

CHURCH HISTORY

Fellowship Baptist Church, located at 410 E. State Highway 121 in Mt. Zion, Illinois, is the third oldest church in Mt. Zion. The church was organized in October 1969 under the direction of Pastor Reese Johnson and the Riverside Baptist Church in Decatur as a home missionary project. The new church began meeting at the Odd Fellows Hall in Mt. Zion under the direct leadership of Rev. Tom Streetor, assistant pastor at Riverside. The first meeting was October 17, 1969. Five families comprised the new congregation.

In 1970, Riverside Baptist Church purchased 5 acres of land along Route 121 for \$12,000. Rev. Robert Kaufman was called to begin leading the congregation on a full-time basis as the ties with Riverside Baptist were officially severed and the new church went on its own.

It was in June 1970, that the church was received into the fellowship of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. This organization of over 1500 independent, fundamental Baptist Churches promotes the fellowship of like-minded churches, encourages the promotion of Christian missions and education, and provides help to the local church without interfering in any way with its independence or local rule.

The first phase of construction began in the spring of 1971. A basement was built where worship and Sunday School activities were held for the next two years. Construction on the main floor of the church began in the early summer of 1972 and was completed by January 1973. The church was officially dedicated on January 21, 1973. In the summer of 1981 an additional four acres of land was purchased for \$33,000, giving the church a full nine acre tract to use for God's glory. Additional facilities will be added as needed.

Fellowship Baptist Church is a growing church with a strong family ministry. According to its motto it seeks to "Meet the needs of people through the preaching of the Word of God." Regular worship and teaching services are held on Sundays; in addition, a slate of outreach, social, and recreational activities are held as deemed necessary by the church.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1 ~ NAME

The name of this church shall be the Fellowship Baptist Church of Mt. Zion, Illinois.

ARTICLE 2 ~ PURPOSE

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law.) The purpose of this congregation includes, but is not limited to, the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, the winning of souls to Jesus Christ, the administering of the ordinances of the New Testament (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), the spiritual edification of its members, the ministering to its own community, the spread of the Gospel in all the earth and the defense of the historic Christian faith.

ARTICLE 3 ~ DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

SECTION 1 ~ ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

We believe the following doctrines represent essential Christian faith and understanding.

A) THE BIBLE

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible, inerrant in the original writings, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, and preserved by God through the ages. We further believe that the Scriptures are the written revelation of God's will and the supreme and final authority for all faith and practice.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:3-4, 19-21; Revelation 22:18-19.

B) THE GODHEAD

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each having precisely the same essence, attributes and perfections.

Scripture: Exodus 20:2-3 ; Isaiah 43:10-12 ; 44:6 ; Matthew 28:19 ; 1 Corinthians 8:6 ; 12:4-6 ; Ephesians 4:6 ; Revelation 4:11.

C) THE LORD JESUS

We believe that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, perfect substitutionary redemption by His death on a cross, bodily resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of the Father where He is the High Priest and Advocate for His people. We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly an act of grace through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who, by appointment of the Father, freely took upon Himself our sins when He died on the cross, and that by His death He fully met the demands of God's holiness and justice-- a full payment for our sins. His death consisted not in setting us an example 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. We believe in the personal, visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth at the end of this age.

Scripture: Matthew 1:21-23 ; 20:28 ; Luke 1:20-35 ; John 1:1-18 ; 20:1-31 ; Acts 1:9-11 ; 4:12 ; Romans 3:24-25 ; 1 Corinthians 15:3-34 ; Ephesians 1:7 ; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 ; 1 Timothy 3:16 ; Hebrews 9:11-28 ; Revelation 1:7-8.

D) THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature. We believe that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He is the necessary agent in regeneration. We believe that the Holy Spirit fills the believer with His presence so that he is able to live a life that is pleasing to God, and gives illumination and guidance to the believer so that he can grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, being conformed to His image.

