

CHURCH COVENANT

We believe that the Holy Spirit of God has drawn us to follow Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. We have publicly confessed our faith through believers' baptism. Following in the footsteps of the saints who have gone before us, we both joyfully and thoughtfully enter into covenant with one another in the presence of God and the angels and the people of this fellowship. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit to a common life that is characterized by the love of Christ. Together we will do all we can to pursue godly knowledge, holiness, spiritual care and the expansion of this fellowship. We will regularly engage in worship and the celebration of baptism and communion. We will hold one another accountable to the discipline of Christ-likeness, and we will ground our lives in Christian doctrine. We will 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 the nations.

We pledge to engage in family and private worship, to teach our children the ways of Christ and the content of Scripture. We commit to speak of our faith to our friends and family. In the world beyond the church, we will pursue to live Christ-like lives. In our work we will be honorable; in our commitments and vows, we will be faithful. And in our personal behavior, we will be people of integrity. We renounce the temptations of gossip and uncontrolled anger. We will be restrained in our wants and responsible in the use of our money. We will be advocates of biblical justice and reconciliation in human affairs. We will resist evil and any appearance of it that offends others. In contrast, we will do all we can to advance the kingdom of God. We will care for one another in Christian love. We will pray for one another, come to each other's aid in times of sickness and difficulty. We will be sensitive to each other's feelings and respectful toward one another in our communications. When we have been offended, we will not strike back. And when we have done wrong, we will acknowledge our responsibility. Together we will pursue the ways of forgiveness and reconciliation, and, as Jesus taught, do it as quickly as possible. Finally, we promise that if the day comes when we are led of God to leave this congregation, we will unite as soon as possible with another congregation where we can continue our commitment to the spirit of this covenant and the teaching of God's Word.

Preamble

We, the membership of Fellowship Baptist Church of Mount Laurel, New Jersey establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit.

REVISED September, 2004

BY-LAWS

(Rules of Order)

Article I – NAME

The name of this incorporated body shall be the Fellowship Baptist Church of Mt. Laurel Township, Burlington County, New Jersey.

Article II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be:

1. To maintain a testimony for Jesus Christ in the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, to seek the salvation of souls and spiritual growth of the saints, to provide such institutions, organizations, and training classes as would educate and equip our people to minister for Christ.
2. To administer the ordinances of the New Testament.
3. To provide Christian fellowship for those of like faith.
4. To provide a place of public worship.
5. To promote the establishment of likeminded churches at home and abroad.

Article III – ASSOCIATION

This church is autonomous and subject only to Christ, its Head. Therefore, it cannot join anything outside itself, but only affiliate with churches and organizations which hold strong biblical convictions and are vigorously opposed to all apostasy and compromise. This church declares itself presently in fellowship with:

1. The Garden State Fellowship of Regular Baptist Churches.
2. The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches.

If these associations should waver from their present biblical stand, this church, in standing true to the Word itself, could no longer fellowship with these associations.

Article IV – ORDINANCES

Section 1 – Baptism:

Baptism by immersion in water shall be the only form acceptable for those professing faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior in accordance with the scriptural teaching. The pastor shall approve all candidates for baptism.

(Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:36-39)

Section 2 – The Lord's Supper:

The Lord's Supper shall be served to the assembled church monthly, or at the discretion of the pastors, in accordance with the scriptural teaching. Since it is the Lord's Supper, none who are His shall be barred, except in cases when members of the church are under discipline (1 Corinthians 5:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 11).

Article V – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 – Reception of Members:

A. Anyone professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, giving testimony of a change of heart from sin toward God, and declaring himself/herself in accord with the principles, practice and doctrines of this church, may become a candidate for membership. Prior to becoming a member of the church, each person must have been baptized as a believer by immersion.

B. Representatives of the Church Board shall have the opportunity to meet personally with candidates in order to ascertain their qualifications for membership.

C. Names of candidates approved by the Church Board will be presented for approval to the membership, who will be given the opportunity to vote. Any member casting a negative vote shall give reason for the negative vote to the Church Board. If the reason given shall be found to be sufficient as to warrant disqualification, membership shall be withheld; if not, the vote shall be declared unanimous unless the board deems it appropriate to bring the matter before the church. The right hand of fellowship shall be extended to the accepted candidate(s) on a Sunday following completion of membership requirements.

