

*Covenant, Constitution
and Bylaws*

A PLACE TO CALL HOME



**BETHEL BIBLE
BAPTIST CHURCH**

www.bethelbible.net

MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT

Having been led by the Holy Spirit, it is my desire to enter into this Biblical commitment to God and my church family at Bethel. I have repented of my sin, professed salvation in Christ alone, and have been baptized, by immersion, following my salvation. I understand that my salvation is a gift of grace that never needs to be repeated, and that I am still a sinner in need of constant help from God and other spiritual believers to encourage me. My desire is to stimulate others to spiritual growth and to receive correction from others in accordance with the biblical understanding of church discipline and restoration.

The Bible is the final authority for what I believe and how I should live. Because of that, my focus is to cherish God's Word in my life, feed on it regularly, and to seek to obey it. The Scriptures teach me to love God and to love people by spiritually helping others within my home and my church family. My goal will be to work toward maintaining the unity and peace of my church. With God's help, I will strive to be quick to uplift others and slow to judge or take offense. The Scriptures teach me to live a life based upon God's moral standard, and I will endeavor to do so. It is my God-given responsibility to guard the reputation of this church while being a faithful representative of Jesus Christ. I will seek to demonstrate to my family the way that God desires a Christian to walk, in my home and in my community.

Jesus has left me with the Great Commission to become a disciple of Christ and to make disciples for Christ. My life-long mission will be to tell others about Him and help them to become disciples. To the best of my ability I will be faithful in my attendance, keep my church and its leadership in prayer, participate in church decisions, and cheerfully support the finances of Bethel so that we can support a pastor, do missions work locally, and support missionaries across the globe. The Holy Spirit has entrusted me with spiritual gifts and He expects me to use them to the best of my ability within the church, which I plan to do. I am called to identify with a local church; therefore, I commit myself to the principles listed above, and should God ever move me from this church, I will find another Bible-Believing church that I can and will join.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this Church shall be "*Bethel Bible Baptist Church.*"

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this Church is:

1. To glorify God by worshipping Him in spirit and truth, bringing praise, honor, and glory to Jesus Christ. (John 4:24)
2. To seek the will of God through a commitment to prayer for one another, the lost, and our leaders. (1 Timothy 2:1)
3. To serve God by sharing the Gospel through our personal testimony, community outreach opportunities, and the support of like-minded missionaries. (Matthew 28:19-20)
4. To gather together to be disciplined through the preaching of God's Word and the fellowship of one another. We will endeavor to demonstrate mutual love, grace, commitment, rebuke, and encouragement for the equipping of the believer who can then effectively spread the Gospel to others. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

ARTICLE III - DOCTRINE

We believe the Holy Bible, the Old and New Testaments, with its sixty-six canonical books in the original manuscripts is the verbal, plenary, inerrant and infallible inspired Word of God, entirely without error or contradiction in all matters of which it speaks; we additionally believe that God by His singular care and providence has preserved His Holy Scriptures; and that the Holy Bible is, therefore, the only and sufficient final and supreme rule and authority of faith and practice (Psalm 12:6-7; 119:89, 105, 152, 160; Matthew 5:18; 24:35; Luke 16:17; II Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; I Peter 1:24-25; II Peter 1:21; Revelation 22:18-19).

We believe that God is Triune, that there are three eternal, co-equal Divine persons in the Godhead and these three are one God (Matthew 28:19).

We believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ; that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin, Mary (John 1 and Matthew 1).

We believe that the only way to be saved is by faith in the blood sacrifice, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and that to those who thus become His sheep He says: "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10:28 and Ephesians 2:8-9).

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven and is now seated at the right hand of God, the Father, that He ever liveth to make intercession for all that come to God by Him (Acts 1:9-11; Hebrews 4:14; Ephesians 1:20-21).

We believe that the Church, which is the body of Christ, began with the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and that each one who accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior is a member of the body of Christ and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:12-13; 6:19-20).

We Believe it is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. We further believe that the Lord's Supper and water Baptism by immersion for believers only are Divine institutions and that Christ desires us to practice them in this age (Matt. 28:18-20 and I Cor. 11:23-39).

We believe that God may, at any moment, return in the air to rapture the saints, and that a Tribulation period of approximately seven years shall follow, after which He will come to earth with His saints and rule for a thousand years. After this, the wicked will be judged and cast into the lake of fire (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:51-57; Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15, 21; 25:46; Revelation 19:11; 20:10-15).

We believe that Satan is a person, the author of the fall, and that he shall be eternally punished (Job 1:7; Genesis 3:1-19; Revelation 20:10).