Scripture: John 14:16-18, 26 ; 15:26-27 ; 16:5-15 ; Acts 2:32-33 ; 5:3-4 ; Romans 8:16 ; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16 ; 6:19 ; Ephesians 1:13-14 ; 5:18.

E) THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, the Devil; that he was created by God holy, and enjoyed heavenly honors; but through pride and ambition to be as the Creator, became the enemy of God; that he drew after him a host of angels; that he is now the unholy god of this age. We understand him to be man's great tempter; the accuser of the saints; the author of all false religions; the lord of the Anti-Christ; the author of all the powers of darkness. He is destined, however, to final defeat at the hands of God's Son, and to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire.

Scripture: Job 1:6-7 ; Isaiah 14:12-17 ; Matthew 4:2-11 ; John 8:44 ; 2 Corinthians 4:4; James 4:7 ; 1 Peter 5:8-9 ; 1 John 3:8-10 ; Revelation 20:10.

F) CREATION

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

Scripture: Genesis 1-2 ; Exodus 20:8-11 ; Nehemiah 9:6 ; Psalm 104:25-26 ; Isaiah 40:21-31 ; John 1:1-5 ; Colossians 1:16-17.

G) MAN

We believe that man, in Adam, was created by God, in the image of God, but that he fell through sin (not by constraint, but by choice) and as a consequence is guilty before God, resulting in physical and spiritual death (separation from God). This sinful condition and resultant death has been transmitted to the entire human race (Jesus Christ being the only exception); so that all persons are sinners both by nature and by choice and are therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

Scripture: Genesis 3:1-6 ; Jeremiah 17:9 ; Romans 1:18-32 ; 3:10-18 ; 5:12, 19 ; Ephesians 2:1-3.

H) 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 woman; that He is both the Son of God, and God the Son, and as such is truly God and truly man.

Scripture: Genesis 3:15 ; Isaiah 7:14 ; Matthew 1:18-25 ; Luke 1:35 ; John 1:14 ; Galatians 4:4.

I) REGENERATION (NEW BIRTH)

Since all persons are sinners and separated from God, it is necessary that all persons be saved by God from their lost and fallen condition. Regeneration is an instantaneous act of the Holy Spirit, and not a process. In the new birth the one who is spiritually dead in his sins is made alive and receives eternal

life, the free gift of God. Regeneration 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.

Scripture: John 1:12-13 ; 3:3-8 ; Romans 8 ; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14 ; Galatians 5:16-26 ; Ephesians 2:4-10 ; Colossians 2:13 ; 1 John 5:1.

J) JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the great gospel blessing, which Christ secures to such as believe on 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.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:11 ; Acts 13:38-39 ; Romans 1:17 ; 4:1-8 ; 5:1-11 ; 8:1 ; Galatians 3:11-14 ; Titus 3:5-7.

K) REPENTANCE AND FAITH

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

Scripture: Psalm 51:1-4, 16-17 ; Isaiah 55:6-7 ; Mark 1:15 ; Luke 18:13 ; Acts 2:37-38 ; 20:21 ; Romans 10:9-13 ; Ephesians 2:8-10 ; 2 Timothy 2:25.

L) 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 these blessings by a cordial, penitent and obedient faith; that nothing prevents the salvation of any sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of God's revelation; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

Scripture: Isaiah 55:1, 6-7 ; Matthew 11:28 ; John 3:16-21 ; 5:39-40 ; 8:42-47 ; Matthew 28:19-20.

M) SANCTIFICATION

We believe that Bible sanctification has three aspects: First, the believer is set apart positionally before God the moment he believes; Second, he is set apart progressively in his walk day by day as he grows in grace; Third, he is set apart from the very presence of sin when his sanctification is completed at death or at the coming of Christ. Every believer is called to a Spirit filled life, separated from all sinful practices.

Scripture: John 17:16-19 ; 1 Corinthians 1:2-3 ; 6:11 ; 2 Thessalonians 2:13 ; Hebrews 10:10-14 ; 1 Peter 1:2 ; 1 John 2:15-16.