Section 2 – Responsibilities of Members:

Each person, upon coming into the membership, voluntarily subscribes to the obligations of the church covenant.

Section 3 – Termination of Membership:

A. Death

B. Withdrawal - Any member in good standing, upon presentation of a written request to the deacons, shall be allowed to withdraw from the membership.

C. Departure - Any member who has been absent from the services of the church for a continuous period of six months shall be contacted by the Church Board. Unless satisfactory explanation has been given to and accepted by the Church Board, that member will be removed from the church membership roll.

D. Church Discipline – The Church Board shall be responsible to administer church discipline where necessary in accordance with biblical principles. Dismissal of a member must be approved by a majority vote of church members in an officially called business meeting. (Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; Titus 3:10)

Article VI – OFFICERS, BOARDS and STAFF

The Church Board shall consist of the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastors, and the Deacons.

The total number of pastors on the Board shall not exceed the number of deacons.

Section 1 – *Deacons*:

A. Qualifications:

1. Qualifications for deacons shall be such as are prescribed and set forth in the New Testament. No one shall be elected to office of deacon who has not been a member of the church for at least six months, and who is not at least twenty-one years of age.

2. All deacons shall be members subscribing wholeheartedly to the Articles of Faith, the Rules of Order, and the Church Covenant. They shall meet the requirements as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Titus 1:5-9.

3. All deacons shall normally assume their duties on the first Sunday of the church year. Retiring officers shall hold office until the terms of the newly elected officers begin.

B. Election:

The church shall elect from its membership a minimum of three (3) deacons.

The number of deacons shall be enlarged at the discretion of the Church Board. The term of office shall be for three years and so arranged that where possible one third (1/3) of the deacons are elected each year. A deacon, having served two consecutive three year terms, shall normally step down for a period of one year unless the church board specifically determines this is not in the best interest of the church, in which case the person may be eligible for re-election to another three year term.

1. The Primary Ballot:

- a. The primary ballot is a write-in nomination and will be distributed to all church members at least two months prior to the annual meeting.
- b. The names of the nominees will be inserted by the voter and the ballot should be mailed without a signature to the chairman of the deacons or deposited in a ballot box conveniently located in the church prior to a date specified by the Church Board. Ballots received after this date will be considered null and void.
- c. The Church Board will consider those men who receive the highest number of votes as nominees for the office of deacon. The Church Board will determine the appropriate number of deacons for the following year.
- d. Individuals who scripturally qualify will be contacted for their consent before their names are presented at the annual meeting.
- e. Only the names of those nominees shall be made public.

2. The Affirmation at the Annual Meeting:

- a. All members in good standing and at least 18 years of age shall have the right to affirm nominees.
- b. Names presented will be the only names considered. There will be no further nominations from the floor at the annual meeting.
- c. The affirmation slips will be counted by an appointed committee and names posted or announced.

C. Responsibilities:

1. It shall be the duty of the deacons to assist the pastors in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church; to be their counselors; to exercise special and prudent watch-care over the church membership.
2. The deacons shall be stewards of all church funds.
3. They shall participate in the distribution of the elements of the

Lord's Supper.

4. They, together with the pastor, shall constitute the Discipline Committee.
5. The deacons shall make recommendations to the church concerning the salary and benefits of the pastor, associate pastors and ministry staff, and the employment or termination of all individuals compensated by the church.
6. The deacons will be responsible for the services in the absence of the pastors.
7. At the first board meeting after each annual church election they shall elect from their number a chairman and a secretary. The secretary shall keep a faithful record of any work, acts, or transactions performed by the body. Meetings shall be held at the call of the chairman or senior pastor. A majority of the full number shall constitute a quorum.
8. The deacons shall act as the pulpit committee.
9. The deacons shall ensure that an audit of the church financial records occurs at least every third year.
10. Deacons, along with the pastors, shall act as the examining council for all candidates for church membership.

