

September 5, 2018

Dear Church Family,

At the quarterly update in September 2017, the elders brought before the church amendments that we wanted to make to the Articles of Faith in our Constitution and By-laws. These were originally presented with the intent that they would be voted upon at the annual meeting the following December. A point of order was brought to our attention in the way the motions were presented, therefore the elders formally withdrew the changes in order to resubmit them this year.

Attached to this letter are the formal motions. They will once again be presented at the September 2018 quarterly update. In compliance with ARTICLE V. Revisions, Additions, and Amendments of the constitution, revisions, additions, and amendments may be made only in the following manner: a. at the annual business meeting (**which occurs on December 5, 2018**); b. by a nine-tenths majority vote of resident members voting in person and by absentee ballot at such meeting; c. after presentation by written motion at a quarterly or special business meeting held at least three months before the annual meeting (which will occur at the quarterly update on September 9, 2018) ; and d. if notice of the proposed change or addition has been given, in writing and from the pulpit, on at least two Sundays in the interim period between said meetings (reminders will be sent and announced in November 2018). The new motions are listed as Motions #1-16. Please feel free to consult any elder as to why the changes are needed.

Also, the elders were charged with presenting formal language for the implementation of a deacon ministry by the end of 2018. As the pilot program comes a close, we are now presenting motions to introduce the deacon ministry into our By-laws. While the requirements are not as stringent for by-law changes, we still would like to present them to you at the quarterly update. They are listed as Motions #17-20. **These motions will also be voted upon at the annual meeting on December 5, 2018.**

Finally, we want to thank the first committee that worked on the original Constitution and By-laws. With God's guidance, they formulated a document that has served us faithfully over 15 years. Any changes should not be viewed as a criticism of their work, but only to build upon the solid foundation they set before us.

If we can assist you in anyway, please feel free to consult us.

In His Grace

The Elders of Providence Baptist Church

## **Proposed Motions to Amend the Constitution and By-Laws of Providence Baptist Church on December 5, 2018.**

### **Motions #1-16 for changes to Section 3. Articles of Faith to the Constitution of Providence Baptist Church**

#### **Motion #1 - Article 1. The Word of God**

The last paragraph of the article currently reads:

We believe that the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments was written by men moved by the Holy Spirit and is a perfect treasure of divine instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge 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 should be tried. Jesus Christ is the sole criterion by which the Word of God is to be interpreted.

The elders move to amend with the following-

We believe that the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments was written by men moved by the Holy Spirit and is a perfect treasure of divine instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge 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 should be tried. ~~Jesus Christ is the sole criterion by which the Word of God is to be interpreted.~~ All scripture is testimony to Christ, who is himself the focus of divine revelation.

#### **Motion #2- Article 2. The Triune God**

The article currently reads-

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection and that execute distinct and harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.

The elders move to amend with the following-

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection and ~~that~~ execute distinct and harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.

#### **Motion #3- also under Article 2. The Triune God. c. God the Holy Spirit**

The article currently reads-

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

The elders move to amend with the following-

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe, at

regeneration, that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.

#### **Motion #4- Article 4. Election**

The article currently reads:

We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

The elders move to amend with the following:

We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and saves glorifies sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

#### **Motion #5- Article 5. Mankind and the Fall**

The article currently reads:

The entire world is a revelation of God, a mirror of his virtues and perfections; every creature is in his own way and according to his own measure an embodiment of a divine thought. But among all creatures only man is made in the image of God, the highest and richest revelation of God, and therefore the head and crown of the entire creation, the Lord's own glory. Mankind being made in the image of God means that man possess similar attributes of God and represents God. At creation God granted humanity eternal souls, the ability to make moral choices, dominion over the earth, the privilege to be in relationship with one another and the command to propagate the human race. In his providence, we believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female as a reflection of his glory. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Consequently, gender is not a social construct. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. God's purpose for mankind in creation was perfect and consistent with the thought and character of the creator.

Therefore, we believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

(Genesis 1:26-31, 2:16-23, 3:12-13, 5:1-2, 6:5; Job 14:4; Psalm 8:3-8, 139:13-14; Jeremiah 1:5, 17:9; Matthew 19:4; Romans 3:10-19, 23, 5:12-14; I Corinthians 11:3, 15:21-22; II Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 2:1-3, 5:23-32; Titus 1:15; Hebrews 2:14-15)

The elders move to amend with the following-

We believe at creation, the entire world was a revelation of God, a mirror of his virtues and perfections; every creature is in his own way and according to his own measure an embodiment of a divine thought. But among all creatures only man is made in the image of God, the highest and richest revelation of God, and therefore the head and crown of the entire creation, the Lord's own glory. Mankind being made in the image of God means that man possess similar attributes of God and represents God. At creation God granted humanity eternal souls, the ability to make moral choices, dominion over the earth, the privilege to be in relationship with one another and the command to propagate the human race. In his providence, we believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female as a reflection of his glory. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Consequently, gender is not a social construct. ~~Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.~~ The gift of gender is part of the goodness of creation. God's purpose for mankind in creation was perfect and consistent with the thought and character of the creator.