N) THE CHURCH

We believe in the universal church-- all believers of this age baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body-- and are thus under solemn duty to promote the unity of the Spirit among Christians, so long as the essential truths of the Bible are not compromised in any way. Its mission includes fulfilling the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20.

We believe in the local church-- the universal church congregated in local assemblies-- the distinctives of which include the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and believer's baptism. 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.

Scripture: Acts 2 ; 20:17-28 ; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 ; 16:1 ; Ephesians 2:11-3:13 ; Philippians 1:1 ; Colossians 1:18 ; Titus 1:5-9 ; 1 Peter 5:1-4 ; Revelation 2-3.

O) BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism must follow saving faith and is an act of obedience to the Lord Jesus' command for believers to identify with Him and His finished work of redemption. We believe that baptism by immersion is the Biblically symbolic means of picturing our death and burial to self, and the new life we have received in Christ.

We believe the Lord's Supper is a memorial testimony of the church, instituted by our Lord, and to be observed by believers until His return as a sacred, symbolic, and scriptural means of remembering His death for our sins. We believe the Lord's Supper should always be preceded by solemn self-examination.

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20 ; Acts 2:42 ; 8:36-39 ; Romans 6:1-6 ; 1 Corinthians 1:14-17 ; 10:14-22 ; 11:17-34.

P) THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

We believe that every person, truly regenerated, receives the gift of Eternal Life, and is made at once a child of God. As such, we believe that the redeemed are kept by God's power until the day of completed sanctification, and that it is the privilege of the believer to rejoice in the assurance of His salvation.

Scripture: John 6:37-40 ; 10:27-30 ; Romans 8:35-39 ; 11:6 ; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8 ; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 ; Ephesians 1:13-14 ; 4:30 ; 1 Peter 1:3-5 ; 1 John 5:13.

Q) THE ETERNAL STATE

We believe in the bodily resurrection and judgment of both the saved and the lost (unbelieving); those that are saved unto the resurrection of eternal life, and those that are lost unto the resurrection of eternal damnation. We believe that the saved will be judged as those possessing eternal life -- and that their judgment is solely for determining the quality of their works as believers, resulting in either the gain or loss of reward.

Scripture: Daniel 12:2 ; Matthew 25:31-46 ; John 5:28-29 ; 11:23-26 ; 1 Corinthians 3:5-17 ; 2 Corinthians 5:9-11 ; Philippians 2:9-11 ; 2 Thessalonians 1 ; Revelation 19:11-20:15.

SECTION 2 ~ SUBORDINATE DOCTRINES

We recognize that there are additional Bible doctrines over which good Christians sometimes disagree. While we desire to extend individual freedom wherever possible (recognizing the right of individuals to be fully persuaded by their own consciences as they are led by the Holy Spirit through the study of His Word), we also recognize the importance of clearly expressing our church's persuasions regarding certain subordinate doctrines.

A) SPIRITUAL GIFTS

We believe that to fulfill its God-ordained mission, the church has been given spiritual gifts through its members. Each believer, according to the will of God, is given at least one such gift for the edification of the church. Each member should strive to develop and use their gift(s) in a way that glorifies the Lord Jesus.

Since these gifts are bestowed by God in order to fulfill specific purposes in His program, we believe that when the purpose of any gift is fulfilled, that particular gift is ended. Thus, we believe that the sign gifts

of miracles, healings, tongues, interpretation of tongues gradually ceased with the ending of the Apostolic age and the completion of Scripture.

Scripture: Romans 15:18-20 ; 1 Corinthians 12-14 ; 2 Corinthians 12:12 ; Ephesians 4:11-16 ; Hebrews 2:1-4.

B) UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE & PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

We believe the Bible should be interpreted in a natural, literal sense. We believe that God revealed Himself and His purposes progressively by divinely ordered stewardships (dispensations) which determine man's responsibilities. We believe salvation is always by grace through faith regardless of the dispensation in which the believer might have lived. Further, God's purpose of salvation has always been based upon the redemptive sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross.

