

Friendship Baptist Church

Constitution and By-Laws

Friendship Baptist Church
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Rome, New York 13440

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Constitution and By-Laws

This constitution which includes its By-Laws were duly adopted during the official organization of this Church on the 26th day of March, 1976 and as amended and approved by the church congregation.

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PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Friendship Baptist Church, of Rome, New York, do hereby adopt the following Constitution and By-Laws, which are based entirely upon Biblical principles. This constitution is not a device of human argument to the Word of God. It is simply a systematic review of the truths found in God's Word concerning His churches. Its purpose is to ever keep before this congregation the doctrines, methods, procedures and organizations as clearly taught in the New Testament. With such a guide we shall, by God's grace, endeavor to practice New Testament Christianity in all of its phases.

(See Article 5 for statements of faith)

1 ARTICLE I – NAME AND ORGANIZATION

1.1 NAME

This organization shall be known as Friendship Baptist Church of Rome, New York, incorporated.

1.2 ORGANIZATION

The first service was held at the home of Rev. Edward A. Schraff at 930 West Thomas Street, Rome, New York. The service was under the direction of Pastor Edward Schraff and was conducted September 1, 1974. The church was formally organized on the 26th day of March, 1976 as Independent Baptist Church. In addition, the church was incorporated in the State of New York. In 1993, the church voted to rename Independent Baptist Church to Friendship Baptist Church.

2 ARTICLE II – OBJECTIVE

2.1 TEACHING AND PREACHING OF THE BIBLE, GOD’S HOLY WORD

This church believes the King James Bible (“Holy Bible” or “Bible”), originally translated into English in 1611, is the inspired and infallible Word of God and is the sole authority for faith and practice. The Bible declares its purpose:

- a. To maintain regular services for public worship.
- b. To proclaim earnestly the Gospel message and to urge its personal acceptance both privately and publicly.
- c. To promote systematic Bible study and teaching for Christian service and soul-winning.
- d. To cooperate heartily by prayer, giving and service in the effort of seeing the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ preached throughout the world.
- e. To pray for one another that we may ever live according to the Will of God as revealed in His Word.
- f. To promote Christian fellowship and friendship.

2.2 TO FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION

This church will work to fulfill the great commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ to His Church in Matthew 28:16-20, which is three-fold:

- a. To win souls to Jesus Christ.
- b. To baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- c. To teach them the Word of God and the cardinal doctrines of God’s Word.

2.3 THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH TO ITS COMMUNITY

The Church has the duty to promulgate the full truth of the Bible, to urge the truth lovingly in the power of the Holy Spirit, on the community at large. To do this, a program of New Testament evangelism, visitation and outreach

must be maintained. In no other way can the Gospel be taken “to every creature.”

2.4 THE CHURCH IN THE MIDST OF THE APOSTASY

This church will teach and preach the Biblical truths as the Baptists through the years have taught:

- a. The sufficiency and supremacy of the Bible in all things pertaining to faith and practice.
- b. The autonomy of the local Church.
- c. A regenerated and baptized membership.
- d. The priesthood of every believer.
- e. The separation of Church and State.
- f. The creation of heaven, earth and man by the direct act of God.
- g. The Virgin Birth and Deity of Christ.
- h. The vicarious atonement for sins of the world by the shedding of Christ’s blood.
- i. The imminent, literal and premillennial second coming of Christ for the saved.
- j. The literal and everlasting heaven for the saved, and literal and everlasting lake of fire for the unsaved. This church will give special emphasis to the need of returning to Bible doctrine, fellowship, discipline and organization, holy living for every believer, and the exposure of the religious apostasy which is ever engulfing and polluting Christianity.

This church is to uphold and teach what the Bible reveals. It is the purpose of this church to bring the community up to the level of God’s standards, but must never lower its standards to those of the community even in an effort to reach the people of the community. This church is never to cooperate or unite with the forces of apostasy in any way or form whatsoever (1 Corinthians 6).

3 ARTICLE III – AFFILIATION

This church is and must forever be an independent, fundamental Baptist Church, independent of any council, convention or denomination or any other form of organic church union. This church may fellowship with other sovereign, autonomous, independent, fundamental Baptist churches, but will not enter into any union or association with those that make their actions binding upon the local church. This article of the constitution cannot be removed from the constitution and cannot ever be amended or changed.

4 ARTICLE IV – CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led as we believe by the Holy Spirit of God to accept as our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose blood and righteousness alone we trust as the ground of our redemption; and having been buried with Him in baptism unto the likeness of His death, and raised in the likeness of His resurrection, to walk in newness of life; and having thus been united to His visible Church, we do now most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with God and with one another as one local assembly in Christ:

- a. We promise that by the aid of the Holy Spirit we will love one another as brethren in the Lord; that we will exercise Christian care and watchfulness one for another, bearing one another's burden and thus fulfilling the law of Christ.
- b. We engage to maintain personal and family devotions, to search the Scriptures with all diligence and to train up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
- c. We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together in the house of the Lord, but will regularly attend its services, unless providentially hindered.
- d. We will pray and labor for its prosperity through its doctrines, its ordinances and its discipline.
- e. In the event that we will be moving to another community, we will as soon as possible join a nearby church of like faith and practice where the Gospel is preached or until such a time keep in constant contact with the Church.
- f. We will earnestly and actively endeavor to win souls to our Saviour, realizing that apart from Him there is no hope and that He has left us in this world as His ambassadors to seek and win the lost.
- g. We covenant that we will regularly and systematically give our tithe (time, talent and treasure) for the support of the local church – James 1:17, Matt 6:21, 2 Cor 9:8.