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead, both the just and the unjust, and in the eternal conscious punishment of the lost and the eternal joy of the saved (Revelation 20:11-15; 22:11-14; I Corinthians 15:1-58).

We Believe that God is Sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts; and, that the gifts of evangelist and pastor\teacher are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today; and, that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed. We believe that the Bible is sufficient alone without any supernatural sign gifts (1 Cor. 12:4-11; 2 Cor. 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12).

We believe that marriage is a divine and sacred institution, which is publicly entered into, uniting one man and one woman in a life-long covenant (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6). It is God's intent that the marriage relationship is only to be broken by death (I Corinthians 7:10-11; Romans 7:2; Malachi 2:16).

BYLAWS

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership By Profession Of Faith

- A. Anyone 18 years of age and older, who is born again, has been baptized by immersion following their salvation, who is exhibiting the Fruit of the Spirit, and who has been faithfully attending for at least three months, may apply for membership.
- B. The applicant shall attend the membership class and be in agreement with the membership agreement, the constitution, and by-laws of this church.
- C. The Pastor and the Deacons will meet with the applicant to hear their testimony of coming to know Christ, and ask or answer any questions.
- D. The name of the applicant will be distributed to all of the members of the church explaining their desire to join the church. If anyone believes that this person should be denied membership, they are to talk with the pastor or deacons before the next Sunday. If no one approaches the pastor, the applicant will be officially welcomed into membership.

Section 2. Inactive Members

Those who are no longer physically able to attend the services of our church due to being a shut-in, or those who go out from our church into full-time ministry may be moved from being an active to become an inactive member. Inactive members do not have the privilege of voting at congregational meetings, and their names on our roll will not count against numbers needed for a quorum or any other voting purposes.

Section 3. Termination Of Membership

- A. By Dropping. If a member is habitually absent from gatherings for worship and fails to communicate with this church for a period of three (3) months and fails to respond to a personal visit by the Deacons or Pastor or to written communication, that member shall be moved from the active to the inactive, non-voting membership roll. If there is no evidence of interest after three (3) additional months, the member's name shall be removed from the membership roll of the Church. Membership may be restored only through the normal procedures as outlined above in ARTICLE IV, Section 2.
- B. By Expulsion. It is Scriptural to excuse from this fellowship anyone who holds false or heretical doctrine or who lives a life which is openly inconsistent with the profession of this Church (Galatians 1:8-9). This must also apply to one who "walketh disorderly" (II Thessalonians 3:6, 11) or to any person who persists in disturbing the peace and unity of the Church (I Corinthians 5:11-13). The Church shall exercise the discipline necessary as outlined in Matthew 18:15-18 and remove from the membership anyone who fails to evidence genuine repentance.

Section 4. Parent-Child Dedication Service

The Bible instructs every Christian parent to train their children to know and love the Lord. This task takes the commitment and dedication of oneself to do the same and live it out in practice personally.

We offer a public dedication service where parents may publicly stand before the church, committing to the Lord and their child that they will endeavor to train their child in the way of the Lord.

While this service has no spiritual impact upon the child, we recognize that some parents would like to have a specific time to remember their commitment to the Lord.

Only those faithfully attending our church will be eligible for this Dedication Service. However, those interested may arrange to participate in a dedication service with the Pastor.

ARTICLE V - GOVERNMENT

Section 1. This Church acknowledges only the Lord Jesus Christ as its head. The Scriptures are our final authority in matters of doctrine and discipline. This Church is independent and not under any external authority or body of churches when it comes to our faith and practice. Our association with other churches of the Fellowship of Fundamental Bible Churches is for the matter of Christian fellowship and purpose. The sole ownership of all properties, real and personal, of this Church shall reside exclusively in the hands of the Church membership and all deeds and other papers of ownership are held in trust by the Board of Deacons (Trustees) of this local Church. This Church reserves the right, subject to a two-thirds majority vote of its membership, to withdraw its membership from the Fellowship of Fundamental Bible Churches or any other association or conference at any time and for any reason which the membership may deem sufficient.

Section 2. The Deacon Board will act as the Board of Trustees for corporate functions such as the buying and selling of property as directed by the congregation. If the church is without any deacon(s), the congregation shall elect a temporary governing board until such time as one or more qualified deacon(s) are chosen. This temporary governing board shall act as the Trustees of the church. When one or more deacon(s) are elected, this temporary governing board shall cease to exist. (Throughout this constitution, the term “congregation” shall mean, “church membership”).

Section 3. The Pastor, with the counsel and in agreement with the Deacons, shall have full power and authority to employ such employees as are necessary to carry on the work of the Church.