Scripture: John 1:17 ; Acts 11:15-18 ; 15:6-18 ; Romans 1:16-17 ; 7:1-6 ; 11 ; 2 Corinthians 3:4-18 ; Galatians 3:9-29 ; Ephesians 1:10 ; 3 ; Colossians 1:24-27 ; Hebrews 1:1-3 ; 7:19 ; 8:7-13 ; 11 ; 1 Peter 1:10-12.

C) FUTURE EVENTS

We believe the church is to live in great expectancy of the personal and pretribulational coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; that the Lord's return is the "Blessed Hope" of every Christian and has a vital bearing on the believer's personal life and service. We believe that the Lord Jesus will establish His kingdom on the earth where He will rule and reign in power and glory for a thousand years.

Scripture: Psalm 2 ; Isaiah 35 ; 60-61 ; Jeremiah 31:31-37 ; Ezekiel 36:22-37:14 ; Daniel 9:24 ; Zechariah 8 ; 12:10-14:21 ; Matthew 24-25 ; Acts 1:3-8 ; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 ; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 ; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-2:12 ; Revelation 19:11-20:15.

SECTION 3 ~ ADDITIONAL CONVICTIONS

We believe the following truths to be clearly taught in the Bible, and as such, we recognize our responsibility to strictly adhere to such standards.

A) HUMAN SEXUALITY

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one 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 the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman by mutual covenant.

We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in their position and value before God, but that God has ordained some distinct and separate roles for men and women both in the home and in the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are required by God to serve as overseers in the church, providing spiritual leadership.

Scripture: Genesis 2:24 ; 19:5, 13 ; 26:8-9 ; Leviticus 18:1-30 ; Romans 1:26-29 ; 7:2 ; 1 Corinthians 5:1 ; 6:9 ; 7:10 ; Ephesians 5:22-23 ; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 ; 1 Timothy 2:8-3:7 ; 3:17 ; Hebrews 13:4.

B) LAWSUITS BETWEEN BELIEVERS

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church necessarily possesses all the resources required to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 ; Ephesians 4:31-32.

C) CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except 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 Kings of the earth. In this connection we stand firmly for the separation of church and state.

Scripture: Acts 4:5-22 ; 5:22-32 ; Romans 13:1-7 ; 1 Timothy 2:1-4 ; 1 Peter 2:13-17 .

ARTICLE 4 ~ Church Government

Clause A

The ministry of Fellowship Baptist Church shall be under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ by means of a plurality of Overseers who function under the authority of the Scriptures and God's Spirit. The Overseers, chosen by church, are the decision making body. The spiritual affairs, government and discipline of the church shall be vested in the Board of Overseers (which includes the Pastor.) Determination of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The Pastor and Overseers shall oversee and conduct all aspects of this church. All officers, boards, committees and staff shall be responsible to this Board of Overseers.

Scripture: Acts 20:17-32 ; 1 Timothy 3:1-7 ; 5:17 ; Titus 1:5-9 ; Hebrews 13:7, 17 ; 1 Peter 5:1-4.

Clause B ~ Designated Contributions

Contributors to the church may suggest uses for their financial giving, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the overseers, for which they will report to the church at regular or special business meetings.

ARTICLE 5 ~ Membership

SECTION 1 - MEMBERSHIP

Clause A ~ Voting Members

Members are required to be at least 16 years, have publicly professed faith and confessed Jesus as their Savior by water baptism, give evidence of a changed heart, and accept the views of faith and practice as held by this church. Any person expressing a desire to join the membership of this church may, upon recommendation of the overseers, be voted into membership by the church.

Clause B ~ Non-voting Members

1. Any person who otherwise meets the qualifications of a voting member, but who is less than 16 years old shall be considered a non-voting member.
2. Any person who professes faith in Christ, affirms essential doctrines as expressed in this Constitution, and regularly assembles together with our church for the purpose of worship, instruction, and service, shall be considered non-voting members. They will not be eligible for elected church offices, and will not have voting privileges.