D. The deacons shall serve as Trustees of this church, representing this corporation as its agent.

1. The chairman and secretary of the deacons shall act as representatives of the church when conducting business with governmental authorities.
2. The deacons shall appoint from its body committees to care for the property, to hold, repair and preserve the same. They shall superintend improvements and perform any business concern assigned to them by the church. They are at all times servants of the church and subject to its corporate action.
3. They shall have authority to purchase, lease or acquire services or goods in any manner not to exceed 1% of the annual budget.
4. In the case of an unforeseen situation requiring prompt action, and upon the declaration of an emergency by a unanimous vote of the Church Board, the limit is raised to 2% of the annual budget. Any decision that exceeds the annual budget shall be specifically reported to the congregation in a timely fashion.
5. They shall not have authority to sell, lease, give away or dispose of church property in any manner to exceed 1% of the annual budget nor to mortgage or encumber the same with debts to exceed the above amount, except as the church shall order by a corporate act.

Section 2 – The Pastors:

A. Qualifications:

Any candidate for the pastorate of the church shall meet the requirements as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

B. The Calling and Election of a Senior Pastor:

1. When the Senior Pastor's position becomes vacant, the deacons shall become the pulpit committee, augmenting themselves as they deem appropriate.

The Deacons shall present a single candidate to the church, arranging for an appropriate candidating experience. This shall include speaking at least one time at a worship service of the church.

2. The candidate shall be elected and consequently called by a three fourths (3/4) vote of the qualified church voters present (provided a quorum is present), and voting upon the recommendation of the Pulpit Committee. Notice of this meeting shall be given on two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting and by letter sent to the membership.

3. The Senior Pastor shall be elected for an indeterminate term.

C. Responsibilities of the Senior Pastor:

1. Upon assuming his duties he shall become a member of the church.

2. The pastor shall preach regularly at the church services, administer the ordinances, and be an ex-officio member of all church boards and committees with the right of choice as to serving on such boards and committees. He shall have the oversight of the entire work of the church and shall perform the duties common to his office.

3. The Senior Pastor shall be responsible for the pulpit supply.

D. Termination of the Senior Pastor:

1. The term of office may be ended upon thirty days notice on the part of the pastor.

2. The church may terminate the term of the pastor at a meeting specially called by the Deacons. Termination shall be by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of members present at the meeting. The pastor's duties shall cease as of the vote to terminate. Unless the termination is due to discipline on the part of the pastor, the church shall pay the pastor two months severance pay. If the termination is for immorality or felony, no severance pay shall be due the pastor, but the church shall consider its responsibility to the pastor's family.

E. Associate and Assistant Pastors

The church may choose to call an undetermined number of associate and assistant pastors.

1. The Church Board shall gain church approval to call a new associate or assistant pastor.

2. The Senior Pastor shall develop a job description with the approval of the Church Board and present a candidate to the church in an appropriate candidating experience. The Associate or Assistant Pastor shall have the same biblical qualifications as the Senior Pastor and be elected in the same manner. Associate Pastors will report to the Senior Pastor.

Assistant Pastors will report to an Associate Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

3. The Church Board shall maintain a current copy of the job description for each Associate and Assistant Pastor.

F. Vacation: The pastors shall have an annual vacation, the time and extent to be agreed upon by the pastors and Church Board.

G. Salary: The pastors' salaries and benefits shall be reviewed by the deacons annually and a recommendation submitted prior to the annual church business meeting.

H. Absence: Absence from services of the church will be by consent of the Church Board.

Section 3 - Professional Ministry Staff

The Church may choose to call an undetermined number of individuals as professional ministry staff.

I. The Church Board shall gain church approval to create a new Ministry Staff position.

J. The Senior Pastor or his designee shall develop a job description and present a candidate to the church in an appropriate candidating experience. The Ministry Staff candidate shall show demonstrated spiritual maturity and ministry skills for the position for which he/she is proposed.

Members of the Ministry Staff will report either to the Senior Pastor or an Associate Pastor as designated by the Senior Pastor.

The Church Board shall maintain a current copy of the job description for each Ministry Staff position.

Section 4 - Support Staff

A. An undetermined number of support staff may be hired to provide services such as administrative, secretarial, clerical, and building maintenance.

