

# Maranatha Baptist Church Constitution

Amended on April 7, 2019



Maranatha Baptist Church  
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# Constitution of Maranatha Baptist Church

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## Article 1 – Name and Purpose

**Section 1:** The name of this church is Maranatha Baptist Church. It is an incorporated body under the laws of the commonwealth of Kentucky.

**Section 2:** The purpose of the Church shall be the preaching of the Gospel, personal evangelism, and to disciple and edify the saints. It shall seek to attain this end through public worship of God, consistent Christian living by its members, Missionary endeavors, and Biblically Based Christian Education.

## Article 2 – Statement of faith

**Section 1:** We believe that the Bible (Old and New Testaments) is the complete and verbally inspired Word of God, without error in its original manuscripts, and therefore our final authority. II Tim. 3:16-17 II Peter 1:19-21 Matt. 5:18. We define this as follows: We believe that all 66 books from Genesis to Revelation to be the only, inspired, infallible, inerrant, authoritative Word of God. God has preserved all His words for the English-speaking world in the Authorized King James Version. We believe the *Masoretic* (traditional) text of the Hebrew Old Testament and *Textus Receptus* (received) text of the Greek New Testament also to be the preserved word of God and were used as the Text to produce the King James Bible. We understand that the actual “original” writings no longer exist. Therefore, being that the King James Version of the Bible was based on and translated from preserved copies of those “originals” and no others, we accept by faith, with understanding, that the Bible for the English-speaking world is best represented by the Authorized King James Version. This will be the only official Bible of this church. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Psalm 12:6-7; Revelation 22:18-19; Matthew 24:35)

**Section 2:** We believe in one, living, eternal, and true God who exists in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Deut. 6:4 II Cor., 13:14 I John 5:7

We believe in God the Father, perfect in wisdom, measureless in power, Who hears and answers prayer, and saves all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. Isa. 6:3 Rom. 11:33 Matt. 19:26 Ps. 65:2 Rom. 10:13 I Tim. 2:4

We believe in God the Son, Jesus Christ, the true God and creator of all things; who became man by being born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died for the sins of the world, was buried, bodily rose from the grave, and literally ascended into Heaven. We believe in His personal, imminent, and pretribulational, premillennial coming for the saints, and in His subsequent return to the earth, with His saints, to set up His kingdom. I John 5:20 Eph. 3:9 Matt. 1:18-25 Heb. 4:15 I Cor. 15:3-4 Acts 1:9 I Thes. 4:13-18 Rev. 19:11-16

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment; indwells every believer at the moment he believes; baptizes all believers into the body of Christ, which is the Local Church, at their water baptism; and is the seal of every believer unto the day of redemption. John 16:7-11 I Cor. 12:12-14 Rom. 8:9 Eph. 1:13-14

**Section 3:** We believe that man was created in the image of God; but because of Adam’s sin, all are born with a sinful nature and separated from God by their sins; and that man is not able to please God apart from the new birth. Gen. 1:26 Ps. 51:5 Isa. 59:2 Rom. 8:8

**Section 4:** We believe in the necessity of the new birth, which involves faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ and repentance from our sins. We believe that the new birth is wholly of grace and not because of works; and that all who are saved are kept by God’s power and secure forever. John 3:3-7 Eph. 2:8-9 Acts 17:30 I Peter 1:5, 18-19

**Section 5:** We believe that Satan is a real person, the author of sin, and the open and declared enemy of God; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. Isa. 14:12-17 Matt. 25:41 I Pet. 5:8-9 Rev. 20:10

**Section 6:** We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men from the grave; the saved to an everlasting blessedness in Heaven, and the unsaved to everlasting torment in the Lake of Fire. Rev. 20:4-6 John 5:28-29 I Thes.4:16-17 Ps. 9:17

