

Constitution

Preamble

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted beliefs of the Southern Baptist Convention, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this constitution.

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this body shall be: SHARON BAPTIST CHURCH.

ARTICLE II. ARTICLES OF FAITH

Section 1. The Scriptures. The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions shall be tried. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

Ex. 24:4; Deut. 4:1-2 17:19; Josh. 8:34; Psalm 19:7-10; 119:11, 89, 105, 140; Isa. 34:16; 40:8; Jer. 15:16; 36:1-32; Matt. 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33, 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff; 17:11; Rom. 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

Section 2. God. There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father. God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Gen. 1:1, 2:7; Ex. 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff; 20:1ff; Lev. 22:2; Deut. 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chron. 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isa. 43:3; 15; 64:8; Jer. 10:10; 17:13; Matt. 6:9ff; 7:11; 23:9;

28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1-7; Rom. 8:14-15; 1 Cor. 8:6; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 4:6; Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5-7.

B. God the Son. Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ he was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself, the demands and necessities of human nature and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, partaking of the nature of God and man, and in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present God.

Gen. 18:1ff; Psalm 2:7ff; 110:1ff; Isa 7:14; 53; Matt. 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16, 27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6; 19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18; 29; 10:30, 38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16, 28; 17:1-5, 21-22, 20:1-20, 28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5, 20; Rom. 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3, 34; 10:4; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8, 24-28; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; 8:9; Gal. 4:4-5; Eph. 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thess. 4:14-18; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Heb. 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15, 24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Rev. 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16

C. God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of God. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand the truth. He exalts God, He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the assurance of God to bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Gen. 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalm 51:11; 139:7ff; Isa. 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matt. 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10, 12; Luke 1:35; 4:1, 18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17, 39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Rom. 8:9-11; 14-16; 26-27; 1 Cor. 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11, 13; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thess. 5:19; 1 Tim. 3:16; 4:1; 2 Tim. 1:14; 3:16; Heb. 9:8; 14:2; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Rev. 1:10; 22:17

Section 3. Man. Man was created by the special act of God, in His own image, and is the crowning work of His creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice, man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence; whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin, and as soon as they are capable of moral action become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Gen. 1:26-30; 2:5, 7, 18-22; 3; 9:6, Psalm 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isa. 6:5; Jer. 17:5; Matt. 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Rom. 1:19-32; 3:10-18, 23; 5:6, 12, 19; 6:6-7; 7:14-25; 8:14-18, 29; 1 Cor. 1:21-31; 15:19, 21-22; Eph. 2:1-22; Col. 1:21-22; 3:9-11;

Section 4. Salvation. Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense, salvation includes regeneration, sanctification, and glorification.

(A). Regeneration, of the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.

(B). Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual perfection through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

(C).Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Gen. 3:15; Ex. 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matt. 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22; 28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14, 29; 3:3-21, 36; 5:24; 10:9; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4 3:23-25; 4:3ff; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18, 29-39; 10:9-10, 13; 13:11-14; 1 Cor. 1:18, 30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Cor. 5:17-20;

Gal. 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:9-22; 3:1ff; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 2 Tim. 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9: 24-28; 11:1; 12:8, 14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6; 2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22; 22:5.

Section 5. God's Purpose of Grace. Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, sanctifies and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is a glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Holy Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Gen. 12:1-3; Ex. 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7; 19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jer. 31:31ff; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22, 31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45, 65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6, 12, 17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7; 26:36; 1 Cor. 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Eph. 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Col. 1:12-14; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10, 19; Hebrews 11:39; 12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5, 13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

Section 6. The Church. A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.

This church is an autonomous body, operating through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In such a congregation members are equally responsible. Its Scriptural officers are pastors and deacons.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42, 47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23, 27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11, 21; 5:22-32; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

Section 7. Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to

the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7, Romans 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 10:16, 21; 11:23-29; Col. 2:12

Section 8. The Lord's Day. The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private and by refraining from worldly amusements, and resting from secular employments, work of necessity and mercy only being excepted.

Ex. 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3; 33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1, 19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Col. 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

Section 9. The Kingdom. The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jer. 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10, 23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Col. 1:13; Hebrews 11:10, 16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6, 9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

Section 10. Last Things. God in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9, Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27, 30, 36, 44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40, 48; 16:19-27; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Cor. 4:5; 15:24-28; 35-58; 2 Cor. 5:10; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thess. 4:14-18; 5:1ff; 2 Thess. 1:7ff; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13; Heb. 9:27-28; James 5:8; Peter 3:7ff; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1; 22:13.