B. All individuals hired for these positions shall have a lifestyle that is consistent with the Church Covenant.

C. Support Staff shall be hired by the Senior Pastor with funds as provided in the church budget. Support staff will report either to the Senior Pastor or to an Associate or Assistant Pastor as designated by the Senior Pastor.

Section 5 – Appointed Officers:

The appointed officers of the church shall consist of Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Church Clerk. They shall be appointed by the Church Board and shall serve for a term of one year, concurrent with the church year. No person shall hold two positions simultaneously. Upon his or her retirement or removal from office, the officer shall deliver to his or her successor or the Chairman of the Deacons all records, files, and/or other papers belonging to the church and shall present the same with all contents complete to the date of surrender of such documents.

A. Treasurer:

1. The duties of the treasurer shall be the administration of all church funds as directed by the deacons and the maintenance of proper and complete records thereof.

2. The treasurer will prepare a financial report to be presented at the Annual Business Meetings and at other times as requested by the Church Board.

B. Financial Secretary:

1. The duties of the financial secretary shall be to keep the accurate record of all money received and assist the treasurer in recording all monies received at church services.
2. The records of all individual gifts shall be guarded as a sacred trust.
3. The Financial Secretary shall prepare tithe and gift statements as required by the Internal Revenue Service.
4. The Church Board shall appoint teams of two church members to count all regular offerings and to provide a summary to the Financial Secretary.

C. Church Clerk:

1. The church clerk shall keep record of all business meetings of the church.
2. The clerk shall keep a record of memberships and baptisms.
3. The clerk shall make a full report to the church when requested by the Church Board.
4. The clerk shall provide the financial secretary and the treasurer with a transcript of the minutes of each church business meeting in which authority is granted for the disbursement or transfer of funds.
5. The clerk, or any other member, shall not release the membership roll of this church to any group or individual.

Section 6 - Retention of Records:

The records of all officers and boards are considered to be church property, and are to be given over to the succeeding officers and boards as soon as practicable. Copies of the minutes of all Business Meetings and Church Board Meetings shall be maintained in the church office.

Section 7 – Indemnification

A. General Rule. Except as otherwise provided in these by-laws, FBC hereby agrees to indemnify, defend and save any officer, employee and/or individual harmless from any loss incurred (or which would have been incurred but for the payment thereof by FBC pursuant hereto) by any officer, employee and/or individual, including, but not limited to, court costs and attorneys' fees, by reason of any act or omission performed or omitted by the officer, employee and/or individual in pursuance of his or her duties on behalf of FBC. This indemnification shall only apply when such duties are within the scope of the officer's, employee's and/or individual's responsibilities and are authorized by appropriate church authority. Any such loss, damage or expenditure shall be paid or reimbursed by FBC to the extent assets are available therefore, but no officer, employee and/or individual shall have any personal liability to any other officer, employee and/or individual or to FBC on account thereof.

B. Limitations. Insurance. The obligation(s) of indemnification provided above shall not include an obligation to pay (or reimburse) any claim, cost or expense which is otherwise payable pursuant to any contract of insurance or other right of indemnification.

Article VII – ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

It is recognized that the church may have within it various ministries.

Section 1 – Relationship to the Church:

All ministries of the church shall be under the supervision of the Church Board.

Section 2 – Finances:

No organization within the church shall have a separate bank account. All monies received shall become the property of the church and shall be handled through regular financial channels.

Article VIII – FINANCES OF THE CHURCH:

Section 1 – Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall begin October 1 and end on September 30 or any one year period determined by the Church Board.

Section 2 – Monetary Principles:

The systematic giving of money for the support of the work of the Lord is worship as well as responsibility. It must be kept on the plane of voluntary, freewill offering. No monies shall be raised for the systematic continual support of the church and its various activities by any but the biblical plan of tithes, offerings and gifts and sacrificial love considerations for Christ's work.

Section 3 – Power to Sign Legal Papers:

Any note, bond, stock certificate, mortgage, deed, lease agreement, evidence of indebtedness, contract, or other instrument of writing or any assignment or endorsement thereof, executed or entered into between this church and corporation and any other person, co-partnership, association, or corporation, when signed by the chairman and secretary of the Church Board, together with the corporate seal of this church impressed thereon, shall be held to have been properly executed for all purposes, for and in behalf of this church and corporation.