**Section 7:** We believe that the Church is the plan of God for carrying out His work in this age; that it is a group of baptized believers who are banded together to carry out the Great Commission. We believe that it has been given two ordinances – baptism by immersion and the Lord’s Table; and that evangelists and pastors and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today. Acts 2:41-47 Matt. 28:19-20 Eph. 4:11-12

**Section 8:** We are an independent, unaffiliated Baptist church. We believe in separation from all apostasy, scripturally forbidden alliances, and compromises – such as the World Council of Churches. II Cor. 1:14 II Tim. 3:5 Gal. 1:8-9 Jude 3-4

**Section 9:** We believe it is the responsibility of every Christian to grow in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and to separate from the world and its practices. II Pet. 3:18 I John 2:15-17

**Section 10:** Dispensationalism. We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man’s responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations—the law, the church, and the kingdom—are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture. (Gen. 1:28; 1 Cor. 9:17; 2 Cor. 3:9-18; Gal. 3:13-25; Eph. 1:10; 3:2-10; Col. 1:24-25, 27; Rev. 20:2-6)

**Section 11:** Creation. We believe that God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour periods. We reject evolution, the Gap Theory, the Day-Age Theory, and Theistic Evolution as unscriptural theories of origin. (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11)

**Section 12:** Civil Government. We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home, 2) the church, and 3) the government. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the government are equal and sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God. (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:13-14)

**Section 13:** Human Sexuality.

1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God’s gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one’s gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)

2. We believe that the term “marriage” has only one, legitimate meaning, and that is marriage sanctioned by God, which joins one man and one woman in a single, covenantal union, as delineated by Scripture. Marriage ceremonies performed in any facility owned, leased, or rented by this church will only be those ceremonies sanctioned by God, joining one man with one woman as that gender was determined at birth. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)

**Section 14: Family Relationships**

1. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12)
2. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are an heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching and training their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction. (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:6; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; I Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4, Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; I Pet. 3:1-7)

**Section 15: Divorce and Remarriage.** We believe that God disapproves of and forbids divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon. (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6)

**Section 16: Abortion.** We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)

**Section 17: Love.** We believe that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward both those who are not believers and those who oppose us. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently, and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or the use of violence as a means of resolving personal conflict or obtaining personal justice. Although God commands us to abhor sinful actions, we are to love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions. (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; 17-21; 13:8-10; Phil. 2:2-4; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; 1 John 3:17-18)

**Section 18:** Lawsuits between Believers. We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32)

**Section 19:** Missions. We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20)

**Section 20:** Giving. We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of the tithe once the gift has been made. We believe that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spreading of the Gospel. All designated offerings shall be used for their intended purpose if clearly stated by the contributor. The tithes, general offerings, and undesignated offerings will be used for the general budget of the church. Designated offerings (i.e. missions, building fund, debt retirement, academy, etc.) of the member shall be used for its intended purpose. The church reserves the right to refuse designated offerings at the Pastor and Deacon's discretion. (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17)

### Article 3 – Membership

**Section 1:** We believe there is no Scriptural evidence of a congregation "voting in" a member into the church. Applicants for membership shall be examined by the Pastor and Deacons and must:

- a. Give Scriptural evidence of being born again.
- b. Whole-heartedly agree to learn the Doctrinal Statement of this Church.
- c. Give evidence of Scriptural Baptism.
- d. Have no "commonly" known open sins that would disqualify them from membership as found in I Cor 5.
- e. Be approved into the membership by Pastor and Deacons.
- f. Sign an agreement and acknowledgement of the church's statement of faith (Article 2) which shall be kept on file at the church as proof of membership.

**Section 2:** Church membership shall consist of Adult and Junior members. Junior membership extends up to the age of 18 with no voting privileges. A junior member may become a voting member upon turning the age of 18 and being approved by Pastor and Deacons.

**Section 3:** It is the responsibility of the Pastor and Deacons to periodically review the membership list. Any member who, for the space of four months, willingly absents himself from the services of the church, or fails to show any interest in the church by contribution shall be contacted by the Pastor or Deacons. If there is still no favorable response, he shall be notified by letter that he shall be placed on the inactive list; with the right of voice and vote in the church affairs being withheld.

