

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH CONSTITUTION

Preface

There are many good reasons that a New Testament church should have a Covenant, Confession of Faith, Constitution, and Bylaws. Together they can greatly assist us in efforts to biblically organize and conduct the ministries entrusted to us by Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. However, we readily acknowledge that these documents, despite their usefulness and precision, will avail nothing apart from the presence and power of the Holy Spirit of God in a church. With this keen awareness of our absolute dependence upon our great God, we set forth these articles.

Preamble

It pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants together in July 1955 to establish a faithful and evangelical New Testament congregation under the name Bethel Baptist Church for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ. By His grace and for His glory, He has sustained this work to the present day.

We, the members of Bethel Baptist Church do declare and establish this Constitution in order to glorify our sovereign God, exalt our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and submit ourselves to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in the hope our Triune God will give us the collective desires of our hearts by helping us to become increasingly a Great Commission church, committed to the task of growing as disciples of Jesus Christ who make disciple-makers. We desire to uphold the principles of our faith and practice as set forth in the Holy Scriptures, exemplify the standard of Christian living portrayed by our Savior, preserve the autonomy of this church, and provide for the honorable and diligent execution of the responsibilities of the members.

Article I – The Name and Legal Description

This community of believers will be known as Bethel Baptist Church. The legal entity of Bethel Baptist Church of Owasso, Inc. is a non-profit religious corporation organized according to the provisions of Title 68 O.S. 1991, Article 13, Code of Oklahoma of 1992. The location of this church's facility is 10705 East 86th Street North in the City of Owasso, Tulsa County, Oklahoma.

Article II – The Purpose of the Church

This church exists by the grace of God and for the glory of God. The ultimate purpose in all of its mission and ministries is to glorify God by obediently making and equipping disciples of Christ, in our community and throughout the world, by the power of the Spirit. We believe that Jesus Christ calls everyone He saves to be disciples who make disciple-makers. We believe we can accomplish this purpose together as we encourage one another to follow Christ, love God, love others and serve the world.

Article III – Church Covenant

The Church Covenant is equal parts promise, summary of expectations, ethical statement, and biblical standards. We summarize how we promise to live together in the Covenant that forms the ethics, or the moral principles, of our worldview and holds out a biblical standard by which we live. Our acceptance of this document follows the practice of believers throughout the centuries who have pledged to God and one another to live out the gospel in community.

We corporately reaffirm our commitment to the Covenant at least annually when we stand as a body and verbally recommit ourselves to it before taking the Lord's Supper. By emphasizing the Covenant in our life together, we strive to protect ourselves from individual and corporate sin and to encourage one another to live in light of a greater covenant—one initiated by love, sealed by sacrifice and kept for eternity by our Savior Jesus Christ.

The Covenant of Bethel Baptist Church

Since by divine grace we have been brought to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to commit ourselves to Him, and upon our profession of faith having been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, relying upon His gracious aid, we do now solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We will walk together in brotherly love, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.

We will purpose to accomplish the Great Commission by making disciple-makers who follow Christ, love God, love others, and serve the world.

We will rejoice at each other's happiness and with tenderness and sympathy endeavor to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.

We will seek to live for God's glory, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, remembering we have been buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in a new and holy life.

We will work together to advance a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and discipline.

We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with another church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

Article IV – Confession of Faith

The Holy Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible and all-sufficient Word of God and is the basis for any confession of faith. In recognition of the Bible's final authority, we do hereby adopt, as a concise summary of our faith, the Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689.

For purposes of membership, it is expected members will be in substantial, non-divisive agreement with the Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689.

For purposes of leadership (for example, pastors, deacons, teachers, facilitators and worship leaders), it is required that all who serve in positions of leadership will be in whole-hearted, non-divisive agreement with the Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689.

Article V – Church Government

The government of this church follows the Scriptural model of “pastor led with congregational consent.” As recognized by congregational vote and as described in this Constitution and the Bylaws, the day-to-day administration of this church will be vested in the office of pastor.

