

February 26, 2017

Proposed Amended and Restatement of the CONSTITUTION OF BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

Our Constitution is a written statement of our beliefs and understanding of the Bible, which is our ultimate authority for faith and practice. Our Constitution summarizes the doctrine we believe, our mission as a local church, and the organizational structure by which we function.

Our Constitution is organized into two sections. The first section is our doctrinal statement, which expresses our belief in the Bible. The second section is our organization, which expresses our understanding of how the Bible describes the church.

SECTION 1 DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

The Bible is God's special revelation of Himself so that we might know Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. In order to love God, learn of God, and live for God, the Word of God is essential. True faith, teaching, spirituality, fellowship, service, and the spread of the Gospel are achieved through knowledge of His Word. Therefore, we are committed to the truth as revealed in His inerrant and infallible Word—the Bible. These teachings reveal the person of Jesus Christ and it is our desire to glorify Christ, edify one another, and testify of Him to the lost souls of men. As a local New Testament Church, we put forth this summary of our beliefs based on His Word.

The Scriptures

We believe that the Bible is without error in its original writings. The author of the Bible is God, who used men moved by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture. We further believe the Bible to be the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions will be tried. Thus, we believe the Bible to be the sole authority for our faith and practice.

(2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

The True God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God who is an infinite, eternal, self-existing, perfect Spirit. He is the supreme ruler of heaven and earth. He is overwhelmingly glorious in character (holy, just, omniscient, wise, faithful, good, loving, merciful, free, and sovereign), and worthy of all honor and obedience. In the unity of the Godhead there are three (3) persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—who are equal in essence and divine perfection, yet distinct in person and role.

We believe that by the decree of the Father all things were created according to the kind intention of His will. As a result, the Father is glorified and will be glorified. We believe that God has revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ who is the eternal Son of God. He was active in creation at the beginning of the world and sustains all things. In accordance with the decree of the Father, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of Mary, who was a virgin. As a result of His birth, in the person of Jesus Christ, true deity and sinless humanity were united—fully God and fully man. Jesus lived a sinless life, died a vicarious death, rose in bodily form, and ascended into Heaven. He now ministers as our high priest, He is the head of the Body, the

February 26, 2017

Church, He will one day return for His Bride, the Church, and He will establish His earthly kingdom as He sits on the Davidic throne.

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father and God the Son, and of the same nature. He was active in creation. Presently, He is active in restraining the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled through the Church. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He bears witness to the truth of the Gospel in preaching. He is the agent in the new birth and in the sanctification of a believer. He always functions in harmony with God's truth.

(Genesis 1:1, 17:1; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; 1 Chronicles 29:11; Job 36:26; Psalm 90:2, 119:89-91; John 4:24, 14:26, 17:1-5; Romans 11:33-36; Ephesians 4:4-6; Philippians 2:5-6; 1 Peter 1:2; Revelation 1:8)

Creation

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, whereby all creation was spoken into existence by God out of nothing in six (6) literal days. We believe man and woman were created in God's own image and after His own likeness. We further believe that humanity did not evolve from any other form of life, but was originally created by the direct act of God. See **Appendix 1** for additional information regarding creation.

(Genesis 1-3; Exodus 20:11; Psalm 33:6-9; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-4)

The Fall of Man

We believe that man, although created without sin, fell by the transgression of one man—Adam. As a result, all of humanity is in sin by nature, disposition, and act. Humanity, therefore, is justly under the condemnation of God without defense or excuse.

(Genesis 2:16-17, 3:6-7; Isaiah 53; John 3:35-36; Romans 1:18-20, 3:9-18; 1 Corinthians 5:12-13, 15:21-22; Ephesians 2:1-3)

Salvation

We believe that the only way of salvation for sinners is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This is possible due to the sinless life, the substitutionary death, and the resurrection from the grave of Jesus Christ. He was made to be sin and a curse for us and died in our place. Nothing man does can add to or take away from the finished work of Christ.

(Isaiah 53:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:20,28; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8; 1 Peter 2:24)

We believe that the new birth comes only through faith in Christ. Repentance is inherent in belief and is not in itself a separate and independent condition of salvation.