**Section 4:** Any member who goes away for college, military service, the ministry, or that moves away so he cannot be active in the church shall be placed on the inactive list.

**Section 5:** Members on the inactive list, who request it, may be reinstated to the active membership by the Pastor and Deacons.

**Section 6:** Active or inactive members may be dropped from the church membership rolls by the Pastor with the Deacons if they do not publicly repent after having been brought before the Church when their conduct is judged to be unscriptural. Matt. 18:15-17 I Cor. 5:9-13

**Section 7:** Individuals, who have been removed from the church membership rolls, may be reinstated by appearing before the Pastor and Deacons. They will be received on the same grounds as a new applicant for membership, after giving genuine evidence of sorrows for sins committed against the teachings of God's Word and the church. II Cor. 2:5-11

**Section 8:** Use of church property (including, but not limited to, Church building, fellowship hall and vehicles) is reserved only to active members of Maranatha Baptist Church and can only be used at the discretion of the Pastor and Deacons. This includes weddings, receptions and parties.

#### **Article 4 – Government and Offices**

**Section 1:** Believing that The Lord, *"According as his divine power hath given unto us **all things that pertain unto life and godliness...**"* ( II Peter 1:3), the government of the Church is solely to be guided by The Written Word of God. The Holy Ghost places the Pastor as the **Overseer** of all things in the Church according to Acts 20:28, and He is to *"...**take care of the Church of God...**"* as per I Timothy 3:5. To accomplish this, the Pastor will enlist the help of the Deacons as needed according to Acts 6:3, I Timothy 3:8,10,12,13, and the Congregation is to be responsible to uphold all things Scriptural with their collective vote of "yea or nay." Matt. 5:37, James 5:12

**Section 2:** In accordance with **Acts 6:1-6** as the first mention for the need, purpose, and method to *"...**appoint...**"* Deacons, the Congregation will have the responsibility to nominate as many Deacons as is deemed necessary by the Pastor to fulfill the duties of that Office. The process for nominating a deacon will occur during a duly called meeting for that purpose and the nomination will be accomplished by the current voting members. The nomination ballot will consist of the specified number of nominations by the Pastor and current Deacons. The man/men nominated will be *"..**set...**"* before the existing leadership of the Church ( Pastor and Deacons) for questioning, and then set before the entire Congregation for additional questioning. Then, if qualified, the nominated man will be "appointed" (Acts 6:3) into the Office of Deacon by a "laying on of hands" by current church leadership.

**Section 3:** The term of office for a deacon shall not expire, providing they have "used the office of a deacon well" in accordance with I Timothy 3:8-13.

**Section 4:** An appointment committee consisting of the Pastor and Deacons shall be established for the appointment of church positions. We believe that there are only two offices in the local church (Pastor and Deacons) that have been established for the local church. All other positions within the church, both staff and volunteer, will be appointed by the Pastor and Deacons.

**Section 5:** All positions of the church that are appointed by Pastor and Deacons shall serve until they resign or are removed by the Pastor for just cause.

**Section 6:** The moderator of the business meetings shall be the Pastor, and he shall preside at all the congregational meetings. In case of the Pastor's temporary absence a temporary moderator shall be appointed by the Pastor.

**Section 7:** Call of the Pastor

A Pastoral candidate for the church shall be called in the following manner:

- a. The Deacons shall contact and interview prospective candidates who are in agreement with the Church's Doctrinal Statement, purpose, and its stand on separation from apostasy and worldliness. I Tim. 3:1-7 Titus 1:5-9
- b. One man shall be selected by the Deacons to candidate; he shall be invited to speak at two services and be interviewed by the Deacons and publicly questioned by faithful active members of the Congregation. The Deacons shall then submit their report and recommendation to the congregation, and give the congregation an opportunity to vote on a call. A Vote of at least 75% of the active members present will be required to constitute a call. If the congregation votes to call a candidate, the Deacons, on behalf of the church, will notify the candidate of the call.
- c. If the congregation does not vote to call the candidate, the above procedure must be repeated.