Section 11. Evangelism and Missions. It is the duty and privilege of every

follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Ex. 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 4:11-12; 15:7-8, 16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-28; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Eph. 3:1-11; 1 Thess. 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

Section 12. Education. The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian schools is necessary to complete spiritual programs for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose of which this school exists.

Deut. 4:1, 5, 9, 14; 6:1-10, 31:12-13; Neh. 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalm 19:7ff; 119:11; Prov. 3:13ff; 4:1-10; 8:1-7; 11; 15:14; Eccl. 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Cor. 1:18-31; Eph. 4:11-16; Phil. 4:8; Col. 2:3, 8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12 to 6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

Section 13. Stewardship. God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Gen. 14:20; Lev. 27:30-32; Deut. 8:18; Mal. 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21, 42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8-9; 12:15; Phil. 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

Section 14. Cooperation. Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct

the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christ unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Ex. 17:12; 18:17ff; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Neh. 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Cor. 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Cor. 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Phil. 1:15-18.

Section 15. The Christian and the Social Order. Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his own life and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. The Christian should oppose in the spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness, and vice. He should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Ex. 20:3-17; Lev. 6:2-5; Deut. 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Mic 6:8; Zech. 8:16; Matt. 5:13-16; 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1 Cor. 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23; 11:1; Gal. 3:26-28; Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:12-17; 1 Thess. 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

Section 16. Peace and War. It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war. The true remedy of the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9; 38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36, 38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2

Section 17. Religious Liberty. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church

protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denominations should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Gen. 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7, 24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Gal. 5:1, 13; Phil. 3:20; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

Section 18. Marriage. God's design for marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. God did not design for marriage between two men or two women. This is a perversion of God's creation and is condemned.

This church, Sharon Baptist Church of Ironton, Ohio, will not allow the practice of non-scriptural weddings in our building or on the church grounds. This church will not allow the pastor, former pastors, staff or anyone else licensed to do weddings to do so on church property. This church will not allow the current pastor and staff to participate in a non-scriptural wedding dealing with the homosexual and lesbian lifestyle.

Gen. 2:18-25; Hebrews 13:14; 1 Cor. 7:10-11; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Lev. 18:22; 20:13

ARTICLE III. CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we so now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most seriously and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We promise, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, comfort and grace; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly by tithes and offerings to the support of our local church, the expenses of this ministry, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also promise to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith and the Bible; to seek the salvation of our family, friends, and acquaintances; to walk wisely in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our actions and attitudes; to avoid tattling, gossip, unkind remarks, and excessive anger; to encourage and support each other in sustaining God's design for marriage as the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime; if not married, to refrain from all sexual immorality and avoid living together intimately with another person so that the Bible's instruction for singleness is upheld; not to participate in a homosexual or lesbian relationship, to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks, drugs, and pornography, and from all practices that jeopardize our own or another's faith; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further promise to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover promise that when we move from this congregation, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE IV. PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be to seek the salvation of lost souls, and to maintain public service for the worship of God; for the teaching and preaching of the entire world of God, both Old and New Testaments; to train members in faithful stewardship of time, money, ability, and opportunity; to minister to all within our region, and to cooperate with other like bodies in ministering to the uttermost parts of the earth.

ARTICLE V. CHARACTER

Section 1. Polity. The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose its membership. It recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation common among Baptist Churches, but is not subject to the control of any ecclesiastical body or organization.

Section 2. Doctrine. This church accepts the Scriptures as its sole authority in matters of faith and practice.

