

**CONSTITUTION  
of  
Elim Baptist Church  
503 Polk Avenue  
Anoka, Minnesota 55303**

**ARTICLE I  
NAME**

The name of this church shall be ***The Elim Baptist Church of Anoka, Minnesota*** (hereinafter referred to as “Elim” or the “church”), a Minnesota not-for-profit corporation.

**ARTICLE II  
MISSION AND VISION**

The mission of Elim is to reach unbelievers at home and abroad and teach them to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. This mission is actualized through Elim’s vision to be a church that exalts the LORD through worship, evangelizes to unbelievers, enfolds people into caring Biblical community, and edifies and equips believers to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

**Evangelism (Outreach)**

Involvement in our community through relationship building with the strategic purpose of seeking and acting upon opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with those who do not yet know Him personally.

**Enfolding (Shepherding)**

Intentional physical, relational, and spiritual care of everyone who seeks to become part of our faith community

**Edification (Instilling sound Biblical teaching)**

Building up members of our church family through sound instruction of Biblical knowledge with an emphasis on how the truth of God’s Word applies directly to our everyday lives.

**Equipping (Discipleship geared towards practical ministry application)**

The proactive mentoring of the members of our faith community with the purpose of helping them understand their unique role in the ministry of our church.

**Exaltation (Worship)**

Encouraging the congregation of our church to live lives of obedience to the Lord combined with encouraging a life of praise and reverence towards God.

### **ARTICLE III CONSTITUTION**

**A. Supersedure**

This Constitution supersedes any prior constitutions, which Elim may have adopted.

**B. Interpretation**

The Council of Elders (hereinafter referred to as “Elders”) shall be the official interpreters of the Constitution of Elim.

**C. Manual of Operations**

Elim shall have a Manual of Operations, which provides detailed guidelines concerning the operation of Elim. The Manual of Operations shall be separate from and subordinate to the Constitution.

### **ARTICLE IV AFFILIATIONS**

Elim is voluntarily affiliated with the Minnesota Baptist Conference and the Baptist General Conference. Elim may choose to affiliate with such other Christian organizations whose mission and vision are consistent with that of Elim, and which allow Elim to remain an independent, autonomous Baptist church. Establishment or dissolution of affiliation with a denomination shall require a 2/3 majority vote at a meeting with no less than 25% of the active membership in attendance.

### **ARTICLE V DOCTRINAL STATEMENT AND STANDARDS**

(As adopted by the Baptist General Conference in 1951, and amended in 1998.)

**A. The Word of God**

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

**B. The Trinity**

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.

**C. God the Father**

We believe in God, the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of each

person, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ.

**D. Jesus Christ**

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth.

**E. The Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

**F. Regeneration**

We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

**G. The Church**

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible confession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.

**H. Christian Conduct**

We believe that Christians should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others; that their conduct should be blameless before the world; that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions; and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.

**I. The Ordinances**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**J. Religious Liberty**

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

**K. Church Cooperation**

We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches.

Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with interdenominational fellowships on a voluntary basis.

**L. The Last Things**

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked.

**ARTICLE VI  
CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led by the Holy Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and to confess Him as Lord, and, on the profession of this faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully covenant with one another, as one body in Christ, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him.

We promise, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to forsake the ways of sin and to walk together in Christian love and in the paths of righteousness. We promise to strive together for both the peace and purity of this church; to sustain its worship and steadfastly to cherish and hold its ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute, as faithful stewards, of our time, talent and money, in the measure that God prospers each of us, so that the work of the local church and the world-wide ministry of spreading the Gospel may be faithfully and effectively discharged.

We promise to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in all our dealings, faithful to our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further promise to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We also agree that when we move from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some local church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of the Word of God.

