

**BETHANY BAPTIST
CHURCH CONSTITUTION**

ARTICLE I. ORIGIN AND NAME

Organized June 10, 1964, this church name is and shall be Bethany Baptist Church.

ARTICLE II. CHARACTER

Section 1. Independent and self-governing, administering its own government by the voice of the majority of its Members.

Section 2. The Holy Bible shall be its only authority and Guide in its faith and practices.

ARTICLE III. DOCTRINE

Section 1. Church Covenant, having adopted the Baptist Church Covenant, its observance shall be considered Essential to the structure of this body.

Section 2. The Purpose

The purpose of this church is the salvation of souls, the edification of believers through the teaching of God's Word (II Tim. 2:15, Rom. 12:1, 2), the worldwide proclamation of God's saving grace expressed in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary (Acts 1:8), the promotion of Godly worship (John 4:23), and "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" until He comes (Jude 1:3).

Section 3. The Statement of faith

See Appendix.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership may be attained by:

A. Profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and Baptism.

B. Letter from another Baptist church of the same Faith and practice. (Baptism of another church of the same faith and practice is the only baptism to be recognized).

C. Statement, if valid reason is given as to why a letter can not be obtained, and baptism has been properly administered by a Baptist church of like faith and practice.

D. Restoration, if suitably penitent and agreed to by majority of the church present.

Section 2. Membership of this body may be discontinued by:

A. Letter of dismissal to unite with another Baptist church of the same faith and practice.

B. Exclusion as the result of disciplinary action taken by the church.

C. Withdrawal of name from the active church records due to prolonged absence in attendance without sufficient reason for a period of three (3) months and efforts to contact in person have failed to restore the fellowship. Church records shall reflect this action.

ARTICLE V. DISCIPLINE

Section 1. Any member or members shall be subject to discipline for private and public offenses committed that is considered detrimental, injurious, and jeopardizes the harmony of the body and cause of Christ.

Section 2. The course of disciplinary action shall be against the offender as prescribed by our Lord in Matt. 18:15-17.

ARTICLE VI. ORDINANCE

Section 1. Baptism

A. Repentance and profession of faith in Christ shall precede baptism.

B. Baptism shall be by immersion only, and administered by authority of the church.

Section 2. Lord's Supper

A. Shall be partaken by born again believers in fellowship with God. Commemorating the death of Jesus Christ showing their faith and participating in the merits of His sacrifice and dependence on Him for their spiritual life.

B. The Lord's Supper shall be observed the first month of each quarter on the third Sunday during the 6:00 P.M. Service and at other times as the church leadership may decide.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

Section 1. Candidates shall be elected to office, always preceded by much consideration and prayer for divine direction and the consent of the church.

Section 2. Pastor

A. The church shall seek a pastor, chosen by the congregation, upon recommendation of the pulpit committee. His tenure shall continue as long as relations between the pastor and the congregation are mutually agreeable or until the Lord leads him

to another field of service.

B. Relations between the pastor and the church may be dissolved at the option of either by giving one (1) month's notice, for pay purposes; otherwise, they may be dissolved immediately at the option of either.

C. The pastor may accept invitations to conduct meetings in other churches by mutual agreement with this church and if without neglect to his own office.

D. The pastor shall engage evangelists for meetings subject to the approval of the church.

Section 3. The Office of Deacon

A. The candidates shall be elected by the church and shall serve under the authority of the church. The qualifications for the office of a deacon shall be those outlined in Acts Chapter 6 and I Timothy Chapter 3.

B. The responsibilities of the deacon shall include but not necessarily be limited to the following:

1. The Pastors Advisory Council - The deacons shall seek to keep the pastor informed and advised as to the needs of the church membership.

2. Teaching and Preaching Ministry - The deacons shall be willing to assist in:

- a. The selection of guest speakers.
- b. Teaching or filling the pulpit, as needed.
- c. Christian education such as Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and literature for the church library.

3. Peacemaker/Disicplinarian - Having the spiritual Welfare of the body as the primary concern the deacons shall seek to promote harmony, Phil. 4:1-2; Acts 15; Gal. 6:1; Rom. 16:17 and Matt. 18:17.

