

CONSTITUTION
LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH
DIKE, IOWA

OUR BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES

1. The Sovereignty of God and Lordship of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:4; Romans 9:21-24; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; Galatians 1:14; 19-22; 1 Peter 1:15; Matthew 28:18.
2. The Supremacy of the Scriptures. Deuteronomy 29:29; Isaiah 8:20; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Titus 1:9.
3. The Autonomy of the Local Church, and the Two Offices of Pastor and Deacon. Acts 6:2-6; Ephesians 1:22, 23.
4. Regenerate Church Membership. Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:2.
5. Baptism by Immersion of Each After Salvation. Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:41, 42; 8:12, 36-39; 10:48.
6. Salvation by Grace Alone. Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 11:6.
7. The Priesthood of Believers (Soul Sufficiency) of Liberty. Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; Acts 5:29.
8. Private Interpretation of the Scriptures. 1 John 2:27; John 14:26; John 16:13.
9. Separation of Church and State. Romans 13; Matthew 22:21.
10. Religious Liberty. Romans 14:4, 5.
11. Changeless Security of the Believer. John 5:24; 10:28, 29; Ephesians 1:13, 14; Ephesians 4:30.
12. Unending Bliss of the Saved; Ceaseless Suffering of the Lost. John 3:16-18; 36; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:14, 15; 21:8.

THE MEANING OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH

In this day of apostasy, worldliness and indifference, we do not hesitate to say that Liberty Baptist Church is “different” from many other churches.

This Church is separate from all forms of apostasy and liberalism. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ deserves the very best from every one of its members.

When you become a member of this Church, you enter into a fellowship which asks all of its members to do their best in maintaining its special, and significant testimony against the apostasy, worldliness and indifference, and to seek every means possible to assist in its positive preaching of the Bible as the “**Word of God**” and seeking to win the lost for Christ.

THE CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit:

- To study the Bible and walk together in Christian love;
- To strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort;
- To promote its prosperity and spirituality;
- To sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines;
- To give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin;
- To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage:

- To maintain family and personal devotions;
- To educate our children concerning the Lord and His Word;
- To seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances;
- To walk circumspectly in the world and to be just in our dealings with all men, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment;
- To avoid all gossiping, tattling, back-biting, and excessive anger;
- To abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and the misuse of drugs.

We believe it would be pleasing to the Lord to abstain from all appearances of evil and to do all things to the glory of God. This would include any questionable worldly amusements.

We further engage:

- To watch over one another in brotherly love;
- To remember each other in prayer and to aid each other 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;
- To not bring forward to the Church a complaint against any member for any personal trespass against us until we have taken the first and second steps according to Matthew 18; private offenses which can be privately settled, we will never make public.

We moreover engage that, when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible, unite with some other Church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and principles of God's Word. In the event there is no such Church, we shall seek, with the Lord's help, to establish one.

PREAMBLE

As a body of baptized believers, we rest our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation. Having bound ourselves together in fellowship and believing it necessary to govern ourselves in an orderly and efficient manner, we do hereby adopt the provisions of the Baptist Distinctives, Articles of Faith, Church Covenant, and Constitution and By-Laws contained in this booklet.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

We adopt those of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. (As clarified at the June 1975 and 1976 Annual Meetings)

1. OF THE SCRIPTURES

We believe in the authority and sufficiency of the Holy Bible. Consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, as originally written; that it was verbally and plenary inspired and is the product of Spirit controlled men, and therefore is infallible and inerrant in all matters of which it speaks.

We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creed and opinions shall be tried. *2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:19–21.*

2. THE TRUE GOD

We believe there is one and only one living and true God, an infinite Spirit, the Maker and supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. *Exodus 20:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Revelation 4:11.*

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; that He bears witness to the truth of the gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the Agent in the new birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer. *John 14:16, 17; Matthew 28:19; Hebrews 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Genesis 1:1–3; John 16:8–11; Acts 5:30–32; John 3:5, 6; Ephesians 1:13, 14; Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; Romans 8:14, 16, 26, 27).*

4. THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, the Devil; and that he was created by God as an angel but through pride and rebellion became the enemy of his Creator; that he became the unholy god of this age and the ruler of all the powers of darkness and is destined to the

judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire. *Matthew 4:1-11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10.*

5. CREATION

We believe the Biblical account of the creation of the physical universe, angels, and man; that this account is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process; that man was created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race. *Genesis 1; 2; Colossians 1:16, 17; John 1:3.*

6. THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created in innocence (in the image and likeness of God) under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression Adam fell from his sinless and happy state, and all men sinned in him, in consequence of which all men are totally depraved, are partakers of Adam's fallen nature, and are sinners by nature and by conduct, and therefore are under just condemnation without defense or excuse. *Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 3:10-19; 5:12, 19; 1:18, 32.*

7. THE VIRGIN BIRTH

We believe that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner, born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can be born of woman, and that He is both the Son of God and God, the Son. *Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14.*

8. SALVATION

We believe that the salvation of sinners is divinely initiated and wholly of grace through the mediatorial offices of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who, by the appointment of the Father, voluntarily took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, and honored the divine law by His personal obedience, thus qualifying Himself to be our Savior; that by the shedding of His blood in His death He fully satisfied the just demands of a holy and righteous God regarding sin; that His sacrifice consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that having risen from the dead He is now enthroned in Heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior.

We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation. Repentance is a change of mind and purpose toward God prompted by the Holy Spirit and is an integral part of saving faith. *Jonah 2:9; Ephesians 2:8; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24, 25; John 3:16; Matthew 18:11; Philippians 2:7, 8; Hebrews 2:14-17; Isaiah 53:4-7; 1 John 4:10; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24.*

9. RESURRECTION AND PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ and in His ascension into Heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest interceding for us. *Matthew 28:6, 7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Corinthians 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2–6, 51; Acts 1:3–11; Revelation 3:21; Hebrews 8:6; 12:2; 7:25; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 2:17; 5:9, 10.*

10. GRACE AND THE NEW BIRTH

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about by our sovereign God in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and newness of life. *John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 5:1; Acts 16:20–33; 2 Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 2:13; John 3:8.*

11. JUSTIFICATION

We believe that justification is that judicial act of God whereby He declares the believer righteous upon the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any work of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's shed blood. *Romans 3:24; 4:5; 5:1, 9; Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9.*

12. SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification is the divine setting apart of the believer unto God accomplished in a threefold manner; first, an eternal act of God, based upon redemption in Christ, establishing the believer in a position of holiness at the moment he trusts the Savior; second, a continuing process in the saint as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to the life; third, the final accomplishment of this process at the Lord's return. *Hebrews 10:10–14; 3:1; John 17:17; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 5:25–27; 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4; 5:23, 24; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24, 25; Revelation 22:11.*

13. THE SECURITY OF THE SAINTS

We believe that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father for Jesus Christ. *Philippians 1:6; John 10:28, 29; Romans 8:35–39; Jude 1.*

14. THE CHURCH

We believe that a local church is an organized congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers are pastors and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government free from

the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only Superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is Scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; that on all matters of membership, of polity, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final. *1 Corinthians 11:2; Acts 20:17–28; 1 Timothy 3:1–13; Acts 2:41, 42.*

We believe in the unity of all New Testament believers in the Church which is the Body of Christ. *1 Corinthians 12:12, 13; Ephesians 1:22, 23; 3:1-6; 4:11; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; Acts 15:13–18.*

15. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our identification with the crucified, buried and risen Savior, through Whom we died to sin and rose to a new life; that baptism is to be performed under the authority of the local church; and that it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He come, and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. We believe that the Biblical order of the ordinances is baptism first and then the Lord's Supper, and that participants in the Lord's Supper should be immersed believers. *Acts 8:38–39; John 3:23; Romans 6:3–5; Matthew 3:16; Colossians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 11:23–28; Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 2:41, 42.*

16. SEPARATION

We believe in obedience to the Biblical commands to separate ourselves unto God from worldliness and ecclesiastical apostasy. *2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10; 1 Timothy 6:3–5; Romans 16:17; 2 John 9–11.*

17. CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except in those things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ Who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming King of kings. *Romans 13:1–7; 2 Samuel 23:3; Exodus 18:21, 22; Acts 23:5; Matthew 22:21; Acts 5:29; 4:19, 20; Daniel 3:17, 18.*

18. ISRAEL

We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be regathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the Church, will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ. *Genesis 13:14–17; Romans 11:1–32; Ezekiel 37.*

19. RAPTURE AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

We believe in the premillennial return of Christ, an event that can occur at any moment, and that at that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in

Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seven years of the Tribulation. *1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 1 Corinthians 15:42–44, 51–54; Philippians 3:20, 21; Revelation 3:10.*