(John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 1:13-14, 2:8-9; Titus 3:5)

The Extent of Salvation

We believe that the blessing of salvation is made free to all by the Gospel. It is the responsibility of all to accept it by faith. Nothing prevents the salvation of anyone but his own depravity and rejection of the Gospel. Therefore, we believe the atonement was unlimited.

(John 5:24; 1 Timothy 4:10; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:10)

We believe that when an unregenerate person exercises faith in Christ, he/she passes immediately out of spiritual death into spiritual life.

(John 3:16; Romans 5:1; Colossians 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:13)

Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the process by which the Holy Spirit manifests the life of Christ in the believer. This work occurs in three (3) phases. Positional sanctification occurs at the time of our salvation, when we are made complete in Christ. Progressive sanctification is the consistent work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer by conforming his/her daily life to Christ. Ultimate sanctification is the receiving of our glorified bodies when Jesus Christ returns for His Bride, the Church.

(Romans 8:9,29,30 Galatians 5:16-25; Colossians 2:9-10; Philippians 1:9-11; Hebrews 6:1; 2 Peter 1:5-8, 3:18)

Eternal Security

We believe that genuine Christians will be kept by the power of God and will persevere until the end. A believer's eternal security is accomplished through the finished work of Christ at Calvary and the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit. We also believe that as a believer sins in this life, he will experience the chastening of the Father. God the Father cannot fail and will in the end present every believer faultless before His throne.

(Philippians 1:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30; 1 Corinthians 11:31-32)

The Church

The Universal Church

We believe that all who have been genuinely saved through the Gospel of Jesus Christ are immediately placed, through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, into the Body of Christ, the universal church, of which Christ is the head.

(Romans 6:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:17-18)

The Local Church

We believe that the local church is a visible manifestation of the universal church in a particular location. A local church is a gathering of believers who have been saved and baptized through immersion. A local church is committed to the Lord and to each other for the purpose of carrying out the will of God as revealed in His Word. As a local church, we are responsible to submit our hearts to the teaching of the Word, to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, to faithfully care for our homes and church family, and to assist in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. As a local church, we are free from external controls of any

February 26, 2017

religious organization. We adhere to the pattern of a congregational form of church polity that acknowledges the Biblical position of the Saints, who are often referred to as brethren; the Overseers, who are referred to in Scripture as leaders, pastors, or elders; and Servants, who have traditionally been called deacons. We further accept the responsibility to gather together at prescribed times to stimulate one another to love and good works.

(Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2, 5:1-13; Ephesians 4:1-6, 11-16; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13, 5:8; Titus 1:5; Hebrews 10:25-26, 13:17)

The Two Ordinances of the Church

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer. It publicly displays their faith in Christ and identifies them with other believers in a local church.

(Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:41-42, 8:38-39, 9:18)

We believe that the Lord's Table was instituted by Christ prior to Calvary and carried out by the church after His ascension into heaven. It is a memorial undertaken by a local church to remember Christ. The frequency of this memorial varies but will always be preceded by a believer's self-examination.

(Luke 22:14-23; 1 Corinthians 11:17-32)

The Christian Life

We believe that the glory of God is the passion of our lives, in thought, word, and action. We make it our ambition in life to lift up God in this world. We purpose this because of who God is and what He has done for us through our salvation in Jesus Christ.

(1 Chronicles 16:29; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 10:31; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Philippians 3:4-10)

We believe that all Christians are called by God to live not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. To accomplish this, the Holy Spirit manifests the life of Christ in our being, our home, our church, and the world. We believe that after salvation we are divinely reckoned to relate to this world as citizens of heaven and witnesses, and that through our lives we should make Christ known to the world. Furthermore, our love for one another is essential for us to fulfill the Great Commission in our community. Thus, we strive together for the Gospel of Christ. We believe that God, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, has enabled us for service through the spiritual gifts and natural talents He has given us.

(Acts 1:8; Romans 6:11-13, 8:1-13; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Galatians 5:16-23; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 3; 1 Peter 1:14-16)

We believe that God, through the Spirit, gave gifts to the church to edify the body of Christ and to glorify Himself. While there is a diversity of gifts, each believer is energized by the same Spirit and each is called to his own divinely appointed service as the Spirit may will. The revelatory gifts ceased at the completion of the Word, while the service gifts continue until Christ completes the Church.

February 26, 2017

(Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11)

We believe that upon the rapture of the Church, each believer will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive praise from the Lord for their life as a believer.