**ARTICLE VII  
GOVERNANCE**

The head of Elim is Jesus Christ. As a church body, no decision should ever be made that would knowingly contradict any of Jesus' teaching. The government of this church is vested in the membership of the church. As a self-governing body, the membership shall delegate its

authority for governing the church to the Elders. The membership shall retain the authority to approve or reject by congregational vote the following:

1. The call and terms of call of the Senior Pastor;
2. The dismissal and terms of the dismissal of the Senior Pastor;
3. The annual operating budget of the church;
4. Entry of the church into any contracts. (It is understood that once the members approve an annual operating budget, obligations and contracts in connection with spending the budgeted moneys may be entered into without obtaining additional approval of the members.)
5. The lease, purchase, conveyance, or disposal of any real property;
6. Amendments or revisions to this Constitution;
7. The election of officers of the church, the Deaconry, and the Moderator;
8. The dismissal of Elders, except that the Elders may dismiss one of its own members independent of action or approval by the church membership;
9. The establishment or dissolution of affiliation with a denomination; and
10. The delegation of governing authority in the event that the number or ratio of Elders cannot be maintained or fails to meet the requirements of Article VIII.C.

## ARTICLE VIII ORGANIZATION

A. **Officers:** The corporate officers of Elim shall be a Church Chairman, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Recording Secretary/Clerk. The Chairman of the Elders shall preside as Church Chairman and shall be the chief executive officer of this non-profit corporation. In the absence of the Church Chairman, the Vice Chairman of the Elders shall assume his responsibilities.

There shall also be the elected positions of Moderator, Assistant Treasurer, Assistant Financial Secretary, Assistant Recording Secretary/Clerk. The Assistant Treasurer, Assistant Financial Secretary, and Assistant Recording Secretary /Clerk shall assist in such duties in their respective areas as may be delegated to them. They shall, in the absence of the officers they assist, assume the duties and responsibilities of those officers.

With the exception of the Church Chairman, these positions shall be filled by election at the annual business meeting.

1. Eligibility. All officers shall be active members of Elim in good standing, meeting the responsibilities of membership.
2. Nomination. With the exception of the Church Chairman, nominees shall be selected by a duly established Nominating Committee consisting of two Elders, two Deaconry members, and three members at large. Any member may notify the Nominating Committee of someone who may meet the qualifications for these positions. The slate of nominees shall be subject to approval by the Elders and shall be posted no later than two weeks prior to the date of the annual meeting.

3. Term of Office. With the exception of Treasurer and Financial Secretary, church officers shall be elected for a term of one year. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary shall each be elected to a two-year term, staggered such that their terms do not both expire in the same year. No officer shall serve more than six consecutive years.
4. Resignation. An officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Elders.
5. Removal. Any officer may be removed by either of the following:
  - a. A vote to do so by 2/3 of the Elders; or
  - b. A vote to do so by 75% of the members voting at a meeting in which a quorum of at least 25% of the active church membership is present.
6. Responsibilities.
  - a. The Church Chairman shall be the chief executive officer of this non-profit corporation. He shall:
    - 1) Preside as Chairman of the Council of Elders;
    - 2) See that all orders and resolutions of the Council of Elders are carried into effect;
    - 3) Perform such other duties as from time to time are prescribed by the Council of Elders.
    - 4) In the absence of the Church Chairman, the Vice-Chairman of the Council of Elders shall assume his responsibilities.
  - b. The Treasurer shall:
    - 1) Be responsible for making payments and disbursements of church funds consistent with the approved Operating Budget and in accordance with other directives and approvals under the guidelines of the Constitution and Manual of Operations;
    - 2) Maintain complete and accurate records of such disbursements and of the assets and liabilities of the church;
    - 3) Provide regular and/or special reports of the status of accounts and transactions of their office to the Council of Elders, Deaconry, and church as may be required;
    - 4) Reconcile bank accounts, working closely with the Financial Secretary as necessary to identify and correct accounting errors.
  - c. The Financial Secretary shall:
    - 1) Be responsible for receiving, counting, recording, and depositing of all moneys received by the church;
    - 2) Provide regular and/or special reports of the status of accounts and transactions of his office to the Treasurer, Council of Elders, Deaconry, and church as may be required;
    - 3) Provide to donors periodic reports of donations and other receipts annually and as may be requested.
    - 4) Assure that the confidentiality of individual donors is honored and maintained.