We believe that the Tribulation, which follows the Rapture of the Church, will be culminated by the revelation of Christ in power and great glory to sit upon the throne of David and to establish the millennial kingdom *Daniel 9:25–27; Matthew 24:29–31; Luke 1:30–33; Isaiah 9:6, 7; 11:1–9; Acts 2:29, 30; Revelation 20:1–4, 6.*

20. THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that only those who are justified by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in the lake of fire. *Malachi 3:18; Genesis 18:23; Romans 6:17, 18; 1 John 5:19; Romans 7:6; 6:23; Proverbs 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matthew 25:34–41; John 8:21; Revelation 20:14, 15.*

ADDITIONS TO ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

A. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. *John 1:1, 2, 14; 14:7-11; Luke 1:35; Philippians 2:6-8; Galatians 4:5*

B. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, after a sinless life, accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. *Romans 3:24, 25; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2:24; Ephesians 1:7*

C. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended bodily to Heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. *Acts 1:9, 10; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24; 7:25; 1 John 2:1, 2*

D. We believe in the "Blessed Hope" ... the personal, imminent, pre-tribulational, and pre-millennial coming of our Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to earth with His saints to establish His millennial kingdom; and finally creating a new Heaven and new Earth that eternally delights in the immediate splendor and blessings of God, glory without end. *1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; 5:9; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6; 21:22; Acts 1:10, 11; Matthew 25:31-46; 2 Peter 3:13*

2. THE TWO NATURES OF BELIEVERS

We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with the provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit; and that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural. *Romans 6:13; 8:12, 13; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9*

3. THE MINISTRY AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

A. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of all His gifts; and that the gifts of evangelists, pastors and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today; and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established. *1 Corinthians 13:4-13; 2 Corinthians 4:7-12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

B. We believe that in accord with His own will, God does hear and answer the prayers of His servants and that His power in our age is in no way limited except by His own sovereign will or the sins of His people. *John 15:7; 1 John 5:14, 15; Isaiah 59:1, 2*

4. DISPENSATIONALISM

We believe in the dispensational view of the Bible interpretation that exalts the grace of God, separates us from the system of Law, and preserves an elect relationship of Israel to the prophetic Word of God. We reject the extreme teaching known as “Hyper-Dispensationalism” which teaching opposes either the Lord’s Table or water baptism as Scriptural means of testimony for the Church in this age. *Galatians 2:16-21; Romans 11:1, 11, 26-29; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41, 42; 18:2; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

5. THE ETERNAL STATE

A. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. *Matthew 25:46; John 5:28, 29; 11:25, 26; Revelation 20:5-13*

B. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul and glorified body are united again to be forever with the Lord. *Luke 23:43; Revelation 20:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17*

C. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with the soul and body reunited; they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment according to their works. *Luke 16:19-26; Matthew 25:41-46; Jude 6, 7; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Mark 9:43-54; Revelation 20:11-15*

LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH

By-Laws

Revised 04/24/2022

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be “LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH” – Dike, Iowa.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this Church shall be to organize, maintain, and develop a Baptist Church, and to promote worship by the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, the administration of ordinances of the New Testament, the spiritual improvement of its members, ministering to its own community and the spread of the Gospel in all the earth through supporting Baptist Missions of like faith and practice, (*See Article IX, Section 1*), and to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints. The purpose is further expressed in our Church Covenant. This covenant shall be read frequently at a Communion Service. Section 2 – The corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, or scientific purposes within the meaning of section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

ARTICLE III – DOCTRINE

Its doctrine shall be in conformity with the teachings set forth in the Word of God and as expressed in our Articles of Faith as adopted on October 18, 1983.

ARTICLE IV – ASSOCIATION

Section 1. This is an independent, autonomous, sovereign Baptist Church and is never to be controlled or governed by any convention or association, but with the right to fellowship with those of like faith and practice, as it shall determine and decide for itself, by vote of the Church.

Section 2. This Church shall not cooperate with liberalism, Neo-Evangelism, or the Charismatic Movement.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Present Membership

All those whose names appear upon the roll of this church are members, but only those upon the “Active” list are considered in good and regular standing. Those whose names appear upon the “Inactive” list have not the right of franchise (to vote) or to hold office, and may not be granted a letter of “good and regular standing” nor participate in any business meeting. The inactive list is to be prepared by the Deacons and Pastor and all whose names are placed on such a list shall be contacted beforehand. All members in good standing, 16 years of age and over, shall be qualified to vote, except on matters dealing with property, and then they must be 18 years of age and older. To be in good standing, a resident member shall have attended regularly the services for the past one year, excepting sickness or unavoidable causes; or new member, and have conducted themselves in a Christian manner.