- h.** We will endeavor to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, holding forth a good testimony at all times; to remember each other in prayer; to comfort each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy and courtesy; to be slow to take offense, ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the teaching of our Saviour to secure it without delay.
- i.** Desiring the triumph of Christ above all earthly good, and joyfully hoping for His coming again in heavenly glory, we covenant that by the help of His enabling Spirit, we will seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness trusting that He shall add all our temporal needs and a full measure of His grace.

5 ARTICLE V – ARTICLES OF FAITH

5.1 OF THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men supernaturally inspired; that it has truth without any error for its matter; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the Will of God to man; the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried.

- a. By “the Holy Bible” we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, which, as originally written, does not only contain and convey the Word of God, but IS the very Word of God.
- b. By “inspiration” we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old as they were moved by the Holy Spirit in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or will ever be inspired.

Scriptural References: 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25; Psalms 119:160; Psalms 119:105; Psalms 119:130; Luke 24:25-27; John 17:17; Luke 24:44-45; Psalms 119:39; Proverbs 30:5-6; Romans 3:4; 1 Peter 1:23; Revelation 22:19; John 12:48; Isaiah 8:20; Ephesians 6:17; Romans 15:4; Luke 16:31; Psalms 19:7-11; John 5:45-47; John 5:30.

5.2 OF BIBLICAL TIME PERIODS, OR DISPENSATIONS

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life that 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.

Scriptural References: Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 9:17; 2 Corinthians 3:9-18; Galatians 3:13-25; Ephesians 1:10, 3:2-10; Colossians 1:24-27; Revelation 20:2-6.

5.3 OF THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent 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 God-head there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct, but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

Scriptural References: Exodus 20:2-3; Genesis 17:1; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; John 4:24; Psalms 147:5; Psalms 83:18; Psalms 90:2; Jeremiah 10:10; Exodus 15:11; Revelation 4:11; 1 Timothy 1:17; Romans 11:33; Mark 12:30; Matthew 28:19; John 15:26; 1 Corinthians 19:4-6; 1 John 5:7; John 10:30; John 17:5; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; Philippians 2:5-6; Ephesians 2:18; 2 Corinthians 13:14.

5.4 OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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 judgment and of righteousness; 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.

Scriptural References: John 14:16-17; Matthew 28:19; Hebrews 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Genesis 1-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:7; John 16:8-11; John 15:26-27; Acts 5:30-32; John 3:5-6; Ephesians 1:13-14; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; John 16:13; Romans 8:14; Romans 8:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 8:26-27.

5.5 OF THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

We believe that Satan was once holy, and enjoyed heavenly honors; but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and drew after him a host of angels; that he is now the malignant prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world. We hold him to be man's great tempter, the author of all raised religions, the chief power behind the present apostasy; the lord of the anti-Christ and the author of all the powers of darkness — destined, however, to final defeat at the hands of God's own Son, and to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels.

Scriptural References: Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:14-17; Revelation 12:9; Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4; Ephesians 2:2; John 14:30; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; Matthew 4:1-3; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 3:5; Matthew 13:25, 37, 39; Mark 13:21-33; Luke 22:3-4; Revelation 12:10; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7; 1 John 2:22; Revelation 13:13-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-11; Revelation 19:11, 16, 20; Revelation 12:7-9; Revelation 20:1-3, 10; Matthew 25:41.

5.6 OF CREATION

We believe in the Genesis account of creation and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary chance of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms; that all animal and vegetable life was made directly and God's established law was that they should bring forth only "after their kind."

Scriptural References: Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:11; Acts 4:24; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 11:3; John 1:3; Revelation 10:6; Romans 1:20; Acts 17:23-27; Genesis 2:21-23; Genesis 1:24.

5.7 OF THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but of choice; and therefore, under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

Scriptural References: Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 5:12, 19; Romans 3:10-19; Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 1:18; Ezekiel 18:19-20; Romans 1:32; Romans 1:20, 28; Galatians 3:22.

5.8 OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit, in a miraculous manner; born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born, or can ever be born of a woman, and that He is both the Son of God, and God the Son.

Scriptural References: Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; Mark 1:1; John 1:14; Psalms 2:7; Galatians 4:4; 1 John 5:20; 1 Corinthians 15:47.

5.9 OF THE ATONEMENT FOR SIN

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial office of the Son of God, who by appointment of the Father freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law of His personal obedience, and by his death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the 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 every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Saviour.

Scriptural References: Ephesians 2:8; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24; Matthew 18:11; John 3:16; Philippians 2:7; Hebrews 2:14; Isaiah 53:4-7; Romans 3:25; 1 John 4:10; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Galatians 1:4;

2 Corinthians 5:21; John 10:18; Philippians 2:8; 1 Peter 2:25;
1 Peter 3:18; Isaiah 53:11; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Corinthians 15:20;
Isaiah 53:12; Hebrews 9:12-15; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:2.

5.10 OF GRACE IN THE NEW CREATION

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 new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and 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 and faith and newness of life.

Scriptural References: John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Luke 5:27; 1 John 5:1; Acts 2:41; John 3:6-7; 2 Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13; 2 Corinthians 5:19; John 1:12-13; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9.

5.11 OF THE FREENESS OF SALVATION

We believe in God's electing grace; that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent and obedient faith; and nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

Scriptural References: 1 Thessalonians 1:4; Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 1:2; Titus 1:1; Romans 8:29-30; Matthew 11:28; Isaiah 55:1; Revelation 22:17; Romans 10:13; Isaiah 53:6; John 6:37; 1 Timothy 1:15; Isaiah 55:7; John 3:15-16; Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 15:10; Ephesians 2:4; John 5:40; John 3:18, 36.

5.12 OF JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to those that believe in Him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood. His righteousness is imputed unto us.