Clause C ~ Inactive Members

Any voting member who does not exhibit a consistent interest and commitment to the local church will be termed an inactive member. Inactive members will not be eligible for elected church offices and will not have voting privileges.

1. Lack of interest and commitment is defined as one Sunday service per month attendance, or less, for three consecutive months.
2. Absence due to illness, accident, age, etc. will not render a voting member inactive.
3. The responsibility to communicate on these matters belongs to both the individual and the church.
4. An active member may be restored to voting member status by stating their desire to do so to the pastor or overseers and by resuming regular attendance (three consecutive weekly services).
5. Any individual inactive member is subject to having their membership terminated after an inactive period of six months (see Section 2).

Clause D ~ The Pastor

The Pastor(s) and his wife shall automatically become members of the church at the time of the acceptance of the call to pastor the church.

SECTION 2 - MEMBERSHIP DISMISSAL

Clause A

A letter of transfer shall be forwarded, upon request of a church of like faith, for members desiring to unite with that church.

Clause B

At their own written request, names of members may be dropped from membership for reasons sufficient unto themselves.

Clause C

Any member of this church, after having been given due notice and opportunity to be heard by the Board of Overseers, may be dismissed from the membership on recommendation of the overseers for any of the following reasons:

- 1) Admission to the membership of another church.
- 2) Continued absence of at least six months without satisfactory excuse, and possessing an indifferent or hostile attitude.
- 3) Conduct contrary to, or incompatible with, the doctrines and practices of this church.

Clause D

The membership of any individual member shall be automatically terminated with notice if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding six months. Upon good cause being shown to the pastor, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the Pastor and Overseers.

Clause E

Upon knowledge of their decease, members' names shall be removed from the roll.

SECTION 3 - MEMBERSHIP DISCIPLINE

We quote as a substantial expression of our belief on the subject of discipline, the following paragraph from Augustus Hopkins Strong:

The Church is not a mutual insurance company, whose object it is to protect and shield its individual members. It is a society whose end is to represent Christ in the world and to establish His truth and righteousness. Christ commits His honor to its keeping. The offender who is only anxious to escape judgment and who pleads to be forgiven without delay, often shows that he cares nothing for the cause of Christ which he has injured, but that he has at heart only his own selfish comfort and reputation. The truly penitent man will rather beg the Church to exclude him, in order that it may free itself from the charge of harboring iniquity. He will accept exclusion with humility, will love the Church that excludes him, will attend its worship, will in due time seek and receive restoration. There is always a way back into the Church for those who repent, but the Scriptural method of insuring repentance is the method of immediate exclusion.

Offenses shall be considered as one of two classes:

Clause A

PERSONAL differences between members should be settled according to the principles of Matthew 18:15-16.

- 1) If a reconciliation thus takes place, the matter is to be considered as ended and in such a case is never to be mentioned to others.
- 2) If such means are ineffectual, appeal shall be made to the church according to Matthew 18:17.

Clause B

PUBLIC trespass against the church shall be dealt with by the Discipline Committee. The Pastor and Overseers shall constitute the Discipline Committee and thereby represent the church. They are directed to move promptly in safeguarding the purity and peace of the church when anyone is obstructing the work in any way. When needed, public trespass against the church shall be dealt with according to the principles outlined in 1 Corinthians 5:3-5 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6.

When charges are made against a member, the accused shall be notified personally or by letter of the nature of charges, and shall be summoned to appear before the Pastor and Overseers to answer the charges. Upon a full and complete hearing of the case, or a reasonable attempt thereat, the committee may be able to resolve the problem, acquit the accused, or find it necessary to recommend to the church that the guilty one(s) be dismissed from membership.

- 1) If the investigation vindicates the accused and the case does not require public notice, the pastor and overseers shall make no report to the church, unless asked to do so by the accused, in which case the Discipline Committee may use their discretion.
- 2) If the investigation shows just grounds for the accusation, they shall make a report and recommendation to the church.