Therefore, we believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

(Genesis 1:26-31, 2:16-23, 3:12-13, 5:1-2, 6:5; Job 14:4; Psalm 8:3-8, 19:1-6, 50:6, 139:13-14; Jeremiah 1:5, 17:9; Matthew 19:4; Romans 1:19-20, 3:10-19, 23, 5:12-14; I Corinthians 11:3, 15:21-22; II Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 2:1-3, 5:23-32; Titus 1:15; Hebrews 2:14-15)

#### **Motion #6- Article 6. The way of Salvation**

The article currently reads:

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead He is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, He is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

The elders move to amend with the following-

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace **exclusively** through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead He is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, He is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

#### **Motion #7- Article 7. Justification**

The article currently reads:

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

The elders move to amend with the following:

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; and by virtue of ~~which~~ that faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

#### **Motion #8- Article 9. Regeneration**

The article currently reads:

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.

The elders move to amend with the following:

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the ~~heart~~ mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.

#### **Motion #9- Article 13. The Local Church**

The article currently reads:

We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word; that its scriptural offices are Pastors and Elders, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

(Matthew 16:18, 18:15-18; Acts 2:41-47, 5:13-14, 14:23, 20:17; Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:2; I Timothy 3:1-7, 4:14; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17)

The elders move to amend with the following:

We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word; that its scriptural offices are Pastors and Elders, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the ~~New Testament Epistles to Timothy and Titus~~. Likewise, scripture allows the church to call Deacons to serve in leadership of a specific function as needed.

(Matthew 16:18, 18:15-18; Acts 2:41-47, 5:13-14, 6:1-7, 14:23, 20:17; Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:2; I Timothy 3:1-13, 4:14; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:1-4)

#### **Motion #10- Article 14. Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

The article currently reads:

We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is pre-requisite to the privileges of a church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

(Matthew 3:16, 26:26-27, 28:19-20; Mark 1:1-11; John 3:23; Acts 2:37-41, 8:38-39; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 10:16-17, 21, 11:23-28; Colossians 2:12)

The elders move to amend with the following:

We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is pre-requisite to the privileges of a church ~~relation~~ **membership**.

~~and to~~ **We believe that** the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church by the sacred use of bread and ~~wine~~ **the cup**, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination. **It is to be celebrated by the regenerated person regularly as a means of proclaiming the gospel until the Lord returns.**

(Matthew 3:16, 26:26-28, 28:19-20; Mark 1:1-11; John 3:23; Acts 2:37-41, 8:38-39; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 10:16-17, 21, 11:23-28; Colossians 2:12)

#### **Motion #11- Article 16. Civil Government and Religious Liberty**

The article currently reads:

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men that are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to the church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination 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.

The elders move to amend with the following:

**We believe** God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men that are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to the church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government, ~~being is~~ **being** ordained of God, ~~it~~ **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.

## **Motion #12- Article 17. The Righteous and the Wicked**

The article currently reads:

There is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and wicked. Those only who are justified through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit are truly righteous in His sight. Those who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and are under condemnation. The distinction between the righteous and the wicked holds in and after death, and will be made manifest at the judgment when final and everlasting awards are made to all men.

The elders move to amend with the following:

**We believe** there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and wicked. Those only who are justified through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit are truly righteous in His sight. Those who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and are under condemnation, **consigned to hell, the place of everlasting punishment.** The distinction between the righteous and the wicked holds in and after death, and will be made manifest at the judgment when final and everlasting awards are made to all men.

## **Motion #13- Article 19. The Family**

The scripture references currently reads:

(Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4;13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22;22:6; 15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

The elders move to amend with the following:

(Genesis 1:26-28, 2:15-25, 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; Psalms 51:5, 78:1-8, 127:**1-5**, 128:**1-6**, 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8, 5:15-20, 6:20-22, 12:4, 13:24, 14:1, 17:6, 18:22, 22:6, 15, 23:13-14, 24:3, 29:15,17, 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 1:18-32; **I** Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33, 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; **I** Timothy 5:8,14; **II** Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; **I** Peter 3:1-7)

## **Motion #14- Article 20. Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct**

The elders move that the following scripture references be included with this article:

**(Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 3:2, 5:17; 2 Timothy 2:1-2; Hebrews 13:7, 1 Peter 5:1-4)**

## **Motion #15- NOTES**

The elders move that *'The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978)'* be added to the 'NOTES' section at the conclusion of the Articles of Faith to clarify the church's position on this doctrine.

**Motion #16-**

The elders move ...

... that the words 'We believe' be added to the beginning of any article where it is omitted

... AND that any capitalization or punctuation that is inconsistent with the majority of the document be amended

... AND that any quotations from the King James Version of the Bible be changed to the English Standard Version of the Bible which is the translation that is used in practice by the congregation.