4. Counselor - Serve as counselor to church members on spiritual, personal and family matters.

5. Soul Winning/Visitation - Serves as an advisor and participant in the development of the visitation program.

6. Election of Deacons

a. Deacons shall be elected to office by the church membership. Nominations for the office of deacon shall be made by the church membership to a deacon review committee of no less than three (3) men appointed by the church to a one year term at the October business meeting. The committee shall screen nominees on the basis of Biblical qualifications and functions. A list of qualified nominees shall be presented to the church for prayerful Consideration at least one month before the October

business meeting as the need for more deacons arises. The man/men elected shall begin serving immediately. The deacon review committee will share the names of those nominated with the sitting deacon board prior to their one month release to the church.

b. The term of office for deacons shall continue as long as relations between that deacon and the congregation are mutually agreeable.

c. The ordination of deacons shall be by the authority of the church.

d. The Deacon Board may be increased by action of the church and in accordance with the procedure described above.

7. Benevolence - In accordance with Rom. 12:11, Rom. 12:13, I Cor. 4:2 and I Cor. 14:40; and in order that the deacons may faithfully discharge their responsibilities regarding the church's ministry to the financially needy, the following policy and procedure will be observed when responding to requests for financial assistance.

a. All requests for financial assistance payable from the church Benevolence Fund will be considered and acted upon by the Deacon Board.

b. Request for financial assistance which are approved by the Deacon Board will be paid from the church Benevolence Fund, or from such special offerings as the Deacon Board may authorize to be taken for such purpose. Before dispensing financial assistance to any person, the Deacon Board will ascertain that the requesting party practices prudent and responsible management of his available financial resources, and also, that for such time as he is a recipient of church Benevolence Fund monies, he will use any and all financial resources at his disposal solely to pay for the basic necessities of living.

c. Persons requesting financial assistance will present invoice statements, tangible evidence of indebtedness and/or cash receipts from creditors for such financial needs as they may request the church to meet. Receipts will be obtained for all Benevolence Fund expenditures and retained as a part of the church's financial records.

Section 4. Trustees

The trustee board, comprised of an uneven number of men (min. 5), shall be elected by and serve under the authority of the church. They shall be men proven to possess spiritual maturity and be knowledgeable in the areas of church business. The responsibilities of the trustees shall include, but not necessarily be limited to the following:

A. Legal: Acting with specific church approval, the trustee shall:

1. Execute all legal documents of the church, such as deeds,
2. insurance policies, church loans etc.

2. Represent the church in dealings before various civil

governing bodies such as federal, state, county and city governments.

3. Represent the church in the buying and selling of all church properties.

B. Financial: Acting with specific church approval, the trustee board shall:

1.a. Be responsible to count the tithes and offerings. An audit slip shall be filled out and signed by the board members participating (minimum of two).

b. Be responsible for depositing in the bank all income of the church.

2. Church Budget: Shall be prepared by a committee consisting of The Pastor, Moderator/Chairman Board of Deacons, Chairman Board of Trustees, Treasurers, Asst. Treasurers and other Church Members as the need arises. Financial input from the Trustees, Church Department Heads and/ or committees will be used in budget preparation. The Committee will then recommend the prepared budget to the voting members of the church body at the October Business Meeting.

3. Be responsible for the purchase of all church supplies, equipment, and materials other than those specified in the church budget. The church will set the level that the Trustees Can spend without direct church approval. Amounts that Exceed what has been established can only be spent by Getting direct approval from the Church.

C. Personnel - Acting with specific church approval the Trustee Board shall:

1. Be responsible for interviewing applicants and employing persons to fill positions which are related to the physical maintenance and/or the daily business functions of the church.

2. Be responsible for supervising the employees of the church.

3. Terminate employees if work quality becomes a negative influence upon the church provided that, through supervision, attempts have been made to get the work quality improved beforehand.

D. Physical Plant Maintenance

The trustee board shall:

1. Be responsible for the maintenance of the church plant and equipment.

2. Be responsible for the church's compliance with necessary fire and safety codes (laws).

Section 5. Clerk

A. The clerk shall be elected by secret ballot. The clerk shall keep a register of the names of members with dates of admission, dismissal or death, together with records of baptism. The clerk has no authority to remove any name from the church roll without instructions from the church.

B. All of the clerk's records and books are the property of the church and shall be kept in a special file at the church.