Scriptural References: Acts 13:39; Isaiah 53:11; Zechariah 13:1; Romans 8:1; Romans 5:1, 9; Titus 3:5-7; Romans 1:17; Hebrews 2:4; Galatians 3:11; Romans 4:1-8; Hebrews 10:33.

5.13 OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH

We believe that repentance and faith are solemn obligations and also inseparable graces wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God; thereby, being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Saviour.

Scriptural References: Acts 20:21; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37-38; Luke 16:13; Romans 10:13; Psalms 51:1-4, 7; Isaiah 55:6-7; Luke 12:8; Romans 10:9-11.

5.14 OF THE CHURCH

We believe that a Baptist church is a congregation of baptized believers associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel, said church being understood to be the citadel and propagation of the Divine and Eternal Grace; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; the qualifications, claims and duties of its officers, pastors or elders are clearly defined in the Scriptures; we believe the true mission of the Church is found in the Great Commission: first, to make individual disciples; second, to build up the Church; and third, to reach and instruct as He has commanded. We

do not believe in the reversal of this order; 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 sole faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel; that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

Scriptural References: Acts 2:41-42; 1 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:4, 8-11; Acts 34:23; Acts 6:5-6; Acts 15:23-24; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 15:22; Jude 3; 2 Corinthians 8:23-24; 1 Corinthians 16:1; Malachi 3:10; Leviticus 27:32; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 1 Corinthians 6:1-3; 1 Corinthians 5:11-13.

5.15 OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer; in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, with the authority of the local church to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem of our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Saviour, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life.

We believe the Lord's supper, in which the members of this church and believers of similar faith outside of this church, by the sacred use of bread and the fruit of the vine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ, are preceded by solemn self-examinations.

Scriptural References: Acts 8:36-39; Matthew 3:6; John 3:23; Romans 6:4-5; Matthew 3:16; Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Acts 2:41-42; Matthew 28:1, 9-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28.

5.16 ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE SAINTS

We believe that every born-again person is saved forever; they are kept by the power of God, sealed by the Holy Spirit and hid in Christ. In addition, a saint can never lose his/her salvation.

Scriptural References: John 8:31-32; Colossians 1:21-23; 1 John 2:19; Matthew 13:19-21; Romans 8:28; Matthew 6:20; Psalms 121:3; Hebrews 1:14; 1 Peter 1:5; Philippians 1:6; John 10:28-29; John 16:5; Romans 8:35-39.

5.17 OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked. Only through faith are we justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified by the Spirit of our God and are truly righteous in His esteem. Those that continue in impenitence (refusal to repent) and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse. 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.

Scriptural References: Galatians 3:18; Genesis 12:23; Romans 6:17-18; Proverbs 11:31; 1 Peter 1:18; Romans 1:17; 2 Corinthians 15:22; Acts 10:34-35; 1 John 2:29; 1 John 2:7; Romans 6:16; 1 John 5:19; Galatians 3:10; Romans 7:6; Romans 6:23; Proverbs 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matthew 25:41, 54; John 8:21; Luke 9:26; John 12:25; Matthew 7:13-14.

5.18 OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; those magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the Will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the kings of the earth.

Scriptural References: Romans 13:7; 2 Samuel 23:3; Exodus 18:21-22; Acts 23:5; Matthew 22:21; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:17; Philippians 2:10-11;

Acts 4:19-20; Daniel 3:17-18; Matthew 10:28; Matthew 23:10; Psalms 72:11.

5.19 OF THE RESURRECTION, RETURN OF CHRIST AND RELATED EVENTS

We believe in and accept the sacred Scriptures upon these subjects at their face and full value. Of the resurrection, we believe that Christ rose bodily the third day according to the Scriptures; that He alone is our merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God; that this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven - bodily, personally and visibly; that the dead in Christ shall rise first; that the living saints shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; that the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His Father David; that Christ shall reign a thousand years in righteousness until He hath put all enemies under His feet.

Scriptural References: Matthew 28:6-7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Corinthians 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2, 4-60; Acts 1:9, 11; Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; Revelation 3:21; Hebrews 8:1, 6; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1 Hebrews 2:17; Hebrews 5:9-10; John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Matthew 24:27, 42; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Philippians 4:20-21; Luke 1:32; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Isaiah 11:4-5; Psalms 72:8; Revelation 20:1-4, 6.

5.20 OF MISSIONS

The command to give the Gospel to the world is clear and unmistakable and this Commission was given to the church.

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. – Matthew 28:18-20

*And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.** – Mark 16:15*

*Then said Jesus to them again, **Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.** – John 20:21*

*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, **How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!** – Romans 10:13-15*

5.21 OF THE GRACE OF GIVING

Scriptural giving is one of the fundamentals of the faith.

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. – 1 Corinthians 16:2

Abound in everything including giving – 2 Corinthians 8:7

Abraham gave a tenth part of all ... the spoils. – Hebrews 7:2-4

We are commanded to bring the tithe into the common treasury of the church.

... the tithe ... is the Lord's. – Leviticus 27:30

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. – Malachi 3:10

In the New Testament it was the common treasury of the church.

And brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet. Having land, sold it and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet. – Acts 4:34, 35, 37

6 ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP

6.1 CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND THE WORD OF GOD

It is the prayerful desire of this church to follow the Scriptures concerning church membership as outlined in Acts 2:41-47.