- d. The Recording Secretary/Clerk shall be responsible for:
    - 1) Recording and maintaining the minutes of all church business meetings;
    - 2) Maintaining up-to-date official records of church membership, baptisms, marriages, births, and deaths;
    - 3) Issuing letters of membership transfer and other official correspondence of the church as authorized by the Council of Elders.
  - e. The Assistant Treasurer, Assistant Financial Secretary, and Assistant Recording Secretary/Clerk shall assist in such duties in their respective areas as may be delegated to them. They shall, in the absence of the officers they assist, assume the duties and responsibilities of those officers.
7. Accountability. All officers shall be accountable in the performance of their duties to the Elders and/or the membership.

**B. Moderator**

A Moderator shall be elected by the eligible voting membership at the annual business meeting. The intended purpose of the Moderator is that of a neutral process facilitator. In the absence of the Moderator, the Church Chairman or his appointee shall fulfill the duties of the Moderator.

- 1. Eligibility. The Moderator shall be an active member of Elim.
- 2. Nomination. Nominees for this position shall be selected by the Nominating Committee and be included on the proposed ballot for church officers at the annual meeting, posted two weeks prior to the annual business meeting.
- 3. Term of Office. The Moderator shall be elected to a term of one year, and may be re-elected to an unlimited number of consecutive terms.
- 4. The Moderator shall:
  - a. Moderate and facilitate the business meetings of the church, ensuring proper conduct of these meetings consistent with Robert's Rules of Order and Elim's Constitution and Manual of Operations.
  - b. In consultation with the Church Chairman, ensure proper scheduling of meetings, notification of members, and agenda preparation.
  - c. The Moderator may choose to abstain from voting, as necessary to preserve their position of neutrality.
  - d. In the absence of the Moderator, the Church Chairman or his appointee shall fulfill the duties of the Moderator.
- 5. Resignation. The Moderator may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Elders.
- 6. Removal. The Moderator may be removed by either of the following:
  - a. A vote to do so by 2/3 of the Elders; or
  - b. A vote to do so by 75% of the members voting at a meeting in which a quorum of at least 25% of the active membership is present.

**C. Elders**

The Council of Elders shall consist of a minimum of five men, including the Senior Pastor, who meet the Biblical qualifications for Elder as stated in 1 Timothy and Titus. A minimum ratio of two active non-staff Elders to every staff Elder (such as Senior Pastor) shall be maintained.

1. Appointment. Elders shall be appointed by the Council of Elders, except as noted in Paragraph 'e' below. Elders may be added to the Council at any time.
  - a. Any member may notify the Elders of someone who may meet the qualifications for and aspires to serve the church as an Elder.
  - b. The Elders shall initiate the selection process, which shall include an extensive, in-depth evaluation and observation of the prospective Elder(s).
  - c. A period of time shall be provided for the congregation to evaluate and provide input concerning the qualifications of the prospective Elder(s).
  - d. After thorough and careful evaluation, and upon receiving unanimous approval by the active Elders, the candidate shall be appointed as Elder.
  - e. In the event that an entirely new Council of Elders is being installed, such as the first Elders to serve under this Constitution, the Elders shall be elected by the church membership.
    - 1) An Elder Selection Committee shall be elected by the membership from a slate of nominees which has been previously reviewed and approved by the Deaconry.
    - 2) The Elder Selection Committee shall identify those men who may qualify for the position of Elder and, after completing the selection process as described in Paragraph 'b' and 'c' above, shall present a list of prospective Elders to the membership for approval.
    - 3) Approval shall be by secret ballot and shall require a 75% positive vote of the votes cast at a meeting in which a quorum of at least 25% of the membership is present and voting.
2. Term. Each Elder shall hold office until he resigns or is removed by the Council of Elders or by the church membership.
3. Leaves From Active Service (non-staff Elders).
  - a. It is recommended that an Elder should take a sabbatical leave of one year after each five years of consecutive service, although this is not mandatory.
  - b. An Elder may request that the Council of Elders consider granting him a leave of absence at any time for reasons which make it difficult or impossible for him to carry out his duties, such as poor health.
  - c. Elders on sabbatical leave or leave of absence shall be classified as 'inactive Elders' and shall not vote on matters that come before the Council of Elders.
  - d. The Council of Elders shall assure that the minimum number and ratio of active Elders are maintained.
4. Responsibilities. The Elders shall:



- a. Accept the responsibility for and authority to superintend all areas of congregational life and the total program of the ministry of Elim;
  - b. Serve the church in building up the members in spiritual maturity, Christ-likeness, and unity, and equipping them to employ their spiritual gifts for ministry;
  - c. Oversee and be accountable for the business affairs of this corporation;
  - d. Delegate authority to Deacons/Deaconesses and others as shall be needed to carry out the specific ministries of the church;
  - e. Retain the authority to dismiss Deacons/Deaconesses, team leaders, etc., and to overturn decisions or appointments of the Deaconry, ministry teams, committees, etc.;
  - f. Evaluate and approve candidates for baptism and/or membership;
  - g. Facilitate and assure the proper administration of the Lord's Supper;
  - h. Be responsible for determining when church discipline is necessary and administering appropriate disciplinary measures with Christian love and with a goal of restoration and/or reconciliation of the member(s) involved;
  - i. Facilitate and assure the development of the annual budget of the church (including the budgets of any subsidiary operations, such as Elim Christian Day Care), and approve this budget before it is submitted to the church membership for adoption;
  - j. Conduct a performance review of the Senior Pastor at least annually;
  - k. Administer Elim's benevolent funds;
  - l. Organize with a:
    - 1). Chairman (who is the Elder elected as Church Chairman as described in Paragraph A.1 of this article);
    - 2). Vice-Chairman
  - m. Assure that an accurate and complete record of the minutes of meetings of the Council of Elders is maintained;
  - n. Keep the congregation well informed concerning its work and provide opportunity for the membership to express its concerns or congratulations.
5. Resignation. An Elder may resign from the Elders at any time by giving written notice to the Elders.
6. Removal. An Elder may be removed from the Elders by any of the following:
- a) A vote to do so by 2/3 of the Elders. (The Elder under consideration shall not have a vote); or
  - b) A vote to do so by 75% of the members voting at a meeting in which a quorum of at least 25% of the active church membership is present; or
  - c) Constitutional mandate as described in Paragraph E.1.c.2 of this article.

**D. Deaconry**

The Deaconry shall consist of an unspecified number of men and women who meet the requirements of I Timothy 3:1-13 and provide leadership in carrying out Elim's ministries.