**Section 8:** Duties of the Pastor

- a. **In accordance with Acts 20:28** *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to **all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.***" The Pastor shall have oversight of every aspect of this Church and its Ministries. He shall use this Biblically Ordained Oversight only as The Scriptures dictate, and shall not be made to **"...serve two masters..."** in keeping with Matthew 6:24.
- b. The Pastor shall ex-officio of all Deacon's meetings, committees, and organizations of this Church.
- c. He shall be moderator of the congregational and deacons meetings.
- d. He shall have the authority to dismiss all paid staff members.
- e. At such time as the responsibilities of the office of Pastor become too burdensome, the Pastor shall recommend a qualified candidate to assist him.

**Section 9:** Dissolution of Pastoral Relations

- a. If there is any question as to the continuance of the Pastor, the Deacons will discuss the matter with the Pastor individually. We believe that we are to place no confidence in the flesh in accordance with Phil. 3:3 and so the congregation should not place their confidence in the Pastor and the Pastor should not place his confidence in the congregation.
- b. If the Pastor does not conform to doctrinal standards of the Church, or the standards set forth in the Constitution, the Deacons may recommend a congregational immediate dismissal after meeting with the Pastor alone and giving him opportunity for repentance. Such dismissal shall be determined by a 75% vote of the active members present.
- c. If the Pastor feels that his work is done, he should give at least thirty days notice of resignation to the congregation.



## **Section 10: Deacons**

- a. The Deacons shall assist the Pastor as deemed necessary by Him in order to allow the Pastor to accomplish His calling from God in this ministry as specified in Acts 6:2,4. They shall be responsible, under the oversight of the Pastor, for the provision of and assisting in the administering of the two ordinances (Baptism and The Lord's Supper). They shall be faithful on scheduled and unscheduled visitation, visit the sick and sorrowing of the membership, investigate delinquents, and they shall maintain personal Bible study in case they are needed to teach a class or fill the pulpit. The Deacons shall do their very best not to hinder the leading of the Lord through the Pastor as Overseer of this church. They shall initiate the removal of the Pastor for only the most serious unrepentant violations of the Scripture in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17. They, on the other hand will step down when asked to do so for unrepentant violations as lined out in the Bible.
- b. The Deacons shall have the care of the physical properties and equipment of the Church. They shall be responsible for maintaining the Church check books and all records. They shall be responsible for all business of the Church under direct oversight of the Pastor. The Pastor with the Deacons will suggest expenditures to the Congregation for a vote should any single missionary or benevolent expenditure exceed \$1,000.00 or should any budget item need funding that would be over 110% of the budgeted amount.
- c. The Pastor and Deacons will discuss any expenditure over the allotted amount determined by the yearly budget.
- d. The Deacons shall nominate one of their own to serve as a trustee. This trustee shall be appointed by the Pastor to be chairman of the trustees. The Pastor will serve as President of the corporation. These trustees have no meetings of their own, but simply fill an additional position as required by law. Any other needed positions will be appointed by the Pastor and Deacons.
- e. The Deacon's shall endeavor by God's grace to live consistent Christian lives by The Word of God, and to uphold and perform with the standards of administration set forth in this Constitution for their particular Office. I Tim. 3:8-13.
- f. They shall act in an advisory capacity concerning the employing and dismissing of staff.

## **Section 11: Treasurer**

- a. The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Pastor and Deacons in accordance to Article 4, Section 4. He shall keep a correct record of all monies received and disbursed. Acts 6:3
- b. He shall pay the bills of the church.
- c. He shall be required at the close of each church year to place his books in the hands of an auditing committee for examination if the Pastor and Deacons see fit. The auditing committee will be appointed by the Pastor and Deacons.
- d. He shall prepare a written monthly report for the Pastor and Deacons which may be given to the congregation.
- e. At such time as the responsibilities of the position of Treasurer become too burdensome for one person, the Pastor and Deacons may annually appoint an assistant/assistants.