Section 3. Denominational Affiliation. This church will be affiliated with the Scioto

Valley Association, the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. Members may be received:

- A. On public profession of faith in Christ; followed by New Testament baptism.
- B. By letter from churches of like faith and orders as determined by membership committee.
- C. By statement of experience, which shall be equivalent to (A).
- D. By restoration, upon recommendation of Deacons.
- E. All who present themselves for membership shall be counseled with in regards to spiritual matters, and oriented with reference to the meaning, responsibilities, and privileges of church membership.
- F. The purpose of said counseling shall be:
 - 1. To render a fuller and deeper ministry to the individual by confirming his relationship to Jesus Christ and ascertaining his commitment to the church.
 - 2. To maintain the quality of church membership at a level conducive to spiritual vitality and purity of the church.
 - 3. To feed these orientated members into the organizational life of the church for further training in Christian service.
- G. Counseling procedures:
 - 1. Counseling shall be accomplished through the means of personal counselors , who shall arrange with the applicant a time and place for counseling sessions. The applicant shall be assigned to a counselor by the pastor at the close of the service in which he presents himself. Counseling procedures should begin at the earliest possible convenience of counselor and applicant.
 - 2. A sufficient number of qualified counselors shall be selected by the pastor and approved by the church. These shall be properly trained and instructed as to their procedures by the pastor, or someone assigned to this task.
 - 3. The materials to be used in the counseling-orientation program shall be selected and recommended to the church by a committee appointed by the pastor upon action of the church.

Section 2. Membership may be terminated:

- A. By granting letter to another church of like faith and order.
- B. By death.
- C. By vote of the church officially recognizing that the member has broken

fellowship with this Church (briefly called exclusion). This shall be done upon recommendation of Deacons only after provisions as stated in Matthew 18:15-17 have been met.

D. If and when a member should be brought before the Church for disciplinary action, they will be notified by letter at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing. This would give them a right to appear before a counseling committee to show cause why disciplinary action should not be taken.

E. For other reasons:

1. Upon written request, a member may be released from his covenant obligations to this Church for reasons that seem satisfactory. After patient and kindly efforts to secure his continuance in the fellowship, his request may be granted and his membership terminated by a majority vote of the Church.
2. A member who in unfaithful in conduct or disloyal to the Church.

F. No membership shall be extended to:

Anyone that has not received Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, followed Him in scriptural baptism, is not in agreement with the Baptist Faith and Message.

ARTICLE II. OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

Section 1. The officers and committees of this Church shall be:

(1) Pastor; (2) Associate Pastor; (3) Deacons; (4) Church Clerk; (5) Treasurer; (6) Music Director; (7) Pianists; (8) Financial Secretary; (9) Sunday School Director; (10) Historian; (11) Head Usher; (12) Nominating Committee; (13) Trustees; (14) Finance Committee; (15) Membership Committee; (16) Awana Director. Assistants may be requested and elected for any one of the above as needs may appear. Such committees as may be needed to care for details of work shall be established at the will of the church.

PASTOR

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the Church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice shall be given. A pulpit committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and their recommendations will constitute a nomination, though any member has the privilege of making other nominations. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by secret ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary to a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by mutual consent, thirty days notice being given by pastor of the church. This may be waived by

mutual consent. The pastor shall have in charge the welfare and oversight of the church. His duties are fourfold; As preacher to teach the gospel; as bishop to superintend the work of the church; as pastor to shepherd the flock; and as minister to serve the people for Jesus' sake. He shall preside at all meetings of the church, except as hereinafter provided. He shall also be member of all committees ex officio.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

An Associate Pastor can be chosen and called by the church as needs and budget allows. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice shall be given. A pulpit committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable associate pastor, and their recommendation will constitute a nomination, though any member has the privilege of making other nominations. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by secret ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary to a choice. The associate pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by mutual consent, thirty days notice being given by the associate pastor of the church. This may be waived by mutual consent. The duty of the associate pastor shall be determined by the pastor and deacon body. He shall also be a member of all committees ex officio.

DEACONS

Section 1. Number, Election, Terms of Service.

1. The number of deacons is to be determined by the needs of the church.
2. The deacons shall be elected in the following manner; by the church and ordained by the church, except when already ordained by a church of like faith and order.
3. The deacons shall have a regular monthly meeting preceding the church business meeting.
4. The church will vote for deacons from a secret ballot, from all male members qualified according to Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13, and being members of this church for one (1) year, this following the year of constitution.

Section 2. Duties of Deacons.

1. In accordance with the meaning of the word and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church.
2. They are to be zealous to guard the unity of the spirit within the church in the bonds of peace.
3. They shall serve as a council of advice and conference with the Pastor in all matters pertaining to the welfare and work of the church. With the pastor they are to consider and formulate plans for the constant effort and progress of the church in all things pertaining to the saving of souls, the development of Christians, and the extension and growth of the kingdom of God.
4. By proper organization and method among themselves, they are to establish

and maintain personal fraternal relations with, and inspiring oversight of, all the membership of the church. Especially are they to seek to know the physical needs and the moral and spiritual struggles of the brethren and sisters; and to serve the whole church in relieving, encouraging, and developing all who are in need.