Clause C

In a case where the Discipline Committee has recommended exclusion, the accused may appeal to the church for a hearing of the case before the church. Upon request for a hearing, the church shall then vote whether to hear the case or to act upon the recommendation of the committee.

Clause D

The purpose of Clause C is to give full protection to any member who may be accused, and at the same time, protect the church from interruptions of its regular business and its spiritual activities by matters

of discipline, the details of which might be wasteful to the time of the church, harmful to the young, and discouraging to the membership.

Clause E

If a member has erred and shall voluntarily confess it before the church, manifesting repentance, there shall be no further charge laid against him.

Clause F

No person that is not a voting member of this church shall be admitted to a meeting of the church pertaining to discipline.

ARTICLE 6 - MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH

Clause A

Worship services of this congregation shall be conducted weekly (including Sundays) and shall include Bible study, prayer, praise, and required business meetings.

Clause B

The communion service will be observed on a regular basis.

Clause C

Quarterly business meetings shall be held in the following months: January, April, July, and October. The January meeting shall be the hearing of the annual reports, the election of officers, officials, and the adoption of the budget.

Clause D

Special business meetings may be called by the pastor or the overseers provided public announcement of the meeting has been made in at least two consecutive services of the church.

Clause E

One quarter of the resident voting membership shall constitute a quorum.

Clause F

All voting members must be 16 years of age or older.

Clause G

Voting: Constitutional matters shall require a three-fourths majority for passage. Financial matters shall require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. A simple majority vote shall prevail in all other matters except unless otherwise stated. Voting will be by ballot when requested by a voting member in a meeting.

Clause H

The Pastor shall serve as moderator of the church. In the absence of the Pastor, one of the Overseers shall preside.

Clause I

The fiscal year shall begin January 01 and end on December 31.

ARTICLE 7 - OFFICERS & ELECTIONS

SECTION 1 - Officers/ Officials

Clause A

The officers of this church shall be the two recognized Biblical ministries (offices) of Overseer and Deacon.

1. Overseers are men chosen by the church to supervise, direct, and care for the spiritual welfare of the church. One Overseer shall be called by the church to serve in the capacity of a teaching Pastor.
2. The Pastor shall direct all functions and ministries of the church, with the particular emphasis of regularly teaching the Bible -- "laboring in the word and doctrine". (1 Timothy 5:17) Also see Section 2.
3. Deacons are to assist the Pastor and Overseers. Their particular ministries are to meet and care for the physical needs of the church. They shall be recognized and elected as deemed necessary by the Church and Overseers.

Clause B

The church shall elect additional officials to serve it as Treasurer and Clerk.

Clause C

The officers of the church and those who regularly teach in the church shall be in complete agreement with the Essential Doctrines and Convictions as stated in Article 4. They shall be in harmony with the Subordinate Doctrines, and they shall abide by the leadership standards of the church as they appear in Clause D. They shall have been an active member of the church for a continuous period of one year. Upon refusal of any officer or teacher to do so, the office shall be declared vacant by the overseers.

Clause D

The church recognizes the following truths to be the biblical guidelines for those in leadership positions:

- 1) In the case of Overseers and Deacons, meeting the requirements as specified in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9.
- 2) Faithfully attending church services. (Hebrews 10:23-25)
- 3) Faithfully supporting the Pastor and leader(s) above them in the area(s) of their responsibility in the church program. (Hebrews 13:17)
- 4) Endeavoring to live a Spirit-controlled life that results in the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)
- 5) Being obedient to the Biblical command to be separated from the world system and abstaining from every form of evil. (2 Corinthians 6:14-18 ; 1 Thessalonians 5:22)
- 6) Being mindful of any questionable practices in the area of "Christian liberty" and carefully seeking to avoid causing a brother in Christ to be offended, stumble or made weak by the use of their Christian liberty. They will lovingly limit their liberty in Christ for the well-being of Christians whose consciences are weak. (1 Corinthians 8 ; Romans 14)

