

**CONSTITUTION
AND BY-LAWS**

OF

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH

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 of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,

We do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, 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, and comfort;

To promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinance, discipline, and doctrines;

To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of its ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations,

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances;

To walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment;

To avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger;

To abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior,

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love;

To remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy of 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 engage that when we remove from this place 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.

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 New Testament and the accepted tenets of Southern Baptists, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each member of this church, and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches, we do declare and establish this Constitution and By-Laws.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE ONE: NAME, PURPOSE, AND INCORPORATION

- Section 1: The name of this church is Bethel Baptist Church
- Section 2: The purpose of this church shall be to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ as recorded in Matthew 28: 19-20, Mark 16: 15, Acts 1: 8, and to develop Christian fellowship and growth in the knowledge of our Lord at home and abroad.
- Section 3: Bethel Baptist Church shall be incorporated in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois governing religious bodies, and the handling of property shall be according to such laws.
- Section 4: This Constitution and By-Laws can only be changed or revised in any measure by this church in a regularly scheduled Business Meeting, or in a special meeting called for that specific purpose.

ARTICE TWO: POLICY, DOCTRINE, AND COVENANT

- Section 1: The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose its membership. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the benefits of mutual cooperation.
- Section 2: Bethel Baptist Church shall adopt the doctrinal statement “The Baptist Faith and Message”, as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention realizing/recognizing that the statement is not a creed binding upon the membership.
- Section 3: The Church Covenant that binds Bethel Baptist Church shall be the one adopted by the Body at the adoption of this Constitution.
- Section 4: The cooperation of Bethel Baptist Church shall be with the Kaskaskia Baptist Association, the Illinois Baptist State Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention, and with similar bodies or groups this church may voluntarily become affiliated with, provided such cooperation does not require violation of the autonomy of this church, and the doctrines it has adopted in this Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 5: A minimum of seven (7) resident members are necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of general Church business or election of officers. A disclosure announcement must be made at three regular and consecutive worship services of this church immediately preceding the Regular or Special meeting called to act upon the calling of a Pastor, purchase or sale of property, or amendments/additions to the Constitution.

Section 6: Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

We believe that term “marriage” has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one’s sex, or disagreement with one’s biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church.

ARTICLE THREE: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: The membership of this church shall consist of those who have been born again, and have followed our Lord in Scriptural Baptism (as defined in the Baptist Faith and Message), and enter into its Covenant.

- Section 2:
- A. Members may be received by Baptism and profession of faith in Jesus Christ, by letter from another church, or satisfactory statement of personal salvation and Scriptural Baptism by immersion. Bethel Baptist Church will not accept baptism performed by any cult.
 - B. Any person presenting himself for membership shall be counseled by the Pastor, Deacon, or committee appointed by this church, which shall interview him and make a recommendation to this church for action at any regular service.
 - C. Pending the recommendation of the Pastor, Deacon, or committee and vote of this church, applicants shall be received under the watch and care of this church.

Section 3: Membership shall entitle a person to vote in Business Meetings, but members under indictment for disciplinary action may not vote pending the outcome of such action.

- Section 4:
- A. Membership may be terminated by death, by letter of dismissal to another church, by personal request, or by disciplinary action of this church.
 - B. Should a member become an offense to this church and his good name by reason of immoral or un-Christian conduct, this church may terminate their membership, but only after faithful effort has been made to bring them to repentance and amendment, Matthew 18: 15-17 being used as a guideline.
 - C. No membership can be terminated by disciplinary action until a minimum of seven (7) days have elapsed from inception of such action.
 - D. Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by vote of this church, upon evidence of reformation.

ARTICLE FOUR: CHURCH OFFICERS

Section 1: Bethel Baptist Church shall have such officers as wisdom and the Holy Spirit may direct to be necessary for carrying on the work of the church. The duties of those officers shall be those common to the office they fill, and according to the instruction of this church.

- Section 2:
- A. This church shall have a Pastor as its chief officer. He shall be a man who has a testimony of being born again, Scripturally Baptized, and Divinely called of God for the work. He shall be an *ex officio* member of all committees of this church, and will work with other officers for the welfare and edification of the membership. He shall serve as Moderator of the Body.
 - B. A Pastor shall be called by this church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which a minimum of three (3) days notice shall be given from the pulpit in a regular Sunday service.