6.2 APPLICATION AND PROCEDURE OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Each candidate for church membership shall publicly confess Christ as Saviour, and indicate their desire for church membership by responding to an invitation at the close of any church service:

- a. By baptism - Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour who is in accord with the Articles of this Constitution upon baptism by immersion will be received into full church membership.
- b. By letter of transfer - A person who has testified to his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and has been baptized by immersion into a Baptist church of like faith and practice will be received into full membership upon the promise of a letter.
- c. By statement of faith - Any person who has publicly confessed his/her faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as his/her Saviour, has been baptized by immersion into a Baptist church of like faith and practice and, because of various reasons, cannot secure a letter, may become a church member by statement. A simple majority of an ordinary quorum shall be required for passage.

6.3 STANDING OF MEMBERS

A member who does not attend or communicate with the church for a period of three months and after a conscientious effort has been made by the Pastor (through letters, phone calls, visits) to renew the interest of the member, will be placed on the inactive roll. An inactive member shall not have the privilege of voice or vote in any of the church business meetings

until they have been restored to full active membership by the recommendation of the Pastor and a majority vote of an ordinary quorum shall be required for passage. Anyone on the inactive church roll must attend six consecutive Sundays before asking the Pastor to be restored into active membership. Failure to remediate an inactive membership one year after being placed on the inactive roll automatically terminates membership. The former member will be notified by letter.

6.4 TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Church membership may be terminated under any of the following conditions:

a. By death.

b. By transfer of membership to another church.

A letter of commendation to any other church, of like faith, may be granted upon request. Such a letter shall be sent only to a requesting church.

c. By voluntary withdrawal.

If a member of the church desires that their name be removed from the membership roll of this church, their request may be presented to the Pastor. If a member of the church joins any other church without request for a letter, their membership in this church will automatically be terminated.

d. By inactivity.

As described in Article 6.3 STANDING OF MEMBERS

e. By church discipline.

As described in ARTICLE 7 – CHURCH DISCIPLINE

7 ARTICLE VII – CHURCH DISCIPLINE

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ states the Church's duty to exercise discipline. Any member who persists in open sin and disobedience to God's Word is to be placed on church discipline and **to be excluded from the church**. Upon being placed on church discipline, the Pastor is to inform the congregation not to fellowship with the disciplined member, and that member is not to participate in regular services until a willingness to repent is shown.

The discipline of sinning members of the church is necessary for the spiritual health and blessing of the Church. It is also indispensable to building truly Christian spiritual, victorious congregations. To surrender this duty and privilege means weakness and defeat; sin and the world will slip in and take over; the Holy Spirit will be grieved and quenched, leaving the Church powerless.

7.2 BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF DISCIPLINE

- a. One brother sinning against another – Matthew 18:15-17. "... if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man ..."
- b. One guilty of fornication, covetousness, idolatry, railing (abusing, reviling, slandering), drunkenness, extortion (dishonesty, swindle, robbery, etc.) – 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. "... to deliver such an one unto Satan ..." (verse 5); "... purge out therefore the old leaven ..." (verse 11); "... therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person ..." (verse 13).
- c. One who blasphemes – 1 Timothy 1:20. "... deliver unto Satan."
- d. Paul warned the church at Corinth concerning, ... debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings (arrogance, self-assertion), tumults (disorders) – 1 Corinthians 12:20, 13-14.
- e. One who is guilty of heresy – Titus 3:10. "... reject."

- f. He who is rebellious – 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15. “... that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly ... have not company with him that he may be ashamed ...” (note verse 15 specifically).
- g. One that causes divisions – Romans 16:17-18.

7.3 PERSONAL OFFENSES

- a. When the sin or offense is personal and private, the injured should go at once to the one who has done the injury and show their fault. Every effort should be made for reconciliation. Patience, love and understanding should be exercised (Matthew 18:15-22; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7).
- b. In connection with these Scriptures, it is well to consider also the duty of one who has reason to believe that a brother has been injured by them and is offended at them. We find the law of the Lord Jesus Christ for such cases in Matthew 5:23-24. This is to be a very private matter between the two; offender and offended. Each should jealously guard the reputation of the other. To follow those teachings of the Lord would mean continued harmony, love, fellowship and the blessings of God upon the church.
- c. If the injured goes to the one doing the injury and they see their fault and repents of it, the injured party should immediately and fully forgive the offender and let the matter end.
- d. If the one doing the injury will not see and acknowledge their fault or repent of it, a second step may be taken (up to this time the utmost privacy has been maintained in the hope that the wrongdoing might not become known and injure the church). When such private effort at supporting righteousness fails, then the injured party is commanded to get one or two spiritual persons to go with them to the offender. It is recommended that those persons be the Pastor and Deacons.
- e. If after much prayerful discussion, reconciliation is not made, the injured may then take the matter to the church, should it be of serious enough nature to warrant such action. Such action may be initiated only by the

Pastor. No public recommendation to either consider, or prosecute such a move shall be made except by the Pastor.

- f.** If the offending party will hear the church and yield to the prayerful decision of the members assembled, there should be a complete and immediate reconciliation.
- g.** If the offender will not hear the church and do right, then fellowship should be withdrawn from the offender and should be regarded the same as an outsider who has never had any connection with the church whatsoever.
- h.** The members of the church shall continue to work and pray for their complete restoration, but shall not extend such comforts and sympathy as would minify and alleviate the effect of the exclusion.
- i.** After sufficient time for reconciliation has past, as evaluated by the Pastor, the Pastor may recommend that offender be placed on church discipline.
- j.** The member in question shall then be notified by the Pastor as to the time when such a recommendation is to be presented to the church. This notification shall be notified at least one (1) week before the time of the business meeting.
- k.** The recommendation of the Pastor, for church discipline, shall include only sufficient information to clearly indicate the nature of the offense.
- l.** Members of the church shall be notified at least one (1) week before the time of the business meeting, that a recommendation of church discipline shall be presented by the Pastor. A majority of an ordinary quorum shall be required for passage.
- m.** Having been placed under church discipline according to 1 Corinthians 5:11-13, the church will not fellowship with the offender, but shall pray that the offender will repent.