**Motions #17-20 for changes to the By-Laws of Providence Baptist Church (Please note that these are brand new insertions)**

**Motion #17- In the By-laws under Article 2: Church Leadership after Section 3**

The elders move to add

*Section 4. Deacons*

As modeled in Acts 6:1-6, Deacons shall be appointed and empowered by the church to serve as leaders of specific ministry areas. The elders shall identify specific functions that require the leadership of a Deacon and present these to the church for approval. The elders shall present Deacon candidates to lead these ministry areas to the church following the nomination and selection process identified in Article II, Section 5. Deacons shall have the authority to make decisions and enlist other members in helping meet their assigned ministry need. Deacons shall provide regular updates at the quarterly meetings and a report at the annual business meeting summarizing the previous year's efforts and plans for the coming year. Deacons shall be presented to the church for reaffirmation every three years, assuming the deacon wishes to continue to serve in that ministry area. In some cases, a ministry need may be of limited duration and a Deacon will only serve as long as the need exists.

**Motion #18- In the By-laws under Article 2: Church Leadership at Section 4.**

The Elders move to amend:

*Section 4.5. Nomination and Selection of Elders, ~~and~~ the Senior Pastor, and Deacons:*

Elders:

The selection process shall be as follows:

- The members shall be encouraged to submit to the Council of Elders the names of men whose lives and gifts are consistent with being considered for nomination as Elder.
- The Council of Elders shall present at a business meeting a candidate or candidates for consideration to the Eldership. In no case should a man be presented without his knowledge and prior consent. Any questions concerning the nominees shall be addressed to the Elders in writing no later than one week prior to the business meeting.
- Resident members shall vote on the list of nominations. A three-fourths majority vote shall be required for the election of an Elder.
- Following election of an Elder, he shall be publicly installed during a regular worship service by the prayer of the whole church and the laying on of hands by the existing Elders.

#### Senior Pastor:

When the senior pastorate of this church becomes vacant, it shall be the duty of the Council of Elders to provide for the filling of the pulpit ad interim, and to nominate for Senior Pastor one who possesses the requirements set forth in these articles. In carrying out this process, the Council of Elders shall directly, or through a search committee, communicate to the congregation at reasonable intervals. All church members who desire to suggest the name of an individual for consideration as Senior Pastor shall do so in writing to the Council of Elders. When the Council of Elders shall invite a candidate for Senior Pastor, they shall notify the church of the trial sermon and associated business meeting in accordance with Article III, Section 2. Only one person eligible to become Senior Pastor shall be considered or voted upon at a meeting. The election results shall be announced publicly at the election meeting and shall be sent by mail to all church members promptly. A nine-tenths majority vote shall be required for the election of a Senior Pastor. After the Senior Pastor has been duly elected, a written call shall be tendered to him, signed by the Council of Elders.

#### Deacons:

The selection process shall be as follows:

- The members shall be encouraged to submit to the Council of Elders the names of individuals whose lives are consistent with being considered for nomination as Deacon and whose gifts are in line with the particular Deacon ministry for which they are being nominated to lead.
- The Council of Elders shall present at a business meeting a candidate to serve as Deacon leader over a specific ministry area. In no case should an individual be presented without their knowledge and prior consent. Any questions concerning the nominees shall be addressed to the Elders in writing no later than one week prior to the business meeting.
- Resident members shall vote on the nominated Deacon. A three-fourths majority vote shall be required for the election of a Deacon.

- Following election of a Deacon, they shall be publicly installed during a regular worship service by the prayer of the whole church.

**Motion #19- In the By-laws under Article 3: Church Business. Section 1. Meetings**

Elders move to amend ...

a. The annual business meeting of the church shall be held during the last month of the church's fiscal year. At this meeting, annual ministry reports shall be received; the annual budget proposed for the upcoming fiscal year shall be approved; Elders and Deacons may be elected and reaffirmed; other necessary business shall be transacted; and information shall be communicated. The Council of Elders shall determine the day and time of the meeting.

b. Quarterly meetings of the church shall be held within the first month of each quarter of the fiscal year. At these meetings, the church shall be informed of the status of church ministries. The Council of Elders shall determine the day and time of each meeting.

c. Other business meetings may be called by the Council of Elders as necessary.

d. Council of Elders, Deacon led ministry and Ministry Team meetings shall be open to members for the purpose of observation. An exception will be made when the Council of Elders, Deacon led ministries or Ministry Team decides by majority vote that a subject requires confidentiality. Then, only that confidential portion of the meeting will be closed. If, in addition to observing, members desire to participate in Council of Elders or Ministry Team meetings, they will be permitted to do so provided prior arrangements have been made with the appropriate chairman.

**Motion #20-**

The elders move that within Article 3: Church Business. Section 2. Notice AND Section 3. Voting that after each phrase 'Election, reaffirmation or removal of an Elder' the words 'or Deacon' be added.