1. Eligibility. Deaconry members must be active members of Elim.

2. Selection. Deaconry members shall be elected by the membership at the annual meeting or other properly scheduled business meeting.
  - a. The Elders, with input from the Deaconry, shall determine the number of Deaconry members that shall be needed, identifying Elim's key ministry areas and assuring that Deaconry leadership is provided for those areas.
  - b. The Deaconry shall nominate candidates for Deaconry member, subject to approval by the Elders. The slate of nominees shall be posted no later than two weeks prior to the meeting in which the election is to be held.
  - c. Any member may notify the Deaconry of someone who may meet the qualifications for and aspires to serve the church as a Deaconry member.
3. Term. The term of office for Deaconry members shall be one year, except in special cases when a shorter term may be appropriate as determined by the Elders. Deaconry members may be re-elected on a yearly basis and are encouraged but not required to take at least one year off after six consecutive years of service.
4. Responsibilities. The responsibilities of the Deaconry shall be to carry out the ministries of Elim in a manner consistent with the vision and directives of the Council of Elders. They shall assist the Council of Elders by performing services of advice, administration, and implementation. They shall:
  - a. Organize themselves however they determine best to carry out their responsibilities and to achieve the mission of the church. The Elders or the Deaconry may designate any specific Deacon/Deaconess or group of Deacons/Deaconesses to specialize in some particular Deaconry function.
  - b. Meet on a regular basis (at least quarterly) to facilitate communication, coordination, and cooperation so that the various ministry activities and use of church resources are managed in an effective and efficient manner;
  - c. Provide summary reports to the Elders at least quarterly. The Elders shall determine the level of detail needed and may choose to meet jointly with the Deaconry.
  - d. Assure that an accurate and complete record of the minutes of meetings of the Deaconry is maintained.
5. Resignation. Deaconry members may resign their appointments at any time upon written notification to the Elders.
6. Removal. A Deaconry member may be removed by either of the following:
  - a. A vote to do so by 2/3 of the Elders; or
  - b. A vote to do so by 75% of the members voting at a meeting in which a quorum of at least 25% of the active church membership is present.

**E. Church Staff**

The staff of this church shall include a Senior Pastor and such other staff members (pastoral and non-pastoral) as the Elders shall deem necessary and/or appropriate to meet the needs of the church.

1. Senior Pastor. The church shall have a Senior Pastor who shall be called and elected by the congregation, and who has devoted his vocational life to the full-time

ministry of The Word in the service of the church. The Senior Pastor shall be considered the shepherd leader in building up the body of believers. The Senior Pastor shall possess all the biblical qualifications of an Elder and shall serve as a full voting member of the Council of Elders.

- a. Selection and Call. The decision to extend a call to a Senior Pastor shall require evaluation and unanimous recommendation by a duly established Pulpit Committee, consisting of one Elder, one Deaconry member and no more than four (4) church members at large. A pastoral call will be extended following a 90% affirmative vote at a duly called business meeting upon at least two weeks prior notice to the church membership. The total number of ballots cast must equal at least 30% of the active church membership.
- b. Responsibilities: The primary tasks of the Senior Pastor shall be:
  - 1) The ministry, preaching, and teaching of the Word, with freedom of the pulpit within the confines and guidance of the Bible and the Holy Spirit;
  - 2) The training of the Elders, serving as a member of the Council of Elders;
  - 3) Administering the church ordinances;
  - 4) Providing general pastoral care for Elim members.
  - 5) Supervising associate pastoral staff and such other church staff as may be determined by the Council of Elders.
- c. Dissolving the Pastoral Relationship. Either the pastor or the church may dissolve the pastoral relationship upon written notice of not less than thirty nor more than ninety days, except by mutual agreement of both parties.
  - 1) The pastor's resignation shall be submitted to the Elders and shall be considered final unless withdrawn.
  - 2) A request for the pastor's resignation may be made by:

The recommendation of the majority of the active Elders; or a petition presented to the Elders, signed by at least 25% of the active membership. If the pastor chooses not to resign as requested, then:

    - The pastoral relationship may be dissolved by ballot vote at a duly called business meeting with at least two week's prior notice to the membership in writing or by bulletin. Dismissal shall require a simple majority vote, with a quorum of at least 30% of the active membership in attendance.
    - Should the recommendation of the majority of the Elders and/or the petition be overruled by the church membership, all Elders voting with the majority of the Council or signing the petition shall automatically relinquish their positions as Elders.