Section 4. The Pastor and Deacons shall direct the interview and reception of applicants for church membership.

Section 5. The Deacons shall work with the Pastor on spiritual problems or grievances within the membership.

Section 6. The Deacons shall have the authority to appoint individuals or committees for the transaction of their business.

Section 7. The Deacons or the Pastor shall have the authority to call congregational meetings when necessary.

Section 8. The Deacons shall perform such other duties as may be defined by this Constitution and shall at all times be subject to the majority vote of the congregation for any financial expenditure in excess of \$5,000.00.

Section 9. During the month of October, the Pastor and Deacons shall select a Nominating Committee which shall consist of two (2) men from the Deacon Board and three (3) men from the congregation at large. The identity of individual members of the Nominating Committee is to be made known to the Congregation each year upon their appointment to provide for part A below.

- A. The Nominating Committee shall place in nomination at a regularly called meeting of the congregation candidates to fill vacancies in the elected offices of the Church. Nominations may be made by membership at large by November 30th. Such a nomination shall be given in writing to any member of the Nominating Committee who shall, in turn, bring it to the attention of all members of the Committee.
- B. The Nominating Committee shall thoroughly investigate the qualifications of each person considered for office. No candidate shall be placed in nomination unless agreed upon by four (4) or more members of the Committee.
- C. It shall be required that any candidate placed in nomination shall be an actively participating member who is in good standing with the Church.

Section 10. In case of vacancies on the Deacon Board, the Pastor and the Board, at their discretion, may submit the names of candidates for the unexpired term to the congregation for election at a special meeting.

ARTICLE VI – PASTOR AND OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers

We believe that God recognizes two officers within the church. This is the Pastor and Deacon.

Section 2. Pastor

- A. The Pastor must be a man who has never been divorced and who meets the requirements as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. The Pastor shall be recognized at all times as the Spiritual head of the Church and (in that capacity) shall have the spiritual oversight of the congregation. He shall conduct all membership meetings,

except when pastoral relations are discussed or except as provided in Article IX, Section 1-C, all regular worship services when possible and shall be ready to assist those under his pastoral care at all times. He shall be ready to give spiritual counsel and comfort and to perform other duties usually associated with his calling. He shall have a vote on all boards, except in matters of pastoral relations and is expected to attend each Deacon's Meeting.

1. The Pastor shall act as advisor and counselor in all affairs of the Church.
2. The Pastor shall not have access to the giving records of individuals.
3. All expenses incurred in carrying out Church work by the Pastor shall be met by the Church. This shall include the purchase of certificates, stationary, postage, and miscellaneous supplies.
4. The Pastor may elect to be paid weekly, every two weeks or monthly.
5. The Pastor shall have a maximum of three (3) weeks of paid vacation time each year.
6. If he attends the Annual Conference of the Fellowship of Fundamental Bible Churches, the room, board and transportation expenses for himself and his family to be paid by the Church.

B. Call. When the Church is without a Pastor, the Deacons may interview interested Pastors and will question them regarding their doctrinal stand as well as other areas of concern. At its discretion, the Deacons may request the assistance of the FFBC's Ministerial Qualifications Committee before it recommends the Pastor to the congregation as a candidate for the pulpit of the Church. A candidate should be heard by the congregation on two (2) different Sundays. The congregation shall meet to consider each pastoral candidate prior to hearing the next candidate. Pastoral selection shall be made by at least 2/3 majority vote of those members present at a congregational meeting called for the purpose. The Pastor and his wife shall become members of the Church by action of the call. The Deacons will be the Executive of the Congregation in regard to pastoral relations.

C. Termination. The Pastor's service shall be terminated if at any time his personal conduct, belief, preaching, or teaching is not in full accord with Scripture. A 2/3 majority vote of the members present at a congregational meeting for that purpose by the Deacons shall be required to terminate the Pastor's service. The Fellowship of Fundamental Bible Churches should be notified of such action.

D. If the Pastor resigns, he must give the congregation sixty (60) days notice. If he is dismissed, the congregation, in turn, should give the Pastor sixty (60) days severance pay.

Section 3. Deacons

A. The role of the Deacon is to help facilitate the ministry of the church by helping the Pastor in planning events and serving where needed.

B. A deacon must be a man who has never been divorced and who meets the requirements as stated in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The Deacons shall have charge of business matters of the Church and shall assist in guiding the spiritual life of the Church. If the need arises, they shall assist the Pastor in ministering the ordinances and in performing any necessary visiting. They shall endeavor by God's grace to live and serve in full conformity with the standards set forth in this Constitution for their particular office and especially as found in the Word of God (I Timothy 3:8-13). Each Deacon shall be faithful in attendance at all services and Deacon's meetings in so far as humanly possible.