Section 2. Reception of Members

Paragraph A: Anyone professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, giving evidence of a change of heart, and declaring themselves in accord with the principles and doctrines of this church may become a candidate for church membership.

Paragraph B: Candidates may apply to become a member of the church in one of four ways:

1. By Testimony and Immersion,
2. By Testimony and letter from church of like faith and practice,
3. By Christian Testimony (having been previously baptized by immersion after having accepted Christ as Savior),
4. By restoration of fellowship following disciplinary action.

Paragraph C: Candidates for church membership shall be required to attend classes where instruction shall be given in doctrines, Christian living, and the Local Church; upon completion the candidate shall meet with the Pastor and Deacons who will make a recommendation based on the testimony of the candidate. Having been recommended by the Deacons, the candidate shall then be brought to the Church for acceptance or rejection, one or more dissenting votes constituting refusal of admission, however, any member objecting shall be required to present the grounds of his or her objection(s) in writing before the Deacons at their next meeting. A two-thirds vote of the Deacons shall over-rule the objection, and the candidate shall be submitted once more to the Church.

Section 3. Release of Members

Paragraph A: Church Letters

(1) Letters of release may be granted any member in good and regular standing. Such letters must be addressed to some particular church of the same faith and practice as this and sent by the Clerk to the Pastor or Clerk of the church to which the member is released. Such letters shall be valid only for six months from date, and the member released shall remain subject to the discipline of this church until notification has been received of the acceptance by the church addressed.

(2) A certificate of Christian character may be issued to any member desiring to unite with another Bible Believing Church.

Paragraph B: Discipline of Members

(1) The matter of discipline of the membership shall be in the hands of the Pastor, assisted by the Deacons, but in cases of expulsion from membership, final action must be taken by the Church. No member shall be expelled until every effort has been made, including if physically possible, personal visits to reclaim him or her for Christ and the Church.

(2) Members failing to support the Church by their attendance within a period of one year, without legitimate excuse (such "support" and "excuse" to be defined by the Deacons) shall be placed on the "Inactive" list and so lose their right to franchise. A name continuing upon the "Inactive" list for more than two years may be removed from the Church Membership Roll subject to Part (1) of this paragraph.

(3) An Inactive member may, by faithful and regular attendance and support during a three month period, be placed on the active list by the Pastor and Deacons.

(4) No charge against any member or group of members is to be preferred before the Church by any individual or group until such charge shall first have been preferred before the Board of Deacons, presented in writing, and signed by the accusers. The Deacon Board shall look into the matter, confer with the accused, and if satisfied that the charges made are true and if the accused shows no signs of repentance, make recommendation to the Church accordingly. *Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1.*

Section 4 - Watchcare Membership

Paragraph A: Persons temporarily residing in the area who are members of a like-minded church may apply for watchcare membership. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership as set out above, except that home church membership may be retained.

Paragraph B: Duties and privileges of watchcare members are the same as for other members except that:

1. when absent from the area for extended periods of time they are released from the responsibility to attend our church services;
2. while they will be encouraged to participate in members' meetings, they will not be eligible to hold any office.

Paragraph C: Termination of watchcare membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other members, except that the pastor shall notify the pastor of the home church of that termination. Watchcare membership will be reapplied automatically as long as the member returns to the area and is willing to maintain membership. Watchcare membership will terminate automatically if the member does not return to the church over a period of twelve months.

ARTICLE VI – THE TWO ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH

Section 1. Baptism

Those professing saving faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior shall, by the Pastor or some person authorized by the Church, be by single immersion, immersed in water in accordance with the Scriptural teaching. *Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:41; Colossians 2:12; Romans 6.*

Section 2. Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper (Communion) shall be served to the assembled Church by the Pastor, or some person designated by the Church, and the Deacons, once a month, and/or at the discretion of the Deacons. Since it is the Lord's Table, none who are His shall be barred, but the Pastor shall

frequently state the Scriptural order which places baptism as preceding Communion, and shall explain the meaning of the ordinance. *Matthew 26:26-29; Acts 2:41, 42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34.*

ARTICLE VII – OFFICERS AND BOARDS

The scriptural officers of the church shall consist of Pastor and Deacon-Trustees. Other positions for the effective ministry of the church shall be Clerk, Treasurer, and Sunday School Superintendent. All of whom, except the Pastor, shall have been a member of the church for at least six months. After the first election, their term, except Pastor, shall begin on the first of the month following the Annual Election. Those retiring from an office or a position shall hold Office until the newly elected begin their term. Other positions may be created by the Church as deemed necessary. The Deacon-Trustees and those to fill the other positions shall be elected at the Annual Business Meeting by the majority of the votes cast. After serving two terms, those serving must be out of office or position for one year before his or her name may be put on the ballot for said office or position unless no others are available.