- n. A church member under discipline will become an inactive member, thus relinquishing their voting right.
- o. After church discipline and sufficient time for reconciliation have past, as evaluated by the Pastor and if inactive membership termination has not automatically occurred, the Pastor may recommend to the church that the offender's church membership be terminated. A majority of an ordinary quorum shall be required for passage.

7.4 GENERAL OFFENSES

Should any member become an offense to the church and a stumbling block to the ministry by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct by consistent breach of their covenant vows or by reason of heretical beliefs, the church may place the offender on church discipline.

- a. Such action may be initiated only by the Pastor. No public recommendation to either consider or prosecute such a move shall be made except by the Pastor.
- b. In all cases where disciplinary discharge is considered, the Pastor shall exercise every spiritual means of persuasion and prayer to draw the errant member back into the fellowship of the church.
- c. When every effort has failed to restore such a member, the Pastor shall recommend that offender be placed on church discipline.
- d. The member in question shall then be notified by the Pastor as to the time when such a recommendation is to be presented to the church. This notification will be given at least one (1) week before the time of the business meeting.
- e. The recommendation of the Pastor shall include only sufficient information to clearly indicate the nature of the offense in writing.
- f. Members of the church shall be notified at least one (1) week before the time of the business meeting, that a recommendation of church

discipline shall be presented by the Pastor. A majority of an ordinary quorum shall be required for passage.

- g.** Having been placed on church discipline according to 1 Corinthians 5:11-13, the church will not fellowship with the offender, but shall pray that he will repent.
- h.** Church member on discipline will become an inactive member, thus relinquishing their voting right.
- i.** After church discipline and sufficient time for reconciliation has past, as evaluated by the Pastor, and if inactive membership termination has not automatically occurred, the Pastor may recommend to the church that the offender's church membership be terminated. A majority of an ordinary quorum shall be required for passage.

8 ARTICLE VIII – CHURCH OFFICERS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

- a. The leadership of this church, all departments being subject thereto, resides in the scriptural office of the Pastor, who is appointed by the Holy Spirit as the overseer of the flock:
 - i. “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.” – Acts 20:28
 - ii. “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.” – Hebrews 13:7
 - iii. “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. – Hebrews 13:17
 - iv. “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.” – 1 Timothy 5:17
- b. The Bible doctrine of the local church shall determine our conception of the ministry. We hold firmly the priesthood of all believers and, therefore, have no separated order of priests. The ministry is the gift of the Holy Spirit to the churches and is an office involving both the inward call of God and the commission of the local church. In the New Testament, there were two types of local ministry in the churches: the Pastors (elders, bishops, overseers), and the Deacons (ministering servants) – Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1, 3.

8.2 WHAT THE WORD OF GOD TEACHES CONCERNING PASTORS

- a. Definition of terms:

- i. Elder (presbuteros) – Among Christians, those who presided over the assemblies (the churches) – Acts 11:30, 14:23, 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 16:4, 20:17, 21:18; 1 Timothy 5:17-19; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1, 5.
 - ii. Bishop (episkopos) – The superintendent, head or overseer of any Christian church – Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7.
 - iii. Pastor (poimen) – A herdsman, a shepherd – John 21:16; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:2.
 - iv. We believe from studying the Scriptures that the three above titles – elder, bishop, pastor – all refer to the ministry of one and the same person. In Acts 20:17, the title elder is used: “And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the Church.” Then, in the 28th verse of the same chapter, speaking of the duties of the elders, Paul by inspiration says: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (poimen – pastors), to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with His own blood.” In 1 Peter 5:1, we read: “The elders (presbuteros) which are among you I exhort ...” - verse 2: “... taking the oversight thereof (episkopos – bishop) ...” - verse 4: “And when the chief Shepherd (poimen – pastor) shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of Glory ...”
- b. The term “Pastor”: The pastors of the New Testament churches were men with the “shepherd heart.” They had the gift of sharing the love of the Chief Shepherd as they expressed dear concern for the needs of men individually. This term has come to be the most cherished designation concerning God’s servants in the ministry of the Church. It is derived from beautiful Biblical symbolism, the shepherd who tends, guides, reeds and cares for his flock of sheep. The term “pastor” (poimen) gives meaning to the ministry and, which, properly interpreted, is broad enough to include the total functional ministry of the local church.
- c. Qualifications of Pastors – 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:4-9.
- d. Duties of the Pastor (those not already intended):

- i. He is to be a preacher of the Word of God – “Preach the Word ...”; he is to “... reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” – 2 Timothy 4:1-5; 1 Timothy 4:12-16.
 - ii. He must see that all phases of the ministry are cared for: the instruction of children, the preaching of the Word of God to the saved and the teaching and training of all church officers and Sunday School teachers, the ministry of community evangelism and visitation of the sick, the care of those who are weak in the faith, the ministry of prayer, the worship and preaching ministry of the church, the selection of Deacons and Assistant Pastors, etc. As the one who presides over the gatherings of the church, the Pastor is responsible for maintaining church order; he shall act as leader of the congregation, taking the initiative when necessary; he shall represent the congregation in pronouncing its decisions. The Pastor must not allow a weaker brother to engage in disputing and criticizing. He must not allow false doctrine to be taught. He shall, with the assistance of the Deacons, conduct the baptismal and communion services.
- e. The responsible leadership of the Pastor in the Congregation:
 - i. Although there is no “priestly authority” granted the Pastor in the New Testament, since all Christians are priests unto God, there is, we believe, a certain leadership authority accorded him: “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God ...” “Obey them that have the rule over you ...” – Hebrews 13:7, 17. “And we beseech you brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13.
 - ii. Authority of office grows out of the responsibility of office. It is not ecclesiastical authority of an assumed authority, but a given authority. Acknowledged as necessary, it is given by the Word of God.