(1 Corinthians 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 19:7-8)

End Times

The Rapture

We believe the Church will be raptured prior to the Tribulation period. At this point, the Lord will descend from heaven and receive to Himself both His own who are alive and all those who have died in Christ. This event is the blessed hope for which we should be constantly looking.

(John 14:1-3; Romans 8:19-23; 1 Corinthians 15:50-56; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14)

The Tribulation

We believe that prior to the Second Coming, the church will be removed from God's wrath that will be revealed during the 70th week of Daniel. Israel's 70th week, or the Tribulation period, will be a time of judgment on the whole earth and a time of preparation for Israel to receive her Messiah. The latter half of the Tribulation will be the time of Jacob's trouble, which Jesus called the Great Tribulation.

(Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24-25; Revelation 6:1-17)

The Second Coming of Christ

We believe the Second Coming of Christ follows the Tribulation. Upon His return, the Lord will sit on David's throne for 1,000 years, to lift the curse which now rests upon creation, to restore Israel to her own land, to fulfill all of God's covenant promises to Israel, and to bring the whole world to the knowledge of God. At the end of the 1,000-year reign of Christ, Satan will be loosed for a season to rebel against the Lord. At the end of the rebellion, all those who are unbelievers will be judged at the Great White Throne and cast into hell, which is the second death.

(2 Samuel 7:8-17; Isaiah 11:1-10, 61:1-11; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Zechariah 14; Revelation 20:1-3)

The Eternal State

We believe that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Regardless of how God has managed His plan (dispensation), all believers who have exercised faith in Christ will be with Him forever in glory.

(Job 19:25; Daniel 12:1-3; Luke 23:39-43; 1 Corinthians 15:1-28; 2 Corinthians 5:8)

We believe that the unbeliever will likewise experience the eternal state. The eternal state for the unbeliever will consist of everlasting punishment due to their rejection of God.

(Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2 Peter 2:4-9; Jude 6-7; Revelation 20:11-15)

February 26, 2017

Appendix 1

Based upon creation, we believe that God designed the gender of men and women, and that gender identity is determined by one's God-given biological sex and not by one's self-perception. (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:21-25)

Based upon creation, we believe that God ordained the institution of marriage as being between a man and a woman. (Genesis 2:21-25; Matthew 19:1-6)

SECTION 2 ORGANIZATION OF BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

Name

The name of our church will be Bethany Baptist Church of Grand Blanc, Michigan. ("BBC")

Mission Statement

The mission of BBC is to exalt our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, by fulfilling His expectations for His church as revealed in Scripture. As members of BBC, we are committed to glorifying Christ, edifying believers, and testifying to the lost.

Philosophy of Ministry

In Matthew 16, Jesus made a statement that has stood the test of time—"I will build my church". We at BBC are a living example of that enduring statement. Since our inception in 1956, BBC has pursued a passion for Christ as revealed in His Word. Our faith has been in Christ; our service has been to assist believers in their growth in Christ and to beckon unbelievers to receive Christ as Savior.

To achieve our passionate pursuit of Christ, we acknowledge that the Word of God is the foundation for faith and practice. We, therefore, are committed to:

- Continually grow in appreciation, knowledge, and love of the Word of God through reading and study.
- Continually submit ourselves to the Word as we learn it.
- Continually live what we have learned as both individual believers and as a community of believers.
- Continually gather together around the Word of God so that we might serve one another in love.
- Continually proclaim the truth of the Gospel to people without Christ.
- Continually develop leadership in the church by identifying, training, and mentoring those who desire to be in the Gospel ministry.

Finally, as we are committed to Christ through His Word, we eagerly look forward to the return of the Lord. Our hope is that until then, we will be found faithful.

We further realize that BBC is a manifestation of the Body of Christ. As such, we acknowledge that we are a living organism inhabited by Christ through the Holy Spirit, with Jesus Christ being the head of the body. Since we are a living, spiritual entity, our practices and procedures, as well as our traditions and fellowship, are spiritual in nature. It is our goal that everything we do will be

done in such a way that we enhance and therefore evidence the spiritual reality of Christ's presence and preeminence in BBC.