All officers, teachers, sponsors, and committee members of the Church and its auxiliary organizations shall be members of the Church, of high Christian Character, and shall maintain a position of separation from worldliness, and from any organization that would involve compromise with liberalism and apostasy. They shall not use tobacco, or alcohol as a beverage, or misuse drugs.

A member of a secret society may be a member of the Church but not hold an office or teach. *James 5:12; Matthew 12:48-50; Acts 4:12; 2 John 9-11; 1 John 2:22, 23.*

A divorced person, or one married to a divorced person, may be a member of the Church but not hold office of Pastor or Deacon. *1 Timothy 3:1-12; Titus 1:6; Matthew 5:31, 32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:1-12; Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11, 39.*

Section 1. Pastor

Paragraph A: The Pastor must be a man in accord with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, as long as said Association remains true to the Word of God, and the Church fellowships with the Association. A candidate for Pastor is to be informed as to where the Church stands in regard to fellowship with various organizations. The candidate is also to let the Church know where he stands in fellowship with organizations, and whether he is in accord with the groups with which this Church fellowships.

The Pastor shall subscribe, without mental reservation, to the Articles of Faith and Practice, and approve the intent and purpose as set forth in the Constitution and the Church Covenant of this Church. He shall be a Baptist, by conviction, and his qualifications shall be those reflected in 1 Timothy 3:1-6 and Titus 1:5-9.

Paragraph B: Only one candidate shall be considered at a time. He shall be called at a special or regular meeting of the Church. Public notice of such action having been given from the pulpit for two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting, and three-fourths

majority vote of the voting members present, and voting at a meeting called for that purpose shall be necessary for his election, subject to Article XIII, Section 6.

His term of office shall be an indeterminate period of time and shall continue as long as the relationship is agreeable to Pastor and the Church. In case of a Pastor's resignation, he shall give the Church a notice in writing, not to exceed 60 days, and at least 30 days, before his ministry terminates.

Paragraph C: The Pastor, together with the resident members of his family who are willing, and eligible, for membership are to become members of the Church. The only exception would be a Missionary Pastor when it may be necessary for him to keep his membership at his home Church.

Paragraph D: The Deacon-Trustee Board shall annually consider, with the Pastor, a vacation time, outside speaking engagements, and his salary.

The Pastor and his wife may be sent by the Church to the Association Meetings of which the Church is in fellowship, with expenses paid if the Church is financially able.

Paragraph E:

- (1) Should it occur that at least ten members of at least five families of the membership of the Church believe that the ministry of the Pastor is completed, they shall first meet with the Deacon Board, with Pastor present, to discuss their objections.
- (2) If after this discussion they are still of the same conviction, the Deacon Board will call, by letter, a special Church business meeting and shall take the following steps:
 - (a) The Deacon Board shall state in this letter to all the active members the reason for such a meeting, along with the information which they feel pertinent for members to know. This letter must be sent at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.
 - (b) At such meeting, the Chairman shall state that a vote of confidence has been called for, but shall not allow public discussion of the matter and shall proceed to take a vote by ballot. A two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting in support of the Pastor shall be necessary to retain the Pastor. Should this not occur, it shall thereby be due notice to the Pastor that his term of office shall cease at a time not more than two months from date of vote. However, the Deacon Board shall have authorization to recommend to the Church that the Pastor's ministry be terminated at any time within the two months period should they deem it to be for the best interest of the Church to do so. In such case, one month regular salary shall be allowed. He shall be allowed use of the parsonage 30 days after dismissal, or by vote of the congregation, 60 days. See Article XIII, Section 6, for quorum.

Paragraph F: The Pastor shall preach statedly at the Church, administer the ordinances of the Church, act as moderator for the transaction of business (or he may appoint the Chairman of the Deacon-Trustee Board to act as moderator, and in case of no Pastor, the Chairman of the Deacon-Trustee Board shall serve as moderator). He shall be moderator of the Deacon-Trustee

Board, and Ex-Officio of all other committees, boards, and organizations. He shall have access to all keys, books, and records, except personal giving, of the Church. If the Pastor will not appoint a moderator, when necessary, the Deacon-Trustee Board shall do so.