- iii. In keeping with such Scriptures as Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 3:5, let it be remembered that a Pastor is the Pastor of every function, committee and activity of the church. He shall be a member (exofficio) of all committees and organizations.
 - iv. The Pastor's divine call to the ministry, the gifts he has received from God, his ordination after careful and prayerful examination, and the church's call to the pastorate to serve in a specific office of leadership all combine to imply that certain prerogatives and acknowledged authority go with the office. **But it is not personal authority, Christ is the authority and the ministry is to be performed in His name. The ministry is to be a ministry of Christ as He ministers through His servants by the wisdom and the power of the Holy Spirit.**
 - v. Where and when a Pastor ceases to follow Christ, or if he preaches any message other than the clear teachings of the Scriptures, he has no spiritual right or authority and should not be followed.
- f. Number of Pastors.
- i. There shall be one Pastor. The Pastor shall be chosen for an indefinite period by ballot upon the recommendation of the pulpit committee.
 - ii. As opportunity and need arise, others with gifts differing from those of the Pastor may be called to serve in the capacity of assistant to the Pastor, minister of education, minister of visitation, minister of music, youth director, etc. They shall be considered as assistants to the pastor and shall be responsible directly to the Pastor. They may be appointed by the Pastor either from within the membership of the church or may be secured from without the church. Those from without are subject to approval by a majority vote of the church with a regular quorum present. Their duties and hours shall be determined by the Pastor.

iii. In the event this church does not have a Pastor – through resignation, church vote to remove or death – the Deacons shall schedule the pulpit supply (church members and/or guest speakers) until a Pastor voted in by the church is selected.

g. Procedure to be followed by the church in calling a Pastor:

- i.** We believe that it is the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit to call men into the full-time ministry and we believe that the Holy Spirit should directly lead in the placing of preachers in God’s chosen field of service for them – Acts 13:4.
- ii.** When the church finds it necessary to call a Pastor, the Deacons shall serve as the pulpit committee. If there are no Deacons, or if there are fewer than five (5) Deacons, the church shall elect the balance from the voting male membership of the church to make a committee of five (5). This committee shall dissolve after a Pastor has been called.
- iii.** If there are more than five (5) deacons in the church the deacons shall decide on which deacons constitute the pulpit committee.
- iv.** A head deacon shall be assigned by the Pastor. In the absence of a Pastor the deacons shall decide on a head deacon.
- v.** The head deacon shall lead the pulpit committee
- vi.** After prayerfully seeking the leadership of the Holy Spirit, this committee shall seek out the candidate(s). When one man is unanimously agreed upon by the pulpit committee, the committee shall present his name to the church to vote on his call. Only one name shall be presented at a time.
- vii.** The church membership shall be notified two (2) weeks in advance that a vote to call a Pastor shall be taken at a special business meeting.
- viii.** A 75% majority vote of a special quorum (Section 11.2) shall be required to extend a call to a Pastor.

- ix. If the candidate is rejected, or if he refuses the call, the committee shall seek another candidate in the same manner described.
 - x. The call of this church to a Pastor shall be for an indefinite period.
 - xi. Once a Pastor has accepted the call of the church, he shall become a member of the church as soon as possible before his first day in office as Pastor of the church.
- h. Dissolution of the Pastoral relationship**
- i. A Pastor may, as he believes the Holy Spirit leads, resign his position as Pastor of the church. He should give the church two months' notice before leaving the work of the pastorate, unless the church relieves him of this responsibility.
 - ii. Action by the church to terminate the Pastoral relationship should be taken only after much prayer and only for the most serious reasons, e.g., immorality, dishonesty, heresy or serious dereliction of the Pastoral duties. Such action may be initiated only within the committee of Deacons and must be made in writing. The matter shall be taken to the church only by the unanimous vote of the Deacons.
 - iii. A 75% majority vote of a special quorum (Section 11.2) shall be required to remove a Pastor.
 - iv. In the event, the church removes the Pastor, the dismissed Pastor shall be advanced one (1) month's salary.
- i. In the event that a Pastor is not present, the head deacon will fulfill these roles.

8.3 WHAT THE WORD OF GOD TEACHES CONCERNING DEACONS

- a. The Deacon, in the technical sense, is one who serves or a ministering servant. He is responsible for the temporal, secular and social cares of the church, as directed by the Pastor – Acts 6:1-7; Philippians 1:1. He should have the gift of “serviceable ministrations.” Note Romans 12:7. While the ministry of the Deacons is temporal, secular and social it must not be thought that natural talent is to be wholly or chiefly relied upon for its

accomplishment. The seven in the Jerusalem church were of “honest report full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.” This should be true of all who would serve the Lord Jesus Christ in the church – Pastors, Deacons, ushers, musicians, and teachers.