Article IX – MISSIONS

It shall be the policy of this church that any missions support shall be viewed as an extension of this local body. Accordingly, all missions or missionaries supported by this church shall be accountable to this church. In addition, all missions, sending churches and missionaries shall be in agreement with our confession of faith both in doctrine and in practice. The principal focus of all missions outreach shall be evangelism and discipleship with the intent of getting believers involved in local churches consistent with our doctrine and practice.

Article X – USE OF THE CHURCH PROPERTY AND FACILITIES

Use of the church facility and properties, both real and intellectual, for other than church sponsored activities shall be by consent of the Church Board.

Article XI – MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

Section 1 – Meetings of Public Worship:

Public worship services shall be held regularly on the Lord's Day.

Section 2 – Business Meetings:

A. The Meetings:

1. The Annual Meeting shall be held during the last month of the fiscal year as determined by the Church Board. Public notice of this meeting shall be given at least two Sundays in advance.
2. Other business meetings may be called at any time by the Church Board. Normally a public notice of same shall be given for two (2) preceding Sundays.
3. Any member desiring a special meeting may present his/her request to the Church Board. The determination as to whether such a meeting is called shall rest with the Church Board.

B. Quorum: A quorum consisting of 25% of eligible voting members shall be required to act upon all business of the church. The minimum voting age shall be eighteen (18).

C. The Moderator: The Church Board will appoint a moderator for each meeting, who shall conduct the meeting in an orderly manner and consistent with biblical principles.

D. Annual Reports shall be available to the membership in printed form one week prior to the annual business meeting.

Article XII – ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of eligible voting members present at any business meeting, providing that notice of the proposed amendment shall have been announced from the pulpit, and published in writing 30 days prior to the meeting at which action is desired.

Article XIII – ORDINATION, LICENSING AND COMMISSIONING

If the church decides by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the eligible members present at a regularly called business meeting to call a man to the pastoral ministry of this church, and recognizes that this person possesses the scriptural qualifications, they must choose to officially recognize him in one of three ways. It may call a council of ministers and brethren to examine the qualifications of the candidate and upon the recommendation of that council, grant or withhold ordination recognition. The church may also choose to commission a man to the ministry without going through the process of ordination in which case an official commissioning service will be called by the church board and the candidate publicly recognized as a pastor of the church. The church may also choose to recognize the candidate as a minister through the issuance of a license that is issued and signed by the chairman and secretary of the Church Board.

Article XIV – DISSOLUTION

Section 1 – In event of the dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied to the extent of the assets. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among

its members, but shall be irrevocably dedicated by the Church Board, to such other non-profit religious corporations as are in agreement with letter and spirit of this constitutional statement of faith, and in conformity with the requirements of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Code of 1954 (Sec. 501-C-3) or any subsequent amendments thereto.

Section 2 – No profit shall ever accrue to the benefit of any persons from the assets, holdings or other transactions in which this corporation as a result of this dissolution may become involved.

Article XV – CONSTITUTIONAL INTERPRETATION

When questions arise with regard to the interpretation of this constitution, the decision of the Church Board shall be considered as the final authority.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

Article I – THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the very words of the holy Scriptures were given by inspiration of God as holy men were moved by the Holy Spirit. This inspiration extended to every part of all 66 books, and they were, therefore, wholly without error, as originally given by God. The Bible is to be the only authoritative standard for our lives and practice. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

Article II – THE GODHEAD

We believe in one true, eternal holy God who is sovereign over all things. He is the Creator, Ruler and Sustainer of all life and is worthy of all honor and worship. In the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are co-equal and co-eternal, carrying out distinct offices, working towards God's eternal glory.

(Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3,4; Hebrews 1:8)

Article III – JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ is the second Person of the Godhead, and as such is eternally existent; that He was born of a virgin, taking on Him a body of flesh, and thereby became the God-Man; that He lived a sinless life; that He voluntarily suffered and died on the cross as a substitute for us and made full and complete satisfaction to God for our sins; that He rose from the dead on the third day and ascended into heaven to the right hand of God, the Father, where He is now seated as our High Priest making intercession for the saints.