Paragraph G: In case the Church has an Assistant Pastor(s), he or they shall serve under the direction of the Pastor, to be called in same manner as Head Pastor.

Paragraph H: For further duties, see Article VII, Section 2, Paragraph C.

Section 2. Deacon-Trustees

Paragraph A: The Church shall elect from its membership not less than three (3) men to serve as Deacon-Trustees. Their terms shall be for two (2) years after the first full term of office. At the first full term, one shall be elected for one year and two for two years. A Deacon-Trustee shall be added for each 50 members after the membership has reached 50. The first term shall be until January 1984 Business Meeting.

Paragraph B: The qualifications for Deacon-Trustees shall be such as are prescribed and set forth in the New Testament (Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:8-13). Their department shall be in accordance with the Church Covenant and Constitution and they should be tithers.

Paragraph C: The Deacon-Trustees shall elect from their number a chairman and a secretary. The former shall have general oversight of their work. The latter shall keep a faithful record of the important work and transactions performed by the Board. Two-thirds of the full number shall constitute a quorum. It shall be their duty as to spiritual matters as indicated below:

- (1) Prepare the elements and table for the Lord's Supper, and assist in serving the same;
- (2) The Pastor, assisted by the Deacon-Trustees, shall:
 - (a) administer baptism and have the spiritual supervision of the church;
 - (b) examine carefully all candidates for church membership, recommending such as they consider eligible to the Church for membership;
 - (c) have charge of all matters of discipline of members;
 - (d) examine and revise the church roll at least once each year;
 - (e) approve visiting speakers for conferences or evangelistic meetings;
 - (f) annually appoint pianist and choir directors;
 - (g) annually prepare and recommend an adequate church budget;
 - (h) annually appoint an auditing committee of three;
 - (i) direct in any use of any benevolence fund for aged and needy;
 - (j) approve all church music, including weddings and funeral services.
 - (k) Approve of Sunday School curriculum for all Sunday School classes
- (3) Care for the supply of the pulpit in case of sickness or absence of the Pastor.
- (4) It shall be the duty of the chairman and secretary to sign all legal papers, and in their absence, these papers shall be signed by such as may be designated by the Board.

As to the property and business of the Church: It shall be their duty as the Trustees to care for the property of the Church:

- (a) To hold, repair, invest, and preserve the same, including hiring and supervising the janitor; or other hired employees;
- (b) To superintend any improvements that are not entrusted to a special committee;
- (c) To perform such business concerns of the Church as shall from time to time be assigned to them by the Church. The Trustees are at all times servants of the Church and subject to its corporate action.

The Trustees shall not have any authority to purchase, or to sell, lease, give away, or dispose of in any manner, church property to exceed three hundred dollars (\$300.00) in value; nor to mortgage or encumber the same by a corporate act. The Trustees shall approve all bills.

Paragraph D: They shall meet once each month, date to be set by the Board. They shall make a full report of their activities to the Church at each quarterly and annual meeting, or as requested by the Church. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, Chairman, or by two-thirds of the Board.

Section 3. Treasurer

The Church shall elect from the Church membership at the annual meeting, a Treasurer for a one year term. The Treasurer shall receive and handle all monies of the Church, giving a written statement at the end of each quarter. All money received shall be counted by both the Treasurer and one member of the Board. The Treasurer shall meet with the Board whenever asked to do so. All records and undeposited money shall be returned to the Church at the end of his or her term.

Section 4. Clerk

The Church shall elect from its membership at each annual meeting a Clerk for the ensuing year. He or she shall keep a fair and complete record of the proceedings of the Church, have charge of all records, keep a register of all members of the Church, write letters of release or dismissal, give notice of Church business meetings, announce the offices to be filled at an annual meeting, and perform such other particular duties as may be regarded in this way.

ARTICLE VIII – FINANCES

Section 1. Tithes, offerings and gifts, shall be the only method of receiving money by the Church or an auxiliary organization.

Section 2. No financial obligations 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 as stated in Article VII, Section 2, Paragraph C, or by corporate act of the Church.

Section 3. The Treasurer shall deposit all monies in a bank approved by the Church and shall pay all monies by check, and in his or her absence, the Chairman of the Deacon-Trustee Board shall have the authority to sign the checks.

Section 4. The Deacon-Trustee Board shall be the Finance Committee.