Church Government

BBC recognizes congregational government as the form of church government that best reflects the teaching of the New Testament. Congregational government rests on the independence and autonomy of a local church. Furthermore, congregational government recognizes that Christ is the sole head of His church and that members are all priests unto God. Finally, congregational government recognizes that leadership within a local church is given to Elders, who exercise that leadership on behalf of the congregation.

Membership

Meaning of Membership

Church membership is a sacred agreement between believers. It is intended not only to allow for a believer to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, but also to provide believers a way to actively participate in the work of ministry. As a result, BBC teaches members to possess a living faith that can be expressed by:

- A faithfulness that promotes the glorification of Christ.
- A faithfulness that promotes the edification of the body of Christ.
- A faithfulness that promotes the Gospel of Christ.

In addition, those who seek membership at BBC must share with the congregation the following:

- A testimony of salvation and subsequent baptism.
- Agreement with our Constitution.

Membership Discipline

The Bible instructs believers to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Sometimes, however, believers break that instruction which causes harm to our fellowship and dishonors the Lord Jesus. Every attempt should be made by believers to reconcile with a humble spirit of forgiveness.

The purpose for church discipline is clearly explained in the Bible as follows:

- A concern for the glory of God.
- A concern for the restoration of a believer's fellowship with Christ and His church.
- A concern for the purity of Christ's church.

The practice of church discipline should follow these biblical guidelines:

- Those who walk disorderly are to be admonished, warned, and appealed to in love. (Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:1-2; Ephesians 4:15)
- It must be done with a spirit of gentleness, humility, and patience. (Galatians 6:1-2)
- If the one in sin does not repent, then members are to withhold intimate fellowship until there is obedience. (2 Thessalonians 3:6-14)

February 26, 2017

- If the one in sin persists after admonishment and withdrawal of intimate fellowship, the final step is formal removal from the fellowship of saints until such time as the sinning member repents of their sin. (1 Corinthians 5:1-11)
- It must be remembered that church discipline always includes a readiness to forgive. Whether it is personal or public, we must be ready and eager to forgive, comfort, and reaffirm our love to a repentant member. (2 Corinthians 2:6-8)
- If the discipline involves a Pastor, then the additional requirements of 1 Timothy 5:19-20 must be followed.

Offices

We recognize the biblical position of Elder and Deacon. Elders are overseers who have the responsibility to shepherd the flock of God. Deacons are servants who have the responsibility to assist the Elders with the needs of the ministry.

Elders

Qualifications

Elders will be men of character and biblical competency as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

- They should desire to be an Elder and demonstrate spiritual leadership abilities among the congregation that evidence that desire.
- They must be able to teach the Word of God with patience and wisdom.
- They should possess a character that is consistent with one who loves God.
- They must be able to manage their home in a biblical manner.
- They should be able to refute error, thereby protecting the congregation from false doctrine.

Responsibilities

The function of an Elder at BBC is to share with other Elders the task of shepherding the congregation. The task of shepherding the congregation at BBC would involve the following:

- Growth in the Faith
- Personal accountability
- Teaching and/or equipping the Saints
- Oversight for the ministry
- Spiritual care of the Saints
- Protection from false doctrine
- Evangelism and discipleship

Appointment

According to the Scriptures, Elders are appointed by God and confirmed by the congregation (Acts 20:28). A task of BBC is to seek and discover God's direction and leading in choosing men who would serve as Elders. The congregation of BBC should be on the alert for men who characterize the qualifications laid out in Scripture for Elders.

While it is recognized in Scripture that Elders are equal in position, they may differ in specific responsibility. Therefore, Elders at BBC will be arranged as a council. The Council of Elders will organize itself in a way that will allow them to follow the purpose of Scripture as expressed at

February 26, 2017

BBC. Finally, the Council of Elders will also support this Constitution in its entirety and fulfill its various requirements with integrity and dedication.

Deacons

Qualifications

Deacons are men who have particular gifts and talents that serve our congregation. Deacons will embody the qualifications as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. (cf. Acts 6:1-7; Philippians 2:1-4)

Responsibilities

Deacons will be responsible to assist the Council of Elders with: the needs of the members, acts of service for the members, and care of the physical needs of the facilities of BBC.

Selection

A task of BBC is to seek and discover God's direction and leading in choosing men who would serve as Deacons. The congregation of BBC should be on the alert for men whose lives characterize the qualifications laid out in Scripture for Deacons.