1. Each Deacon shall be elected by the Congregation for a term of three (3) years. As it is the function of the Nominating Committee and the Pastor to carefully examine the qualifications of those men eligible for the office of Deacon, only those names advanced by that Committee will be considered for this office.
2. A majority of the current number of Deacons constitutes the quorum necessary to conduct business.
3. For any motion to be carried, a majority vote is required.
4. The matter of supplying the pulpit when the Church is without a Pastor will be the responsibility of the Deacons.
5. Deacons must be men only according to Scripture (I Timothy 2:11-3:13).
6. No two members of the same family may serve simultaneously on the Board of Deacons.

B. Officers of the Deacon Board

1. The President of the Deacons shall be elected by the other Deacons and shall chair all Board meetings.
2. The Vice-President shall also be elected by the other Deacons. In the event that the President is unable to perform his duties or there is a vacancy in that office, his duties shall be assumed by the Vice-President.
3. The Secretary shall also be elected by the other Deacons and shall keep an accurate record of all meetings. He shall have custody of the Church seal, shall maintain a complete record of all correspondence and such records as may be necessary. All records are to be property of the Church.
4. The term of office for the President, Vice-President and Secretary is one year and they may succeed themselves only once.

Section 4. Other Offices

- A. *Treasurer*** - The Church Treasurer shall be appointed by the Deacons. He shall be responsible to make deposits as well as keep an accurate and well organized record of all monies received and paid out. He shall make sure that all monies owed are paid in a timely manner. He shall be responsible to work with the deacons to prepare a yearly budget for the church. The treasurer will be responsible to provide annual receipts for giving. The record of individual gifts to the church is to be kept confidential.
- B. *Assistant Treasurer*** - The Assistant Treasurer shall be appointed by the Deacons in cooperation with the treasurer. He shall assist in counting the tithes and offerings received. In the absence of the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer shall assume the responsibility of the Treasurer. No records are to be kept by the Assistant Treasurer.

Counting the Offerings: The Assistant Treasurer and one other person approved by the *Deacons* will count the offerings each week. If the Assistant Treasurer is not available, the offerings shall be counted by two people approved by the Deacon Board. When counting the offerings, discretion should be made by the counters in regards to knowing who and how much is being given. In an effort to keep all giving as confidential as possible no more than two individuals shall count the monies at any given time. Once counted, offerings are to be placed in the safe until such time they are retrieved by the Treasurer. If there are not at least two approved

counters available to count the offering, then the offerings shall be placed in the safe until such time the counters are available.

- C. **Church Clerk** -- The Church Clerk shall be elected annually by the congregation. He or she shall keep an accurate record of all correspondence, minutes of meetings and other papers of importance to the organization. The Church Clerk will also maintain the membership roll and will make additions or deletions as directed by the congregation. These records are the property of the Church.
- D. **FFBC Delegate** -- During the month of January, a Delegate and an Alternate Delegate to the Annual Conference of the Fellowship of Fundamental Bible Churches will be elected by the congregation. Their room and board, along with their family, shall be paid for the Annual Conference.
- E. All those holding elected or appointed positions in the Church must be members of the Church.

ARTICLE VII – OTHER CHURCH MINISTRIES

Section 1. The Sunday School.

- A. **Superintendent** -- The Superintendent shall be appointed by the Pastor and Deacon Board for a term of one year. He or she shall oversee the general operation of the School, promote the School through a bus ministry and a visitation program, secure substitute teachers when needed and be responsible for ordering educational materials.
- B. **Teachers** -- Teachers shall be appointed by the Superintendent with the approval of the Pastor and Deacons. All teachers must be members of the church, except under special circumstances and under supervision.

Section 2. Missions.

- A. The missionary program and its promotion shall be the responsibility of the missionary committee.
- B. Members of the Missionary Committee
 1. There will be nine members serving on the committee.
 2. Each member shall be an active member of the church.

3. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of the committee.
4. Each member shall serve a three-year term.
5. No one may serve more than two consecutive terms.
6. No more than two family members shall serve on this committee.

C. Purpose of the Missionary Committee

1. To correspond with the missionaries.
2. To bring before the congregation new missionaries for support.
3. To decide upon the support level of individual missionaries.
4. To promote missions in the local church.
5. To plan missions conferences.