2. Other Staff. The Elders shall determine whether other pastoral or non-pastoral staff positions shall be established, and what the qualifications for the position shall be. The Elders may draw upon the Deaconry or other church members or committees for input in defining a new staff position.
  - a. Hiring.
    - 1) Assistant Pastors, Associate Pastors, and other pastoral staff members shall be hired by the Senior Pastor after consultation with and approval by the Elders.
    - 2) The Elders shall be responsible for the hiring of non-pastoral staff members. They may, at their discretion, delegate that responsibility to a staff member, Deaconry, committee, or church member.
  - b. Responsibilities: Church staff members shall operate under the general policies of the council of Elders and shall perform such duties as the Senior Pastor, Council of Elders, and their direct supervisor shall direct.
  - c. Resignation. Church staff members may resign at any time by providing written notification to the Senior Pastor or Elders. Pastoral and ministry-focused staff must provide at least 30-days' notice.
  - d. Dismissal/Termination. A church staff member may be terminated at any time by either:
    - 1) The Senior Pastor or their immediate supervisor after consultation with the Elders, or
    - 2) The Elders upon a 2/3 majority vote to do so.
  - e. Elder-Level Staff. The Elders may designate a staff position to be an "Elder Staff" position. The individual holding an Elder Staff position must meet the standards for Eldership and shall, by virtue of his position, serve as a member of the Elders.

#### **F. Subsidiary Operations**

The establishment and/or continuance of any subsidiary operation or unit of Elim (such as Elim Christian Day Care) shall be subject to the approval of the Elders and shall be subordinate to the governance of the church, authority for which is vested in the Elders.

1. It shall be fully integrated into the organizational structure of Elim.
2. It must be fully consistent with the mission and vision of Elim, as stated in this Constitution.
3. Its organizational structure, policies, practices, etc., shall be subject to approval by the Elders.
4. The Elders shall appoint/approve and/or employ such leaders as they may deem appropriate to lead the organization, and shall retain the authority to remove such leaders
5. All leaders, staff, and team members of such subsidiaries must be born-again Christians, unless specifically exempted by the Elders.

**G. Removal From Office**

Removal of any person from a voluntary or paid leadership position, including Senior Pastor, may be with or without cause.

**ARTICLE IX  
MEMBERS / MEMBERSHIP**

**A. Eligibility**

Any person who is a believer in Christ, who has been baptized by immersion after being born again through God the Holy Spirit, and who takes the Bible, God's Holy Word, as their rule of faith and practice for living, shall be eligible for membership in the church.

**B. Admission to Membership**

Qualified applicants may be admitted to membership at any time.

1. Application. A person may apply for membership by informing the Senior Pastor or any other Elder of their desire to become a member.
2. Qualification. The Elders shall appoint two or more Elders to interview the applicant concerning their Christian experience and life, and to report back to the Elders concerning the qualifications of the applicant. The report shall address whether the applicant:
  - a. Meets the eligibility requirements stated in Paragraph A of this article;
  - b. Has completed, or is willing to complete, Elim's membership instruction class (if appropriate based on the applicant's church background);
  - c. Agrees with Elim's Doctrinal Statement, Mission and Vision, and Church Covenant;
  - d. Is willing to actively participate in the life of the church and to contribute faithfully to the financial support of the church; and
  - e. Understands and accepts the Elder form of church governance under which Elim operates.
3. Approval. The Elders shall determine if the applicant shall be recommended for membership in Elim. A unanimous favorable vote by the Elders, with at least 2/3 of the Elders voting, shall be required for admission to membership. Upon recommendation, new members should be welcomed into the church at any meeting of the membership (business, worship, etc.).
4. Letters of transfer shall not be required and, if received, shall not supersede the process for qualification and admission to membership described above. Notification of membership shall be sent to a new member's former church.

**C. Responsibilities of Membership**

Each member of Elim is responsible for adhering to the Church Covenant. In addition, each member shall accept responsibility to:

1. Regularly attend the worship meetings and business meetings of the church;

2. Seek to discover and use their spiritual gifts in support of the mission and vision of Elim, through participation in the programs and activities of the church.
3. Contribute regularly to the financial support of the church through God's tithes and their offerings.

