- The elders shall mobilize the church for world missions.
- The elders shall ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our core convictions.
- The elders shall establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- The elders shall propose funding for new paid staff positions. Candidates to fill the positions of senior and associate pastor shall have congregational approval. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.
- The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.
- Each year the elders, in conjunction with the deacons, shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a specially-called budget meeting and called up for a vote at the following members' meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.
- The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings.
- For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of Wisconsin, the elders shall elect one of their number to serve as the president of the corporation.

### Section 4 – The Senior Pastor

The senior pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called

to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 3. He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

#### Section 5 – Associate Pastors

The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of associate. An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out in Article 5, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 4. He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders.

#### Section 6 – Assistant Pastors

The church may call additional pastors, from within the congregation only, whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of assistant. An assistant pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall be subject to the triennial reaffirmation and term limitation set out in Article 5, section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 5. He shall assist the senior pastor and associate pastor(s) in the performance of their regular duties, and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor. The elders shall define the responsibilities of the assistant pastor(s).

#### Section 7 – Senior Pastoral Assistants

The elders may hire additional staff to assist with pastoral ministry, designated as senior pastoral assistants. These shall not be pastors, though they may be recognized as elders should they be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation, in accordance with Article 5, Section 2. The elders shall define the responsibilities of the senior pastoral assistant(s). They shall serve at the will of the elders for an initial term up to four years, though that term may be extended with the approval of the elders.

#### Section 8 – Pastoral Assistants

The senior pastor may hire additional staff to assist with pastoral ministry, designated as pastoral assistants. These shall not be pastors, though they may be recognized as elders should they be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation, in accordance with Article 5, Section 2. The senior pastor shall assign the responsibilities of the pastoral assistant(s). They shall serve at the will of the senior pastor for a term of one year, though that term may be extended with the approval of the elders.

#### Section 9 – Deacons

The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 and Acts 6:1–7.

- The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons.
- In addition to the specific responsibilities listed below, the role of the deacon is to serve the elders, freeing them to fulfill their primary role of prayer and the ministry of the word. God's design of the office of deacon serves to put down dissension in the church.
- They shall be elected to two terms lasting for a maximum of three years and may only be elected to another term after one year. In the event that there are no qualified candidates to fill the vacant office of deacon, the term may be extended in one-year increments until a qualified candidate can be secured.
- The deacons shall meet on a regular basis. The elders shall be informed of all deacon meetings and invited to send a representative to such meetings. The deacons will submit a copy of the minutes of their meetings to the elders. In the interest of efficient function, the deacons may choose necessary leaders from among their number.
- Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, including caretaker and stewardship responsibilities over all church properties, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration.
- The deacons, under the leadership of the elders, shall assist in preparing an itemized annual budget that will be presented to the church each year for approval.
- The deacons shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.
- The deacons, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

#### Section 10 – Clerk

It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the pastor, the elders, the deacons, or the church. The clerk shall be appointed by the elders. For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of Wisconsin, the clerk shall serve as the secretary of the corporation.

The clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members.

#### Section 11 – Treasurer

The treasurer shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each members' meeting. The responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or

agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church. The treasurer shall be appointed by the elders. For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of Wisconsin, the treasurer shall serve as the treasurer of the corporation.

#### Section 12 – Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall be appointed by the elders. The financial secretary shall assist the treasurer in counting the offerings and keep a permanent record of the same. He/she shall keep a confidential record of the giving of individuals by check or envelope and furnish upon request receipts or annual reports to individuals. The records of all individual gifts shall be kept confidential. The financial secretary shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, a written report. In the absence of the treasurer the financial secretary shall be authorized to disburse funds from church accounts. All books, records, and receipts of this office are the property of the church and must be surrendered upon termination of office or at the request of the elders.

### **Article 6 – Elections**

#### Section 1 – Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles: Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process; Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders; All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members; The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Section 2 – Selection of Officers

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as elders and deacons shall be presented by the elders at the previous members' meeting (providing that previous meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator. The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting. The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a 75% majority of all votes cast for the office of elder. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast. The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

#### Section 3 – Calling of the Senior Pastor

In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential senior pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement

of Faith. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as senior pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

#### Section 4 – Calling of Associate Pastor

In the calling of any man to the position of associate pastor, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential associate pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith. Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as associate pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

#### Section 5 – Calling of Assistant Pastor

The calling of any man to the position of assistant pastor requires that that man have been recognized and called by the congregation to the office of elder, according to the process described in Article 6, Section 2. Such a man may then be called by the elders to serve as assistant pastor with defined duties for a fixed period of time specified by the elders in the terms of his call.

### **Article 7 – Finances**

- The fiscal year of the church shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31 of each year.
- The books of the church treasurer and any auxiliary organization treasurers are subject to review or audit at any time as requested by the elders.
- No money shall be raised by the church or an auxiliary organization except by freewill giving. Exceptions may be granted by the elders.
- No financial obligation shall be placed upon the church either as a mortgage, note, or outstanding bill, or in any other form unless money is in hand to meet the same, except by corporate act of the church. However, the elders shall have the authority to make reasonable and proper expenditures up to 3% without special permission from the church.
- The elders, after consultation with the deacons, shall determine and annually review staff employment arrangements such as, but not restricted to, salary, allowances, benefits, vacations, holidays, absences from the pulpit for extra-church ministries, sick leave, study leave, emergency leave, training seminars, denominational conferences, etc. These employment arrangements shall be made within the boundaries of the annual budget.

### **Article 8 – Indemnification**

#### Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c)

in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

#### Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification

At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

#### Section 3 – Procedure

If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

### **Article 9 – Dispute Resolution**

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 6:1-8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities.

### **Article 10 – Statement of Faith**

Rice Lake Baptist Church is in substantial agreement with the Second London Baptist Confession of 1689.

### **Article 11 – Amendments**

This Constitution and Statement of Faith may be amended by a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote. This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote. The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members by the church clerk.