ARTICLE IX – MISSIONS

Section 1. It shall be the policy of this Church to always have an active missionary program; that regular monthly support is to go to missionaries who are in full agreement with the Articles of Faith of this church and engaged in the All regular mission support must be approved by majority vote of the congregation present at a business meeting. Gifts may be given to recognized local compassion ministries and other agencies engaged in evangelism.

Section 2. All foreign missionary support will be reviewed when the missionary returns on furlough, and all other support annually.

ARTICLE X – AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1. Sunday School

The Sunday School shall be a part of the Church and not a separate organization. Its financial needs shall be taken from the General Treasury.

Section 2. Other Organizations

There may be other organizations as will help develop the Church but none shall be started without approval of the Deacon-Trustee Board and the Church. These organizations shall be self-governing but always amenable to the Church through the Deacon-Trustee Board, and approved by them. All programs and activities must be for the general welfare of the Church and in harmony with the principles of the Bible and our Constitution.

Section 3. All officers of auxiliary organizations and all regular teachers in the Sunday School must be members of the Church in good and regular standing. All substitute teachers and Vacation Bible School teachers are to be approved by Pastor and Deacon-Trustees.

Section 4. No organization may take regular support of any work or missionary without receiving approval of the Deacon-Trustee Board and Church.

ARTICLE XI – COMMITTEES

Section 1. Pulpit Committee

Paragraph A. The Pulpit Committee shall be the Deacon-Trustee Board. Pulpit supply is their responsibility only in the absence of the Pastor.

Paragraph B. Upon the death or resignation of the Pastor, it shall be the duty of the Pulpit committee to interview a candidate for the pastorate of the Church and to submit to him a copy of the Articles of Faith and Constitution and By-Laws of the Church, to ascertain his agreement or disagreement therewith. They shall not present a candidate who is not in agreement with the Church in these things. Upon submitting the name of the candidate to the Church body, they shall make clear and plain to them his position concerning the Articles of

Faith and Constitution and By-Laws. They shall obtain references from sources qualified to pass judgment concerning the candidate's qualifications.

Paragraph C. The Pastor shall be included in the Search Committee for Assistant Pastor.

Section 2. Auditing Committee

The Auditing Committee of three, with a good knowledge of finances, shall be appointed by the Board at least 30 days before the Annual Business Meeting. It shall be the duty of this Committee to examine the financial records and vouchers of the Church Treasurer at the close of the calendar year, or more often if desired, and to report the results to the Church at the Annual Business Meeting. The Treasurer shall not be a member of the Auditing Committee.

Section 3. Other Committees

Paragraph A. Other committees and persons to serve may be appointed by the Pastor and the Board to which the responsibility falls.

Paragraph B. Such committees may be: Advertising, Flowers, Music, Hospitality, Transportation, Visitation, Usher, Building, and a Building Financial Committee, or others as the need arises.

Paragraph C. Each chairman shall be instructed by the Pastor and the Board to whom he is responsible as to his duties. He shall give reports to the Board under which he is directed, and to the Church.

ARTICLE XII – MANNER OF ELECTIONS

Section 1. Nominations

Paragraph A. The Deacon-Trustee Board shall prepare a Nomination (Primary) Ballot indicating the elected officers of the Church; those who occupy each office; those whose term expire.

Paragraph B. The Deacon-Trustee Board shall give the Nomination Ballot to the Active Members of the Church at least one month prior to the Annual Election Meeting and instruct them to complete their nominations and return to the Committee within two weeks;

Paragraph C. Shall collect the ballots and tabulate the results; and carefully consider qualifications of nominees;

Paragraph D. Shall prepare and make available an Election Ballot to be used at the election meeting, listing at least two leading nominees for each office (whenever possible).

Paragraph E. There shall be no nominations from the floor.

ARTICLE XIII – BUSINESS MEETINGS

Section 1. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Church shall begin January 1st and close December 31st.

Section 2. Election of Officers – Reports and Business

The Annual Business Meeting of the Church and Election of Officers shall be held on a day during the third full week of January, if possible, or as soon thereafter as possible.

Section 3. Quarterly Business Meetings

Quarterly Business Meetings shall be conducted, if possible, on a day during the third full week of April, July and October.

Section 4. The Pastor shall preside at regular business meetings, or he may appoint the Chairman of the Deacon-Trustee Board to act.

Section 5. Special Business Meetings

Special Business Meetings may be called by the Pastor, two-thirds vote of the Deacon-Trustee Board, or by ten voting members from at least five families presenting their request to the Board of Deacon-Trustees, whenever necessary. Announcement of said meeting must be given at least two Church services on separate days. When such meeting is called, it must be stated why the meeting is called, and no other business may be considered by the Church at said meeting.