This church shall select a Pulpit Committee from among its members to seek out a Pastor, and the recommendation of the Pulpit Committee shall constitute a nomination. The Pulpit Committee shall present only one name for consideration at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) majority of those members present being necessary for election. The Pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by mutual consent, by this church, or by himself.

- Section 3.
- A. This church shall have as many Deacons as it deems needful. They shall be elected by vote of the congregation. Deacons shall be added as the need arises. Additional Deacons shall be selected as candidates, interviewed and instructed, and presented to the Body for election, by the Deacons and Pastor.
 - B. The Deacons shall assist the Pastor in administration of the ordinances of this church. They shall have the authority to do only that which this church authorizes them to do, and shall not assume governmental duties over the Body. They shall be expected to participate in the spiritual and temporal ministry of the church body.
 - C. Other church officers shall be governed according to the By-Laws of this church, as noted below.

BY-LAWS OF BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH

- Section 1.
- A. This church shall govern its Business Meetings according to Robert's Rules of Order, latest revision, except where its Constitution or By-Laws supersede those rules.
 - B. Regular Business Meetings shall be held on every odd numbered month, on the first Wednesday evening. Meetings may be changed to other times by vote of the Body. Call meetings can be convened, following their announcement at two regular and consecutive worship services of this church.
 - C. All questions of business shall be decided by a majority vote, except those otherwise provided for in the Constitution.
 - D. All elected officers of this church shall be in good standing. It shall be prerogative of this church to replace any elected officer who fails to function satisfactorily.

Section 2. OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

- A. CLERK. This church shall elect a Clerk. The Clerk shall keep record of the Business Meetings of this church. The Clerk shall keep a register of the names of members, with dates of their admission, dismissal, or death, together with records

of baptisms. The Clerk shall issue letters of dismissal at the instruction of the Body, and send for letters of recommendation of those received by letter. The Clerk shall preserve on file essential communications and written reports. The Clerk shall prepare the Annual Report to the Kaskaskia Baptist Association.

- B. TREASURER. This church shall elect a Treasurer. It shall be the Treasurer's duty to receive, preserve, and disperse church funds. The Treasurer shall keep an itemized account of receipts and expenditures, and make a report of the same, in writing, for each Business Session. The Treasurer shall make their records available for audit at such time this church may direct. When a successor is elected, the records and books will be audited and relinquished to the new Treasurer.
- C. TRUSTEES. This church shall elect as many Trustees as deemed needful. The Trustees shall be responsible for maintaining the property of this church, the transfer and acquiring of property as directed by this church, and the execution of such legal matters as this church may direct.

Section 3. COMMITTEES

- A. CHURCH COUNCIL. The Church Council shall be composed of the heads of each department of work: the Treasurer, the chairman of the Deacons, the chairman of the Trustees, the chairman of the finance committee, the Sunday school superintendent, the Clerk, and the Pastor. The Church Council will act in an advisory capacity, making recommendations to this church, and counseling with the Pastor. It shall be the purpose of the Church Council to plan promotional programs for missions and evangelistic efforts. They shall meet quarterly.
- B. BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE. This committee shall be composed of four (4) members and the Pastor. The members of this committee shall be appointed by the Pastor. This committee may ask the assistance of any other member who may have pertinent information or helpful skills. The duty of this committee shall be to prepare and submit a budget for each year. This committee shall review the budget as needed and recommend such changes as needed. This committee shall promote the stewardship programs of this church.
- C. COUNTING COMMITTEE. The Treasurer or two (2) ushers and a designee shall count the funds received in offerings at the services of this church. In the event only one is present, any member of this church may be enlisted to help. The Treasurer shall arrange for deposit of the funds. The offering shall be counted at the conclusion of the worship service.
- D. Other committees shall be appointed or elected as need arises, by nomination and election at regular Business Meetings. Ad hoc committees may be appointed as needed.

THUS ENDS THE CONSITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF BETHEL BAPTIST CHRUCH