**D. Voting Privileges**

All active members in good standing who are at least 16 years of age shall be eligible to vote in any church business meetings except as noted elsewhere in this Constitution. Members may vote by absentee ballot in any church meeting, provided that the member has presented their ballot to the Recording Secretary/Clerk prior to the meeting. Voting by proxy is not permitted.

**E. Termination/Inactive Membership**

1. Transfer of Membership: Members in good standing shall, upon request, be granted a letter of transfer to another Baptist Church or letter of recommendation to unite with another church of like faith, which shall be valid for a period of six months from date of issue.
2. Voluntary Termination. Any member may voluntarily terminate their membership at any time by providing written notification to the Elders. In the absence of written notification to the Elders, a member shall be considered to have voluntarily terminated their membership if that member:
  - a. Has become a member of another local church; or
  - b. Has transferred their regular attendance to another local church; or
  - c. Has, by choice, been absent from Elim for a period of one year without communicating with the church or contributing to its support.
  - d. Members falling into one or more of the above categories (a., b., or c.) and who have not been officially removed from the membership roll shall be considered 'inactive' and shall not be eligible to vote in any church meetings.
  - e. After one year of inactive membership, the Elders shall contact the inactive member prior to potential removal of their name from the membership role.
3. Involuntary Termination. Any member may have their membership terminated by the Elders upon a vote to do so by 2/3 of the Elders. The Elders shall not, however, terminate a person's membership until after attempting to inform the person of the Elders' intention to vote on the matter.

**F. Grievances**

All cases of grievances between members shall be dealt with in accordance with the rules laid down in the 18<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Matthew, and no public complaint shall be heard until this course shall have been pursued.

**G. Discipline of Members**

The Elders shall be responsible for determining if and when discipline of a church member is necessary, and what disciplinary measures shall be taken, within the guidelines laid out in the New Testament (such as Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1-5).

1. The primary purpose of the disciplinary process shall be to bring about reconciliation of the member with the Lord and the church through confession, repentance, and forgiveness, resulting in restoration of the member's fellowship with the Lord and the church. (Galatians 6:1-5)
2. Refusal by a member to submit to disciplinary measures prescribed by the Elders, and/or to participate in good faith in the disciplinary process shall result in termination of membership. (Matthew 18:17)
3. Disciplinary termination of membership shall occur only after prayer and careful consideration by the Elders, and may, for example, be the result of one of the following:
  - a. Sinful conduct-when there is no confession and genuine repentance; or
  - b. A lifestyle which is inconsistent with Biblical standards and/or Elim's Statement of Faith or Church Covenant; or
  - c. Teaching which is inconsistent with the Bible and/or Elim's Doctrinal Statement of Faith; or
  - d. Other serious violations of, or contradictions with, Elim's Church Covenant, Doctrinal Statement, or Mission and Vision.

**ARTICLE X  
MEETINGS**

**A. For Worship**

The church shall meet regularly each Lord's Day for worship, the preaching of the Gospel, and Christian instruction. Other religious services may be scheduled as the conduct and advancement of the work of the church may require, subject to approval by the Elders.

The Lord's Supper is open to all believers in Christ and shall be observed monthly and at such other times as the Elders may determine.

**B. For Business**

1. Annual Meeting: An annual meeting of the church membership shall be held each year during the last month of the fiscal year. The date and time of the meeting shall be designated by the Moderator in consultation with the Elders. Items of business for the annual meeting shall include
  - a. Election of individuals to specified offices/positions (Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, Recording Secretary/Clerk, Moderator, and Deaconry)