All business of major importance, such as calling a Pastor, voting on purchase or sale of property, voting on questions of fellowship with other groups, etc. shall be announced from the pulpit on two preceding Sundays.

Section 6. It shall require fifty percent (50%) of the resident voting members to be present to constitute quorum for regular business meetings, and seventy-five percent (75%) of voting members for calling or dismissal of a Pastor, and purchase or sale of property. See Article VII, Section 1, Paragraph B. The majority vote of those present and voting shall be necessary for elections or business unless otherwise specified.

Section 7. Routine business, as receiving members, issuing letters of transfers of membership, choosing messengers to meetings, may be cared for at any regular meeting.

Section 8. Order of Meetings

In the conduct of business, rules contained in *Roberts Rules of Order* shall govern all cases to which they apply. In exceptions, a three-fourths majority vote shall establish the rule.

ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Amendments to this Constitution and By-Laws may be made at any Annual Business Meeting, or a called business meeting, by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present, after weekly notice of the meeting has been given from the pulpit for one month and a copy of the proposed changes has been posted on the bulletin board for one month, 30 days.

Section 2. The Church Covenant and Sections XVIII, XX, and XXI cannot be amended.

Section 3. These By-Laws shall be in the hands of the Clerk at every regular business meeting.

ARTICLE XV – USE OF THE CHURCH

Section 1. No secret societies will be permitted to hold services in the Church. The funeral of any persons so associated may be held in the Church if conducted by an approved minister, subject to Section 2.

Section 2. No Pastor or speaker who denies the fundamentals of the faith once delivered unto the Saints will be permitted to preach or conduct any services in the Church.

Section 3. Speakers for evangelistic meetings or conferences who are called to conduct such meetings are to be in sympathy with our beliefs and stand. This responsibility is the duty of the Deacon-Trustees and Pastor. The invitation of such speakers is to be approved by the Church at a business meeting.

Section 4. The use of property is to be governed by the Deacon-Trustee Board.

ARTICLE XVI – VACANCIES

If a vacancy occurs in any elected office, the Board shall appoint someone to the office until the next annual election, to be approved by the Church.

ARTICLE XVII – LICENSE AND ORDINATIONS

Section 1. Licensing

Paragraph A. When a man in this membership is called to the Christian ministry and desires to be licensed, he shall make his desire known to the Board of Deacons. If the Deacon Board is satisfied concerning his salvation, call to the ministry, and consistent Christian living, it shall recommend to the Church that license be granted. The Church may act upon this recommendation at any regular meeting.

Paragraph B. The duration of this license shall be for one year from the date of issue, but may be renewed annually after a review by the Deacon Board. No license granted by this Church shall be valid after the licensee removes his membership from the Church. A license can be annulled or withdrawn at any time should the Church, in its judgment, have sufficient reason for such action.

Section 2. Ordination

Paragraph A. When, in the judgment of the Deacon Board, a man in this membership is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of the Deacon Board to recommend to the Church that a council, composed of a Pastor and two Messengers from churches of like faith and practice, be called for the purpose of examining the candidate. By Church action, the council will be called.

Paragraph B. This council shall thoroughly examine all applicants for ordination as to their salvation, call to the Christian ministry, education, reputation, character, doctrinal belief,

Christian experience, and if the council so recommends, the Church may proceed with ordination.

Paragraph C. The following shall not be ordained to the ministry:

- (1) One who has not served six months as Pastor, Assistant Pastor, or in definite Christian work in such manner as to convey reasonable evidence of God's call to the ministry;
- (2) One who is not conducting himself according to the Church Covenant;
- (3) One who is a divorcé or who is married to a divorcée whose previous husband is still living. / *Timothy 3:2*

Paragraph D. It shall be within the power of the Church to discipline, even to revoking the ordination credentials of any minister ordained by this Church, if the said minister is found guilty of any of the above practices after an impartial hearing is conducted in the ministry of 1 Corinthians 13. The minister under question shall have the privilege of appealing his case to the congregation within sixty days after the decision of the Church.

ARTICLE XVIII – DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

In the event of the dissolution of this Corporation, all assets of the Corporation shall be distributed to organizations of like purpose which qualify for tax exemption under the Internal Revenue Code, Section 501 (c) (3).

ARTICLE XIX

This church shall always be a Baptist Church.

ARTICLE XX – PRIVATE PROPERTY EXEMPT

The private property of the members of this Corporation shall not be liable for corporate debts.