C. The clerk's term of office shall be indefinite and may be dissolved at the option of the church or the clerk without previous notice of either.

Section 6. Treasurer

A. The treasurer shall be elected by secret ballot. The treasurer shall disburse, by check, money of the church by the authority of the church for those items set forth in the church budget.

B. The treasurer shall make a regular monthly report to the church by posting a written report of receipts and disbursements on the bulletin board. One copy of such monthly report shall be kept in the clerk's files.

C. The treasurer's records and books are the property of the church and shall be kept in a special file cabinet at the church.

D. The treasurer's term of office shall be indefinite and may be dissolved at the option of the church or the treasurer without previous notice of either.

ARTICLE VIII MEETINGS

Section 1. The church shall have quarterly business meetings and at other times as is necessary. The regular business meeting shall be held on the 3rd Friday of the first month of each quarter. Chairman of the Deacon Board shall be Moderator over the business meeting.

ARTICLE IX ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1. Sunday School

Section 2. Youth Fellowship

Section 3. Missionary Circle

Section 4. Christian Education Board

ARTICLE X AFFILIATIONS

This church shall not have any affiliation with associations or conventions.

ARTICLE XI PULPIT COMMITTEE

Section 1. After the pastor's tenure is terminated, the church shall appoint from the floor a pulpit committee consisting of five (5) members as follows:

A. If there are both deacons and trustees serving as officers of the church, the committee will consist of one (1) deacon and one (1) trustee and three (3) laymen.

B. If there are no deacons and no trustees serving as

officers of the church, the committee will consist of five (5) laymen.

C. If there are no deacons serving as officers of the church, the committee will consist of one (1) trustee and four (4) laymen.

D. If there are no trustees serving as officers of the church, the committee will consist of one (1) deacon and four (4) laymen.

Section 2. Calling a pastor requires a special meeting previously announced during a regular service.

Section 3. Calling a pastor requires a 75% majority vote of the members present and voting.

ARTICLE XII VOTING PRIVILEGES OF BETHANY MEMBERS

Section 1. Members who are not active and regular in church attendance and who are absent for a period of two (2) months or longer without due cause shall not be eligible to vote in any business meeting and must be in church attendance for four (4) consecutive weeks before they can vote. This vote shall be challenged by the deacon board.

Section 2. Election of officers and major business shall be by secret ballot.

ARTICLE XIII AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended by a 75% majority vote of members present and voting at a stated meeting, provided the amendment has been offered in writing at a previous meeting.

ARTICLE XIV SUPER SESSION

This shall supersede any and all prior constitutions effective DAY 12 MONTH SEPTEMBER YEAR 1980.

APPENDIX - A

ARTICLE III - THE STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section 3.

1. We believe the entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments, to be verbally inspired ("God Breathed") of God, without error in the original writings, and that they are our supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and life (II Tim. 3: 16, II Peter 1:21).

2.a. We believe in one Triune God eternally existing in three persons---Father, Son, Holy Spirit co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, and co-equal in power and glory,, John 17:1-5 and having the same attributes and perfections. (Matt. 3:16, Matt. 28:19, II Cor. 13:14, Gen. 1:26, I John 5:7).

b. We believe Jesus Christ to be the eternal Son of God (Heb. 1:1,3). Who became flesh (Jn. 1:14, Col. 2:9), who was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man (Luke 1:35) that He died for our sins upon the Cross (I Peter 2:24) according to the scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice (II Cor. 5:21); and that all who believe in Him are justified by faith in His shed blood, not of their own

works (Col. 1:14, Eph. 2:8, 9 and Rom. 3:28).

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord (I Cor. 15:3-20), in His ascension into Heaven, (Acts 1:9), and in His present life there for us as High Priest and Advocate (I John 2:1,2).

c. We believe the Holy Spirit to be co-equal with the Father and the Son (I Jn. 5:7). He is a person; He is come as the fulfillment of Christ's promise (Jn. 16:7). He regenerates (Jn. 3:3-5), indwells (I Cor.. 6:19), seals (Eph. 1:13, 14), infills (Eph. 5:18) empowers (Rom. 8:2); Guides (Gal. 5:16, 25), and illuminates (I Cor. 2:13, 14)the believer.