- 7) Seeking daily to "grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" by regular Bible study, personal prayer, and by Christian service. (Colossians 3:23 ; 1 Thessalonians 5:17 ; 2 Timothy 2:15 ; 1 Peter 3:18)
- 8) Seeking to be a positive testimony before the world, seeking to reach the lost for Jesus Christ. (Matthew 5:13-16)
- 9) Carefully exercising their leadership position as a positive example to all who look to them as an example of the life of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1)
- 10) Refraining from any membership in secret societies or organizations with secret vows, commitments, or oaths. (John 14:6 ; Colossians 1:18 ; Matthew 5:34-35 ; James 5:12)
- 11) Promoting the importance of a godly home by the example set in their own home. (Ephesians 5:21 - 6:1)
- 12) Each Overseer and Deacon should be a one-woman man and oppose divorce: understanding it not to be an option for the Christian, except in such cases as are allowed by the Bible, namely-- adultery (Matthew 19:4-9), and desertion by an unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:15). Cases of divorce before salvation are, along with every other sin, washed away by the cleansing blood of the Lamb and do not automatically disqualify from leadership ministry (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
- 13) Endeavoring to fulfill the job description, responsibilities and trusts given to them in the leadership position God has led them to. (2 Timothy 2:1-2, 4:1-2)
- 14) Being willing to remove themselves from positions of leadership when they can no longer honor or live up to these standards.

Clause E

To fill any vacancy (other than the pastorate) the Pastor and Overseers shall appoint a replacement to serve until the start of the following fiscal year.

SECTION 2 - PASTOR

Clause A

The Pastor shall be a recognized Baptist minister with sufficient qualifications and experience to handle the affairs of the church according to the standards of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. It shall be his responsibility to have the oversight and leadership of the church and to fulfill such responsibilities as are incumbent upon a Pastor and minister of the Gospel.

Clause B

The Pastor(s) shall continue in office until he resigns, or until his resignation is requested at a special meeting called for the purpose, in the following manner:

The question of severing the pastoral relation may be considered at any regular or special business meeting by the presentation to the overseers of a written request for such action, signed by a member of each of 25% of the families of the church membership, providing public notice from the pulpit of the meeting for this action shall have been given on two successive Sundays before the meeting. A 75% majority of the ballots cast by the voting members shall decide the question.

Clause C

The Pastor(s) shall be called by a 75% majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular or special business meeting of the church where public notice of such action has been given from the pulpit by the Pulpit Committee two Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting.

Clause D

The Overseers shall constitute a Pulpit Committee.

SECTION 3 - OVERSEERS

Clause A

The church shall elect from its membership qualified men to serve as Overseers. Their terms shall be three years each. Upon completing each term of service, an Overseer must be renominated and re-elected in order to continue serving as an Overseer.

Clause B

To be eligible for nomination, a man must be at least 21 years old. The qualifications for Overseers shall be those set forth in the Bible and as summarized in Section 1, Clause D, of this Article. Qualifying situations that are difficult and/or unclear shall be considered and decided by the already recognized, elected leadership (Pastor and Overseers).

Clause C

The Overseers are responsible for shepherding and having oversight of the church. They shall watch over the spiritual affairs of the church; they shall guide and guard the church according to the principles of the Scriptures. They shall establish policies, and create committees, as needed and they shall determine the practices of the church. They shall exercise general oversight of financial matters of the church. From among their number they shall appoint:

- 1) A Chairman of the Overseers.
- 2) A Secretary to serve when they have business to transact.

Clause D

Decisions made by the Board of Overseers shall be based on carefully assembled facts, Scriptural insight, and the solicited input of the church. The Board of Overseers must seek through the application of Biblical principles, the mind of Christ, and come to a consensus before deciding matters of church business. Should any member disagree with any action taken by the Board of Overseers, that member is encouraged to discuss the area of disagreement with any Overseer. If any member desires to meet with the entire Board of Overseers, that member will be scheduled to do so by the Chairman of the Overseers.