D. Officers of the Missionary Committee

The missionary committee will vote on the following positions yearly:

1. President
2. Secretary
3. Financial Secretary

E. Missionary policy and support.

1. Each missionary supported must be a member of a fundamental Bible-believing Church and channeled through a recognized fundamental mission board or agency.
2. The Board under which the missionary serves must not belong to the National Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches.
3. Every missionary receiving missionary support from this church must sign our Doctrinal Statement showing agreement to it.
4. Every missionary is to regularly (at least once per quarter) send items of prayer and praise that we may be kept up to date concerning their situation.
5. Any new missionaries are to be presented for the approval of the congregation at a regular or specially called meeting of the congregation.
6. Because missionaries often have to pay customs fees for any packages they receive, our church will not send personal or household items to missionaries while on the field without first checking with the missionary about the cost. Any monetary gift received will not be sent directly to the missionary, but rather to their individual mission board.

Section 3. Youth Work

The Pastor will oversee the entire youth program. When necessary or possible, the Pastor, along with the Deacons, will have the opportunity of designating an active youth director. Those serving in leadership positions in any of our ministries concerning the youth are expected to attend all church services to the best of their ability. Anyone working with teens or children must have a background check completed.

ARTICLE VIII - SUFFRAGE

All active members of the church eighteen (18) years of age or over and who are in good standing with the church shall have the right to vote in any congregational meeting.

ARTICLE IX - MEETINGS

Section 1. Semi-Annual.

- A. The church will have at least two scheduled meetings per year. The date will be determined by the Pastor and Deacons and must be announced to the congregation on the two Sunday's preceding said meeting.
- B. At the semi-annual meeting, the minutes of the preceding semi-annual meeting shall be read and the financial report of the church rendered. If the minutes were sent to each member at least a week before the meeting, the minutes do not have to be read publicly. The report of the nominating committee shall also be submitted to the membership for action at the January meeting.
- C. The Pastor shall appoint one of the deacons or another member of the congregation to chair each business meeting. The Pastor is also eligible to chair the meeting if he desires.
- D. Elections and any other decisions deemed necessary shall be by secret ballot. Any member can request a secret ballot, and if approved, the vote shall be conducted this way.

Section 2. Congregational Meetings.

- A. Congregational meetings may be called by the Deacons or Pastor provided the time, place and purpose shall be given on the two (2) consecutive Sundays preceding such a meeting.

- B. Individual members may request a congregational meeting by presenting said request in writing, stating the reason, to the Pastor or Deacons. The Pastor and Deacons shall determine by majority vote whether the requested meeting will be called.
- C. In any Congregational meeting, other items of business may be considered after the intended purpose of the meeting has been accomplished.
- D. If an emergency meeting is necessary, it shall be called by the Pastor or Deacons with every possible effort to inform the membership.
- E. One-third (1/3) of the total active members must be present in order to conduct business. Any item voted upon at any meeting of the congregation must receive at least a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present in order to be adopted.

ARTICLE X - PROPERTY

Section 1.

This Church shall have the right to own, buy, or sell tangible properties, both real and personal, in its own name and through its properly elected and authorized officers.

Section 2.

No profit shall ever accrue to the benefit of any persons from the assets, holdings, or other transactions in which this Corporation may become involved.

Section 3.

In the event of the dissolution of the Corporation, all its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among members, but shall irrevocably be dedicated by the Deacons to such other non-profit religious corporations as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of this constitutional statement of faith and in conformity with the laws of the Land. The Fellowship of Fundamental Bible Churches should be notified if such action ever becomes necessary.

Section 4.

Any individual or organization that would like to use any of our property or facilities must fill out a facility use form and agree to abide by our regulations. We will not allow our property or facilities to be used in any way that would violate our Constitution, Bylaws, or Doctrinal Positions.

ARTICLE XI - CHURCH FINANCE

Section 1.

We recognize the principles of God's Word in the matter of our giving. Therefore, we require that all organizations of Bethel Bible Baptist Church refrain from such practices that would bring commercialism into the Church.

Section 2.

This Church shall not support any agency, organization, or associates of said organizations whose rules of faith and practices are not in accordance with Scriptures.

Section 3.

The fiscal year shall be from January 1st to December 31st.

ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS

Section 1.

Amendments to an article of this Constitution may be made at a congregational meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of those present, provided that it does not nullify the Articles of Purpose and Doctrine of the Bethel Bible Baptist Church as stated in Article II or III of this Constitution.

Section 2.

Amendments to this Constitution may be made only if it is announced and published in writing on at least the two Sundays prior to the announced meeting of the membership at which it will be presented.

Revised and Approved – January 25, 2023