- b.** The Christian character and qualifications of a Deacon are found in the Scriptures mentioned above – Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- c.** The Deacons shall be elected from among male members of the church. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the Pastor. The Deacons shall have only such duties as are given by the Pastor.
- d.** The Deacons and the Pastor – it is the essential nature of the Deacon’s office that it shall shield the Pastor and protect him so that he may fulfill his distinct and peculiar function of prayer and ministry of the Word of God. Discerning Deacons will always find their highest usefulness in intelligent and understanding support of the Pastor to free him for his sacred ministry. Every Pastor must have some discerning spiritual men on whom he can lean. When he is weary with toil, when the battle goes hard, he needs this inner circle of prayerful Deacons – a group of men who know, love and understand.
- e.** Deacons, in setting a Godly example, should desire to win lost souls to Christ. In fact, this is the Deacon’s highest function. They should also feel responsible for the ministry of visiting and caring for the widows, the needy and the sick of the church. Deacons should have a burden for missions by earnestly praying and sacrificially giving for our missionaries.
- f.** The Deacons are also to be an example to the church in the matter of giving of tithe (time, talent and treasure).
- g.** Each Deacon agrees to voluntarily remove himself from office if at any time he can no longer abide by the Constitution or finds himself not in harmony with the Pastor.
- h.** The Deacons will assist the Pastor in the serving of the Lord’s Supper and in the administering of believer’s baptism.

- i. The office of Deacon shall be for two years length. In the event there are no qualified replacements these men may be re-elected.
- j. When the Pastor desires to elect a Deacon(s) to serve the church, he will bring a call for nominations of Deacon candidates to the church. Church members will provide the Pastor with candidate names in writing any time after the announcement. The Pastor will interview candidates given and provide recommendations to the church. An ordinary quorum vote shall be required to elect Deacons.
- k. In the event no Pastor is present, the church can nominate, interview and vote in a Deacon(s). Potential candidates will be interviewed by the current Deacons with any assistance from the church selected by the Deacons and they will provide recommendations to the church. A second business meeting, scheduled no earlier than four (4) weeks after, will include the recommendations and the church vote to elect a Deacon(s). In this four-week period, church members should pray and interact with those candidates, seeking God's Will for which nominees to add to the pool of Deacons.

8.4 TREASURER

- a. Because of the close relationship of the Pastor and the treasurer, the Pastor shall appoint a treasurer at each annual business meeting. The treasurer shall be bonded.
- b. Duties – The treasurer shall act as the paying agent for the year. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve and pay out the church money as necessary, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. All books, records and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be considered the property of the church. The books, with the exception of the personal tithing records, shall be open to inspection at all times.
- c. An annual audit of the financial records will be conducted by an accountant outside of the church.

8.5 CHURCH CLERK

- a. A church clerk shall be appointed by the Pastor at the annual business meeting.
- b. Duties – The clerk shall keep in a suitable book a record of all actions of the church. He/she shall keep a register of the names of all members of the church divided into two different rolls: an active roll and an inactive roll. The clerk shall keep minutes of all business meetings of the church. The clerk will maintain baptismal certificates. The clerk can sign, certify or attest documents as may be required by law.

8.6 TRUSTEES

- a. Trustees shall function pursuant to New York State Law as defined in ARTICLE 2- General Provisions, ARTICLE 7 - Baptist Churches, of Religious Corporations (RCO) CHAPTER 51

Reference:

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/RCO/A2>

<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/RCO/-CH51>

- b. The trustees shall be elected from the male voting membership of the church by regular quorum vote.
- c. Duties – The trustees are the servants of the church and shall act as the representatives of the church in all legal matters. It shall be the duty of the trustees to represent the church in all legal matters as required by law, and to hold in trust the property of the church. They are not to be considered a board of directors. They have no authority to buy, sell, lease, mortgage or transfer any property without the specific instruction of the church authorizing by regular quorum vote such action. The trustees shall have the responsibility of the upkeep and maintenance of all buildings and property.

8.7 QUALIFICATIONS OF ALL OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES AND WORKERS

All elected (during a church business meeting) and appointed officers, employees and workers of this church shall be faithful to all public services of the church. They shall be givers of tithe (time, talent and treasure), showing a pattern of good works, strictly adhering to the Bible teaching concerning separation from the world (2 Corinthians 6:14-17). Their lives shall be such as to honor the name of Christ. Any officer, employee or worker bringing dishonor on the name of Christ and this church is subject to removal from office by the Pastor, or head deacon in the absence of a Pastor.

9 ARTICLE IX – PROPERTY

9.1 PROPRIETY

The church property(s) belongs to the congregation as a whole and not to any one person or group of people.

9.2 ORGANIC DIVISION

In case of organic division of the church membership, the church property(s) shall belong to those who abide by this constitution.

9.3 DONATIONS

All articles donated to the church become the property of the church and will be entered in a donation log and signed by the donor.

9.4 DISSOLUTION

In the event that the church dissolves, trustees will liquidate all assets, pay all debts, and equally distribute the balance among all currently supported mission projects.

10 ARTICLE X – MISSIONS

10.1 HOME MISSIONS

- a. This church will help to support missionaries inside the United States.
- b. This church will help to start New Testament Baptist churches within the United States.

10.2 FOREIGN MISSIONS

- a. This church will help to support missionaries outside the United States.
- b. The support of a foreign missionary may not be discontinued until the supported missionary has left the ministry the church has supported or is found to be teaching doctrines contrary to the Articles of Faith (Section 5) of this church.
- c. A change in pastorate does not constitute a change or cancellation of any missionary project(s) in force at the time of the pastorate change.

10.3 INSTITUTIONS

The support of worthy institutions for the training of Pastors and other full-time Christian workers.

10.4 OTHER PROJECTS

This church may support other worthy missionary projects, i.e., Rescue Missions, Youth Camps, etc.

10.5 LOCAL INJUNCTIONS

- a. All mission monies must be spent outside of this local church on mission projects only.
- b. Every missionary project must be approved by a majority vote of the church with an ordinary quorum present.

11 ARTICLE XI – BUSINESS MEETINGS

11.1 REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

The Pastor may call business meetings as they become necessary. A business meeting must be announced in two (2) public services prior to the business meeting. The Pastor will act as moderator of all business meetings. The Pastor must be present at all business meetings. In the event that the church is without a Pastor, the Deacons by majority vote may request a special business meeting. Announcement of special business meetings are the same as regular. These meetings are open to all church members.