5. In counsel with the pastor, and by such methods as the Holy Spirit may direct in accordance with the New Testament teachings, they are to have oversight of the discipline of the church, in administering which they are to be guided always by the principles set forth in Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 Thess. 5:12-14.

TRUSTEES

1. Trustees shall be elected by the church upon the recommendation of the nominating committee, but not less than three.
 - (A) One-third for three years
 - (B) One-third for two years
 - (C) One-third for one year
2. The trustees shall hold meetings to transact the business entrusted to them whenever necessary.
3. It shall be the duty of the trustees to hold in trust all the property of the church, to superintend all repairs, care, and improvements of the church property and its use.
4. One trustee shall serve as a general finance committee of the church.

MODERATOR

The moderator shall be the pastor. In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of the deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and a moderator pro-tem shall be elected. The moderator has the authority to appoint committees.

CLERK

The clerk of the church shall keep in a suitable book, a record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. He shall keep a register of the names of members with dates of admissions, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. He shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these by-laws.

TREASURER

The church shall elect annually a church treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed, all

money, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. Payment of bills for local work and expenses shall be made promptly by check, and all funds received for denominational or other causes shall be remitted at least monthly by check. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render at each regular monthly meeting an itemized report of receipts and disbursements for the preceding month, and this report shall be distributed to the church in its regular monthly business meeting. Within thirty days after the end of each fiscal year, the treasurer shall render to the trustees and to the church an annual report showing the total amount of receipts and an itemized statement of all disbursements. All books, records, and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be considered the property of the church. The books shall be open to inspection at all times by any member of the church.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year, and its acceptance and approval of the church, the same shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve it as a part of the permanent records of the church. The treasurer shall, upon the election of his successor, at the completion of his fiscal report, promptly deliver to the deacon body all books, records, and accounts in his hands pertaining or relating to, in any manner, the duties of the office he is relinquishing. He shall consider it a part of his responsibility to promote in every proper way scriptural giving on the part of the entire membership of the church.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY

The Financial Secretary shall be elected annually. He shall receive the empty collection envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the proper persons elected to serve in turn; and from these he shall give each donor individual credit. He may keep the envelopes for reference if he so wishes. He shall also be responsible for preparing and mailing annual statements to all contributing members. The Financial Secretary has no responsibility for keeping money of the church.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

A Finance Committee of not less than three or more than seven shall be elected to meet with department heads and formulate budget before January 1.

The responsibility of this committee is to keep membership informed of financial condition of the church.

The Financial Secretary and the Treasurer shall be on this committee with one or more to be elected, up to five members. The trustees shall elect one of its members to serve as a member of the Finance Committee, which shall be included in the seven.

ARTICLE III. MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship

1. Public services shall be held on the Lord's Day and on some regular evening or evenings of the week.
2. The Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday of each month.
3. Occasional religious meetings may be appointed by the Pastor, at his discretion, or by vote of the church.

Section 2. Business

1. Regular business meetings shall be held on the second Wednesday night of every other month, under rules of Parliamentary Procedures.
2. The pastor may call from the pulpit special business meetings, the particular object of the meeting being clearly stated. Special meetings of the church may also be requested by the clerk specifying the object thereof, which notice shall be read at the public service on the Lord's Day next preceding the day fixed for such meeting.
3. A majority vote of the congregation shall be decisive in reception of new members and decisions in business meetings, except in calling a pastor, and amending this constitution and by-laws.
4. The ordinances of this church shall be the Lord's Supper and baptism by immersion. The Lord's Supper shall consist of unleavened bread and the unfermented fruit of the vine, and shall be served to all baptized believers, as stated in 1 Cor. 11:28-29.

This Constitution and By-Laws, with the exception of Articles II and III, may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at any regular business meeting, providing the amendments have been offered in writing at a previous regular business meeting and announced from the pulpit at least two (2) times. A committee shall be appointed by the church every five (5) years for the purpose of studying and recommending changes if any deemed necessary to these constitution and by-laws.