## **Section 12: Clerk**

- a. The Clerk shall be appointed by the Pastor and Deacons in accordance to Article 4, Section 4. He/she shall keep a correct and careful record of all official acts of the church.
- b. The clerk shall keep a careful and complete record of membership, marriages, funerals, baptisms, and all significant events.

## **Section 13: Sunday School**

- a. Any necessary Sunday School assistants shall be appointed annually by the Pastor and Deacons in accordance to Article 4, Section 4.
- b. All of the Sunday School Teachers shall be appointed annually by the Pastor.
- c. The Pastor shall be responsible for and approve of all curriculum for the Sunday School. He may appoint a qualified Deacon or assistant to help in this as needed. All the activities of the Sunday School shall be answerable to the Pastor or delegated to a Deacon. The Deacons will assist the Sunday School Teachers as necessary.

## **Article 5 – Meetings**

**Section 1:** All items to be voted on shall require a majority vote from the congregation unless otherwise outlined in this Constitution.

**Section 2:** The Annual Business Meeting will be held the first Sunday of January, unless ordered otherwise by the Pastor and the Deacons.

**Section 3:** Business meetings will be held at the discretion of Pastor and Deacons.

**Section 4:** Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor. Notice of such a meeting must be given at a service preceding the meeting.

**Section 5:** The Deacons present and voting members of the congregation present, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business in the respective meetings.

**Section 6:** The Constitution may be changed only by a 75% vote at any meeting of the church properly called for that purpose. The Doctrinal Statement may only be changed by an 85% vote of the Deacons and congregation.

**Section 7:** Robert's Rules of order shall be used to conduct Business Meetings as long as the Bible is the final rule for all faith and practice. If the Pastor cannot act as such as ex-officio of all Meetings, a parliamentarian shall be appointed annually as needed by the Pastor and Deacons.

## **Article 6 – Ordination**

**Section 1:** When a man from our Congregation voices his call by God to the ministry, The Pastor and the Deacons will call for a council for Ordination. Being that it is the responsibility of this Local Church to ordain a man, without outside counsel, the Church will be the only Ordaining Authority. Other Local Independent, Fundamental King James Bible Believing Pastors may be asked to sit in, and even ask questions to the candidate, but they will not have any ordaining authority.

**Section 2:** The ordaining council shall thoroughly examine all applicants for ordination as to their call to the Christian ministry, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal belief, and demonstrate efficiency in Christian service. The church shall proceed with the ordination service upon recommendation of the ordaining council.

**Section 3:** The candidate must have served at least six months as a Pastor, Assistant Pastor, or in definite Christian work in such manner as to convey reasonable evidence of God's call to the ministry.

**Section 4:** This constitution does not have any Biblical Authority to Ordain or remove from an Ordination. Once a man is ordained, he is God's Servant, and only God can deal with that man.

### **Article 7 - Dissolution**

**Section 1:** All real estate and properties owned, acquired, or donated shall for all times be the property of Maranatha Baptist Church. Whoever shall leave the congregation for any reason whatsoever, or whomever it is found necessary to dismiss from membership, shall not have any claim on the property. The donation of physical property shall be approved by the Deacons.

**Section 2:** This congregation is legally 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).

At such time as Maranatha Baptist Church shall cease to function, the value of said properties shall be disbursed to other like Faith Independent Fundamental King James Bible Believing Ministries.

- Shall and will means MUST
- "Pastor" is synonymous with "Elder"

## Adoption

These bylaws were adopted by a unanimous vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting of the church on April 7, 2019

These bylaws supersede any other bylaws of Maranatha Baptist Church

Pastor:

Stephen Griffis

Trustees:

Lester Abbott

Bill Begley

Randy Edwards

David Snell

Jeff Wright

Minutes taken by: Gail Begley