1. The election ballot shall be subject to approval by the Council of Elders and posted not less than two (2) weeks prior to the date of the meeting.
  2. Those elected shall assume office the first day of the month following their election.
  - b. Presentation of a preliminary annual financial report, which should include 11 months actual data and projections for the 12<sup>th</sup> month. The completed annual financial report shall be made available to the membership by the end of the first month of the new fiscal year.
  - c. Approval and adoption of the annual budget.
  - d. Other necessary business.
2. Other Business Meetings.
- a. A quarterly meeting of the church membership shall be held each quarter during the first month of the fiscal quarter. The date and time of the meeting shall be designated by the Moderator in consultation with the Elders.
  - b. Other business meetings may be called by the Elders at any time. Announcement of such a meeting shall be made to the church membership at least one week preceding the meeting.
  - c. Upon written petition by at least 10% of the active membership, the Elders shall schedule a meeting, ensuring that the announcement of the time and purpose of the meeting shall be made to the church membership at least one week prior to the date of the meeting.

**C. Voting Decisions**

Unless otherwise specified, approval of church business matters shall require a simple majority of the eligible members voting. For matters requiring a greater approval margin or a stated quorum, the specific requirements stated in the pertinent section of this Constitution shall apply.

**D. Rules of Order**

Robert's Rules of Order, as last revised, shall be the parliamentary guide for the business proceedings of this church, except where they may conflict with this Constitution.

**ARTICLE XI  
FINANCIAL / RECORD KEEPING**

**A. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of this corporation shall be the twelve-month period commencing on June 1 and ending on May 31.



**B. Books and Records**

The Elders shall cause to be kept

1. Minutes of all church business meetings and meetings of the Elders, the Deaconry, and such other committees and organizations as the Elders shall direct;
2. Such other records and books of account as shall be necessary and appropriate to the conduct of the corporation's business.

**C. Accounting System and Audit**

The Elders shall cause an appropriate accounting system to be established and maintained, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applied on an annual basis.

The Elders shall cause the financial records and books of account to be reviewed or audited on an annual basis.

**ARTICLE XII  
AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION**

**A. Proposal to Amend**

A proposal to amend this constitution may originate in one of the following ways:

1. The Elders may prepare an amendment proposal; or
2. Any member may submit an amendment proposal to the Elders for review, who may then prepare an amendment proposal; or
3. A petition from at least 10% of the membership to amend the Constitution shall cause the proposed amendment to be presented to the membership for approval.

**B. Presentation of Amendments**

1. Proposed amendments to the Constitution shall be presented at the annual business meeting or other duly scheduled business meeting.
2. At least four weeks must pass between the initial presentation of a proposed amendment and the meeting in which the approval vote shall occur.

**C. Approval of Amendments**

1. Notice must be given to the active membership at least two weeks prior to the date of a meeting in which an amendment approval vote is to occur.
2. Approval of a proposed amendment shall require a 2/3 majority vote, with no less than 25% of the eligible membership voting.

### **ARTICLE XIII DISPOSITION OF CHURCH PROPERTY**

**A. Church Division**

In the event of a division of the church body, any Elim owned property will remain in the possession of the group that continues as Elim Baptist Church.

1. The group that abides by this Constitution shall be determined to continue being Elim Baptist Church, and thus the rightful owners of Elim property.
2. If there is a dispute over which group shall continue as Elim Baptist Church, and thus retain ownership, the matter shall be presented to the Minnesota Baptist Conference for a decision.
3. If no group qualifies to continue as Elim Baptist Church, then all Elim owned property shall be transferred to the Minnesota Baptist Conference.

**B. Dissolution**

In the event that this corporation shall cease to exist, all Elim owned property shall be transferred to the Minnesota Baptist Conference.

**C. Consolidation**

In the event that a consolidation with another church seems advisable, the Elders shall be authorized to negotiate the terms of such consolidation insofar as the property is concerned. The church membership must approve any terms recommended by the Elders, in accordance with church governance Article VII.5.

### **ARTICLE XIV LIABILITY**

No Elder, officer, nor any member of a board or committee of this church shall be personally or individually liable for any error or mistake, act, or omission for, or on behalf of, this church, occurring within the scope of his or her duty as an Elder, officer, board or committee member, except in the case of his or her willful misconduct or violation of law.