SECTION 4 - DEACONS

Clause A

It shall be the duty of Deacons to care for any specially recognized, physical and/or temporal needs of the church; they shall serve the needs of the people. (Acts 6:1-7)

Clause B

Deacons shall be voting members possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The church shall elect Deacons from its membership and their terms shall be three years each. Upon completing each term of service, a Deacon must be renominated and reelected in order to continue serving as a Deacon.

SECTION 5 - TREASURER

Clause A

The church shall elect at the appropriate annual meetings a Treasurer. The term shall be two years, renewable immediately.

Clause B

The Treasurer shall be responsible for the finances and the budget along with the Pastor and Overseers. The Treasurer shall give reports on the financial condition of the church at the quarterly business meetings.

Clause C

An audit of the books shall be made annually by someone other than the Treasurer.

SECTION 6 - CLERK

Clause A

The church shall elect at the appropriate annual meetings a person as Clerk, whose term shall be two years, renewable immediately.

Clause B

The Clerk shall keep records of all church meetings, maintain lists of baptisms and membership, send letters of dismissal to churches and individuals, file all reports, papers, resolutions, so ordered by the church, conduct church correspondence and any other actions requested by the church.

SECTION 7 - ELECTIONS

Clause A

At its third quarter meeting, the church shall have opportunity to nominate all those persons who they believe are qualified and suited to serve in a church office.

1. A nominating ballot will be provided to each member.
2. There is no minimum or maximum number of names that can be written for each office.

Clause B

A name will not be considered officially nominated unless it is submitted by 25% of the membership present.

Clause C

Those nominated by the church (25%) are submitted to a Nomination Committee consisting of the Pastor and Overseers. If there are less than three members to the Committee, two additional voting members may be chosen by the church to complete the Nomination Committee.

Clause D

By the annual church meeting, a slate of names for final church approval shall be submitted and voted upon. The elected officials shall assume their positions immediately upon being elected.

ARTICLE 7 - SUBSIDIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Clause A

No subsidiary organization shall be formed without consent of the Pastor and Overseers, and shall not engage in any practice or policy contrary to the general position of the church itself.

Clause B

All regular officers of subsidiary organizations shall be regular attendees and in good standing with the church. The Pastor and Overseers shall have the oversight of the election or appointment of teachers and leaders in all subsidiary organizations.

ARTICLE 8 - LICENSING AND ORDAINING

Clause A

Any member who in the judgment of the church gives evidence by his piety, zeal, and aptness to teach that he is called of God to the work of the ministry, after having preached in the hearing of the church, may be licensed to preach the Gospel of Christ, provided two-thirds of the members present at any regular meeting shall agree thereto.

Clause B

If the church decides by a two-thirds vote at a regular meeting that one of its members, a licensed preacher, or otherwise, passes the Scriptural qualifications for full ordination, it shall call a council of pastors and brethren to examine the candidate to which council the propriety of ordaining shall be referred. Upon recommendation from the council, the church shall act regarding ordaining the candidate to the Gospel ministry.

ARTICLE 9 - DISPOSITION OF ASSETS

In the event of the dissolution of this church, all of the properties and assets then held by the church, after liabilities have been cared for, shall be distributed in accordance with the Purpose Article of this Constitution. These assets shall be given to missions, schools, or churches of like faith and practice.

ARTICLE 10 - AFFILIATIONS

This church declares itself in fellowship with the state and national associations of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. If the GARBC or any of its representatives seek to interfere with the autonomy of this local church, or tends toward modernism, this church shall take appropriate action to sever the fellowship.

ARTICLE 11 - AMENDMENTS

Clause A

Only voting members of the church can suggest an amendment to the Constitution.

Clause B

All suggested amendments must first be reviewed by the Board of Overseers.

Clause C

Upon review and recommendation of the Overseers, the amendment will be voted upon at a regular or called business meeting of the church following 30 days' notice of the proposed amendment as given in the bulletin.

Clause D

A three-fourths vote shall be needed to amend the Constitution.

ARTICLE 12 - ADOPTION

The adoption of this Constitution shall hereby nullify all previous Constitutions, regulations, and by-laws.

Adopted April 29, 2001