11.2 QUORUM

- a.** Ordinary Quorum – shall consist of the active members present at the business meeting.
- b.** Special Quorum – one-half (50%) of the total active membership roll of the church shall be present to constitute a special quorum in cases of especially important matters; for example, buying or selling property, constructing a building, calling a Pastor, terminating the Pastoral relationship, or amending the constitution.
- c.** Voting age of members shall be at least sixteen (16) years of age.
- d.** Procedure of business meetings:
 - i.** Devotional service and prayer
 - ii.** Reading of minutes
 - iii.** Reports and recommendations by the Pastor
 - i.** The yearly financial report includes an update on the budget, expenses made toward the budget, rollover balances (e.g., benevolence) and account balances (e.g., checking, savings, vehicle).
 - iv.** Unfinished business
 - v.** New business
 - vi.** Closing prayer and adjournment

12 ARTICLE XII – AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution may be introduced in writing through formal motion at any business meeting, but shall not be acted upon by the church until a later business meeting. At such time an affirmative 75% of required voting members shall be necessary for acceptance; provided, however, that members of the church have in the meantime been duly informed of the proposed amendment.

At no time can any amendment be adopted that would be contrary to the clear teachings of the Scriptures and to historic Baptist beliefs and practices. Constitution Articles II, III, IV and V may not be amended at any time under any conditions.

13 ARTICLE XIII – SEXUALITY AND MARRIAGE

13.1 HUMAN SEXUALITY

- a. 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.

Scriptural References: Genesis 2:24; Genesis 19:5, 13; Genesis 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4.

- b. We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman – Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23. This institution shall not hire for pay, or have voluntary help from, anyone who is practicing, or believes that homosexuality is an alternative lifestyle. We believe that homosexuality is immoral according to God's Word. Such persons cannot be considered for membership, or be retained as a member, but shall be dismissed from membership by majority vote of the church membership and Pastoral staff.
- c. If a member becomes a homosexual while on staff of this institution, they shall be dismissed by the Pastoral staff.

Scriptural References: Leviticus 18:22-23; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Genesis 19:1-25.

- d. No person who has ever been accused and found guilty by law of any form of sexual misconduct shall be allowed to hold a position in any children's ministry.

13.2 CONCERNING MARRIAGE

- a. The Pastor shall not perform unbiblical marriages – Genesis 2:22-24; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:14.

- b.** We believe that God's intention for marriage is established throughout the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments – Genesis 2; Matthew 19; 1 Corinthians 7.
- c.** We believe that God ordained marriage as a voluntary union for life of one man and one woman – Romans 7:2-3.
- d.** Sexual orientation is a personal (human) choice and we believe it is not part of God's plan for the human race.
- e.** We believe God establishes your sexual gender and you are either male or female at birth, excluding genetic abnormalities due to the fall – Genesis 1:27; Genesis 5:2.
- f.** We believe that sexual intimacy is legitimate only within the bounds of marriage between that man and that woman – Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:22; Hebrews 13:4.
- g.** We believe that marriage is more than a contract between one female and one male; it is a covenant before God – Matthew 19:4-5.
- h.** We believe that in Christian marriages, the Church acts as an agent of God's blessing, as a primary witness and as a supportive community – Titus 2.
- i.** We believe that a healthy marriage is the best foundation for families and the raising of children.

As a church, we believe marriage is a God ordained institution, and as such should be governed by God's standard. To this end, we have adopted the following policies. The purpose of these policies is to uphold the sacredness of marriage and the vows made before God and man during the marriage ceremony.

Those qualifying for use of the church facilities for marriage are limited to:

- a.** Members and/or faithful attenders providing their marriage meets the Scriptural standards of God's Word as assessed by the Pastor.
- b.** Because the Bible forbids an unequal yoke (1 Corinthians 6:14), the use of the church and services of our Pastor are not available to a believer marrying an unsaved person.
- c.** Same sex marriages will not be performed; nor shall any transgender marriages be performed. No other wedding except one man to one woman will be performed.
- d.** Alcoholic beverages will not be served at the reception of those who are married in church facilities and who use such facilities for their reception.
- e.** Since a wedding in the church denotes a desire to do God's Will, every part of the ceremony, including words, music, and symbols will be appropriate for the occasion and will be subject to the Pastor's approval.
- f.** If other Pastors are invited to participate in the ceremony, they shall be of like faith and doctrine, with special permission granted by the Pastor.

The above guidelines are justified and demanded for a Christian wedding in a building dedicated to the glory of God. If you feel that you do not meet these standards or wish to comply with the requirements, we ask you understand and respect our reasons.

Revision History

Date Adopted	Comment	Signed
26 Mar 1976	Church established	Rev. Edward A. Schraff
27 Feb 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many grammar and wording corrections • Add King James to Bible description in Article 2.1 • Remove 10% requirement for tithe • Clarified tithe as time, talent, treasure • Add dispensations in Statements of Faith (Article 5.2) • Add we follow “close” communion for the Lord’s supper • Changed time for member inactivity and termination • Add by inactivity and by Church Discipline for reasons for membership termination • Changed notice time of meeting for church discipline • Changed notice time for calling a pastor • Head Deacon fulfills roles of a Pastor when not present • Removed: “The Deacons of this church should never be thought of as a board of directors, ruling elders, etc.” • Added Article 13 – Sexuality (13.1) and Marriage (13.2) • Pastor cannot perform unbiblical marriages (Art. 13.2.a) • The Pastor selects the head deacon • Removed Baptism is required for the Lord’s Supper 	Matthew Miller (Head Deacon)