3. We believe that man was created in the image of God (Gen.. 1:26, 27); that he sinned (Rom. 2:23, 5:12) and There by incurred, not only physical death (I Cor. 15:21, 22), but also spiritual death which is not annihilation (Luke 16:23), (Rev. 21:8), but eternal separation from God (Rev. 20:11-15). We believe that all men are born with a sinful nature, totally depraved, and that all who reach moral accountability and are not born again, are eternally lost, (Rom. 6:23, Jn. 3:18).

4. We believe we are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8) through faith, and faith alone in the shed blood of Jesus Christ and Calvary's cross, (Eph. 1:17), and that all who exercise saving faith in Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit and thereby become the children of God, (Jn. 1:12, - 3:5, 6) possessing eternal life and eternal security.

a. We believe that repentance is a change of mind and purpose toward God prompted by the Holy Spirit and not the work of man. It is characterized by Godly sorrow for sin which is offensive to God and ruinous to the soul; and that true repentance is inseparably related to true faith. Luke 13:1-3; Luke 15:7; Acts 8:22; Rom. 2:4; II Cor. 7:10; Acts 20:21.

b. We believe that every true believer should apply his life in service for Jesus Christ. We are justified by faith in Jesus Christ (Titus 3:5); works are the outgrowth of our salvation (Eph. 2:10). While we are saved apart from works, this does not give license to sin. Grace teaches good works (Titus 2:11, 12).

We believe that every believer will be judged according to his works (II Cor. 5-10),and over and above the gift of salvation believers will receive rewards for all work and shall abide (I Cor. 3:12-15).

c. We believe that those born again possess two natures and that these persons may be victorious over the old through the power of the new, but that the eradication of the old nature is unscriptural (Rom. 7:15; Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:24; II Peter 1:4).

d. We believe the Scriptures teach that regeneration, or the new birth, is that change wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, by which a new nature and a Spiritual life, not before possessed, are imparted, and the person becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus; a holy disposition is given to the mind, and the will subdued, the dominion of sin broke and the afflictions changed from a love of sin and self to a love of holiness and God; the change is instantaneous, effected solely by the power of God; in a manner incomprehensible reason; the

evidence of it is found in a changed disposition of mind, the fruits of righteousness, and a newness of life. And without it salvation is impossible.

5. We believe in the blessed hope, the personal (Acts 1:11), premillennial (II Thess. 2:1-4), and imminent (Matt 24:27) return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ for His Saints (I Thess. 4:14-18). We believe in the personal, visible and glorious return of Christ for His Saints. We believe that between these two events shall occur the seven years of Daniel's seventieth week (Dan. 9:27), the last three and one half years of which mark the 'Great Tribulation' culminating in the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-16) in which Christ shall be victor, whereupon He will establish his thousand year reign.

6. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust Acts 24:15).

a. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection (Rapture), when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified for-ever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; II Cor. 5:8; Phill. 1:23; 3:21; I Thess. 4: 16,17; Rev. 20:4-6).

b. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain after death, in conscious torment, until the second resurrection, when the body and soul reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast in the Lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting, conscious punishment (Matt. 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; II Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6:7; Rev.. 20:11-15).

7. We believe that Satan is a fallen angel, that he is the unholy god of this world, and the author of all the powers of darkness. He is the enemy of God, Christ, all mankind and God's angels (Matt. 4:1-11; 13, I Peter 5:8; John 14: 30). We believe that He is destined to the Judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire, (Rev. 20:10).

8. We believe that all in this dispensation who have been saved by the new birth are members of the church, the Body of Christ, that Christ is the Head (Col. 1:18) and we are members of His body, (I Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 5:25-32). We believe every saved individual should unite with a local visible church which is a congregation of baptized believers (I Cor. 1:2, Acts 2:41-47), associated by local church covenant in the faith and fellowship governed by His laws (Matt. 28:20) of the Gospel, observing the ordinance of Christ (I Cor. 11:2); exercising the gifts and privilege invested in them by His word; that it's only scriptural officers are Pastors and Deacons, those qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the epistles to Timothy (Especially I Tim. 3:1-13, II Tim. 4:1-5) and Titus (Especially 1:5-9). We believe in the principle of separation of church and state (Matt. 22:21).