(Hebrews 1:8; Matthew 1:22, 23; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; Acts 1:9-11; Hebrews 7:14-16)

Article IV – HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead possessing all the attributes of deity, that He was active in creation; that He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment; that He is the agent of the new birth and the seal of salvation; that He indwells, sanctifies, helps, teaches, imparts spiritual gifts, and produces spiritual fruit in the lives of believers. We believe that believers are spiritually baptized into

the body of Christ once, at the moment of salvation. (Acts 5:3, 4; John 16:7-11; John 3:5, 6; Ephesians 1:13, 14; Romans 8:14, 16, 26, 27; John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 12:3, 13; Galatians 5:22, 23)

Article V – ANGELS

We believe that angels are spirit beings created by God to serve and worship Him; and that they are active in the lives of His children. (Psalm 148:2, 5; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:14)

Article VI – SATAN

We believe that Satan is an angel who was created by God; that he sinned by prideful rebellion against the Creator and was cast from heaven; that he became the unholy ruler of the powers of darkness; and that he will be one day cast into the lake of fire with the other angels that fell into sin to receive everlasting punishment for his sin. (Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10)

Article VII – CREATION

We believe the biblical account of the creation of the universe, angels, and man; that this is a literal, historical record of the direct, immediate acts of the Godhead without any evolutionary process; that man was created in the image and likeness of God 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 1-4; Colossians 1:16-17)

Article VIII – THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that sin entered the human race through the voluntary transgression of Adam when he rebelled against God's standard in the Garden; that all men sinned in him; that all are, therefore, totally depraved as the partakers of his fallen nature and are sinners by nature and conduct, and are, therefore, under God's just condemnation. (Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 3:10-19; 5:12; 1:18)

Article IX – SALVATION

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly by grace through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who, by the appointment of the Father, voluntarily took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, and fulfilled 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 was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place; that having risen from the dead He is now enthroned in heaven, and He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Mediator between God and man. We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition for salvation. Repentance is a manifestation of this faith and is a change of mind and purpose toward God prompted by the Holy Spirit through hearing the Word of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:21-26; Hebrews 7:25; Romans 10:9-15)

Article X – NEW BIRTH

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again, that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life as a gift of God; that the birth is brought about solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with the Word of God, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel, that all who are truly born again are kept by the power of God until they are received into heaven. (John 3:3; 2 Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1; 2 Corinthians 5:9; Philippians 1:6; John 10:28)

Article XI – THE CHURCH

We believe the universal church or Body of Christ consists of those who have believed in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Ephesians 1:22-23; Matthew 16:18) We believe that a local church is a congregation of immersed believers associated by fellowship in the gospel and a covenant of faith, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws; that its officers are pastors (elders) and deacons, whose qualifications are defined in the New Testament; that the mission of the church is found in the great commission; that the local church has absolute right of self-government apart from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organization. (Acts 2:41, 42; 1 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 15:22)

Article XII – BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the single immersion in water of a believer to show forth his identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, through whom we died to sin and rose to new life. We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of Christ's death and should be practiced until He comes again; that it is only for those believers who have done solemn self-examination before participating. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28)

Article XIII – SEPARATION

We believe in obedience to the biblical commands to separate ourselves to God from sinful practices 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)

Article XIV – CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society, that the authorities are to be prayed for and 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. (Romans 13:1-7; Acts 5:29; 1 Timothy 2:1-3)

AMENDMENT:

Article VI, Section 3-B: *Election of Deacons*

Deacons shall be elected from the membership of the church. The number shall be determined by spiritual qualifications and the needs of the congregation at the recommendation of the pastor and deacon(s) and the approval of the congregation.

AMENDMENT:

Replacement of Article X – *Missions*

It shall be the policy of this church that any missions support shall be viewed as an extension of this local body. Accordingly, all missions or missionaries supported by this church shall be accountable to this church. In addition, all missions, sending churches and missionaries shall be in hearty agreement with our confession of faith both in doctrine and in practice. The principal focus of all missions outreach shall be evangelism and discipleship with the intent of getting believers involved in local churches consistent with our doctrine and practice.