Ministry Leaders

The Lord has richly blessed BBC with Saints who desire to worship Him through their service to others. As a result, many ministries of BBC are led by men and women who use their gifts and talents to serve others. BBC recognizes Ministry Leaders as additional officers of the church.

Qualifications

The qualifications to serve as a Ministry Leader would include a maturity of faith that is evidenced by a consistent life in Christ. In addition, a Ministry Leader would express a sacrificial love for others. Finally, they might possess a burden for an area of ministry.

Selection

A task of BBC is to seek and discover God's direction and leading in choosing men and women who would serve as Ministry Leaders. The congregation of BBC should be on the alert for believers whose lives characterize the qualifications for being a Ministry Leader.

Support Staff

The hiring of support staff members, who are not Elders, will be planned for and directed by the Council of Elders with financial approval from the congregation.

Finances

Believers are to give financially as an expression of their commitment to the Lord, according to their ability, and with a cheerful heart (2 Corinthians 8:1-6; 2 Corinthians 9:7). BBC recognizes that a Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Financial Secretary will be responsible to order and keep all the finances and financial records. The Treasurer will have primary responsibility to be the financial officer on behalf of the congregation. He will keep the congregation informed of its financial condition by means of monthly financial reports, a yearly financial report, and any other reporting that is necessary. The Treasurer will delegate to the Assistant Treasurer any responsibility he deems necessary for the fulfillment of the responsibilities of the Treasurer. The Financial Secretary will keep records of monies given to BBC through regular and special offerings.

February 26, 2017

Congregational Meetings

Services

BBC will meet regularly for the public reading of Scripture, exhortation, education, and prayer. Times and dates for regular services will be determined by the Council of Elders.

Annual Meeting

At the Annual Meeting, church officers (except for Elders) will be elected, a budget will be submitted to the congregation for approval, as well as any other items deemed necessary for the ministry of BBC. The budget year will begin in September and end in August of the following year.

Family Meetings

When issues, financial updates, or other items need to be brought to the attention of the congregation, a Family Meeting may be held.

Voting

Congregational government requires the active participation of the congregation. Consequently, a quorum for a meeting requiring a vote will be 50% of the eligible voting members.

The purpose of voting at BBC is to affirm the Lord's leading within the congregation on an issue, choice, matter, or finances.

Votes that require a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of the quorum present at a meeting are as follows:

- Amending the Constitution
- Calling an Elder
- Missionary Support
- Church Discipline

All other votes require a simple majority of the quorum present at a meeting.

A member of the Council of Elders will moderate all Congregational Meetings.

Dissolution of Property

In the event that BBC is dissolved, disbanded, or it ceases to function as a church for any reason, the title of all property, both real and personal, will be given by the remaining members to only Bible-believing churches or institutions of like faith and practice.

Corporate Officers / Indemnity

An Elder and a Ministry Leader, to the extent such person qualifies as a volunteer director or volunteer officer under sections 110 and 209 of Act 162, Public Acts of 1982, as amended, of Bethany Baptist Church shall not be personally liable to the Bethany Baptist Church or its members, for money damages for any action taken or any failure to take any action as a director or volunteer officer, except liability for any of the following:

February 26, 2017

- The amount of a financial benefit received by an Elder and a Ministry Leader to which he or she is not entitled.
- Intentional infliction of harm on Bethany Baptist Church or its members.
- A violation of section 551 of Act 162, Public Acts of 1982
- An intentional criminal act.
- A liability imposed under section 497(a) of Public Acts of 1982

Bethany Baptist Church assumes all liability to any person other than Bethany Baptist Church or its members for all acts or omissions of an Elder and a Ministry Leader member occurring on or after January 1, 1988 incurred in the good faith performance of his or her duties as an Elder and a Ministry Leader.

Bethany Baptist Church assumes the liability for all acts or omissions of an Elder and a Ministry Leader or other volunteer occurring on or after the effective date of this provision if all of the following are met:

- The person was acting or reasonably believed he or she was acting within the scope of his or her authority.
- The person was acting in good faith.
- The person's conduct did not amount to gross negligence or willful and wanton misconduct.
- The person's conduct was not an intentional tort.

The person's conduct was not a tort arising out of the ownership, maintenance, or use of a motor vehicle for which tort liability may be imposed under section 3135 of the insurance code of 1956, 1956 PA 218, MCL 500.3135