9. We believe that the ordinances of the church are baptism, which is the immersion in water of the saved individual, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 2:14, 46, 47), thus portraying the saved individual's union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3,4), and the Lord's Supper which is a provision of bread, representing Christ's Broken body, and the cup, representing His shed blood, partaken by all born again believers in fellowship with Him, commemorating the death of their Lord, showing their faith and participating in the merits of His sacrifice, and their dependence on Him for spiritual life. It is to be preceded by faithful self-examination (I

Cor. 11:23, 24).

10. We believe that we should be active in the support of world-wide missions, both at home and abroad, and that our support should be to missions which have as their supreme motive the winning of souls to Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18-20) and the accomplishment of that through the local church.

11. We believe that every saved individual should faithfully give of his income to God for spreading of the gospel. God owns all that we have (Col. 1:1-16); we are His stewards (I Cor. 4:1, 2); our giving is not to be as unto men (Matt. 6:1-4), but as an act of worship to God, (I Cor. 16:1- 3).

12. We believe that God gives spiritual gifts for service to all Believers (Romans 12: 6-8; I Corinthians 12: 4-11; Ephesians 4: 11-16). We believe that the apostolic age of signs and the gifts of healing and tongues ceased with the ministry of the apostles chosen personally by Christ and with the completion of the written Word of God. We believe that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism nor of the filling of the Spirit. The gifts which remain are sufficient for the ministry and the perfecting of the Church today. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, according to His will, for the sick and afflicted (James 5:14, 15.)

13. Human Sexuality is a wonderful gift from God, sexual intimacy is to be expressed between a man and a woman within the commitment and love of a marital relationship. (Genesis 2: 24-25; Proverbs 5:18; I Corinthians 7:5; I Thessalonians 4: 3-5; Hebrews 13:4.) Therefore, we believe that any other form of sexual intimacy is both Immoral and a perversion of god's perfect gift. (Leviticus 18: 1-30; Proverbs 6:32; I Corinthians 6:18; Roman 1:26-27)

14. We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather are divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these dispensations - the law, the church, and the kingdom - are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture. (Gen. 1:28; I Corn. 9:17; II Corn. 3: 9-18; Gal. 3: 13-25; Eph. 1:10, 3:2-10; Col. 1:24-25, 27; Rev.20: 2-6.)

15. We believe in the autonomy of the local Church. The Scriptures have established a form of function and government for the local Churches to be autonomous. As a autonomous local Church, we believe in maintaining the purity of the doctrinal beliefs contained in our articles of faith. We believe in separation from those whose teachings are contrary to our doctrinal integrity. However, we are not against distributing funds through an organization for a particular purpose, as long as the funds do not go in support of expanding false teachings.(I Tim. 3: 1-13, Titus 1: 5-9, Acts 14: 23, 15: 2, Rom. 16:17, Eph. 4:14. I Tim. 1:3, 4:6, Tit. 1:9, II John 1: 9-10.)

PRESENT

ARTICLE VI. ORDINANCE

SECTION 2. Lord's Supper

A. Shall be partaken by born again believers in fellowship With God. Commemorating the death of Jesus Christ Showing their faith and participating in the merits of His sacrifice and dependence on Him for their spiritual life.

B. The Lord's Supper shall be observed on Sunday at 6:30 P.M. following each quarterly business meeting and at other Times as the church may decide.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

ARTICLE VI. ORDINANCE

Section 2. Lord's Supper

A. Shall be partaken by born again believers in fellowship With God. Commemorating the death of Jesus Christ showing Their faith and participating in the merits of His sacrifice and Dependence on Him for their spiritual life.

B. The Lord's Supper shall be observed the first month of each quarter on the third Sunday during the P.M. Service and at other times as the church leadership may decide.

PRESENT

ARTICLE VIII MEETINGS

SECTION 1. The church shall have quarterly business meetings and at other times as is necessary. The regular business meeting shall be held on the 3rd Friday of the first month of each quarter. Chairman of the Deacon Board Shall be Moderator over the business meeting.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

ARTICLE VIII MEETINGS

SECTION 1. The church shall have an annual business meeting that shall be held on the 3rd (Thursday) of October of each year and at other times as is necessary.

At the October business meeting the Church Budget will be approved and other business as necessary.

Chairman of the Deacon Board shall be Moderator over the business meetings.