This congregation is an autonomous church of Jesus Christ and may join in voluntary association with other Baptist churches upon recommendation of the pastor(s) and upon confirmation by the congregation. Withdrawals from such associations may be effected by the same procedure. At this writing, this church functions in friendly cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention of churches. Other associations with churches and/or ministries of like faith may be pursued by the above procedure. However, no association may infringe upon the autonomous status and voluntary cooperation of this church.

Article VI – Membership

A New Testament Understanding of Membership

The New Testament illustrates and teaches that professing Christians are to be baptized and committed to a local church for worship, ministry, edification, discipline, fellowship, discipleship and evangelism. While we recognize the true spiritual condition of an individual is infallibly known only to God, we also recognize the New Testament places upon the local church the responsibility of carefully guarding the admission and exclusion of its members. Therefore, the membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who will be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Because of the New Testament emphasis upon regenerate church membership, we believe the following constitute fruit of a true work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration:

A contrite heart: Contrition is described in the Scriptures as godly sorrow for sins (cf. *Psalm 34:18, 51:17; Isaiah 66:2; II Corinthians 7:10*).

Repentance toward God: Repentance is a change of mind toward God on account of sin (cf. *Ezekiel 18:31; Hosea 14:2; Joel 2:12; Acts 3:19, 8:22, 17:30*).

Evidence of conversion: Conversion is a turning from sin (the dominion of it) and a turning to God to walk in His way of holiness (cf. *Psalm 51:12; Matthew 18:3; Luke 22:32; Acts 3:19*).

Faith in Jesus Christ as Lord: Faith is totally relying upon the person and work of Jesus Christ for salvation. The evidence of this saving faith is a submissive spirit purposing to live by loving Him and keeping His commandments (*John 14:15; Matthew 28:20*).

To “join” Bethel Baptist Church means the individual and the corporate body enter into a unique covenant commitment to one another. Church membership is a mutual relationship with both the individual and corporate body having specific responsibilities.

When an individual joins Bethel, the church family commits to teach that person the Word of God (*II Timothy 3:15, 4:1-4; I Peter 2:2; Ephesians 5:26*); to provide opportunities for growing spiritually, nurturing, and serving (*Ephesians 4:12-14; II Timothy 1:6; I Corinthians 12:4-7*); to provide a framework for building fellowship and godly relationships (*Ephesians 4:16; I Corinthians 12:12-27; Romans 12:3-21*); to carry out responsibilities of reproof, rebuking, exhorting, caring, and disciplining (*Ephesians 4:14-16; II Timothy 3:16-17; I Thessalonians 5:14; Galatians 6:1-5; Matthew 18:15-17*); and to broaden the believer’s concern for and perspective of the non-Christian world (*Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 1:14-17; Philippians 1:27-28*).

The church member commits to develop in personal spiritual growth through sanctification (*Romans 6:19; Ephesians 4:15; I Peter 2:2*); to be faithful in attendance,

participation (*Hebrews 10:24-25*), service, and giving (*I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:6-8; I Peter 4:10*); to seek intentionally to preserve the unity of the church (*Ephesians 4:3*); and to maintain a good testimony toward unbelievers (*I Thessalonians 2:11-12; 4:11-12*).

Article VII – Church Officers

Jesus Christ alone is the Head of His Church universally and this church locally. In His divine wisdom, He has been pleased to give certain gifts (*Ephesians 4:11-13; Acts 20:17, 28; Philippians. 1:1*) to the local church in the form of men who will provide spiritual leadership and equip the saints to engage in ministry. Appealing to the pertinent biblical passages that set forth specific spiritual qualifications, each church should seek to discover those whom the Lord has called and qualified to lead in these capacities.

The Scriptures teach the God-ordained offices in the church are pastor(s) and deacons. These offices comprise the Pastoral Ministries Team. The pastor(s) have the responsibility and authority to teach the Word, to pastor the flock of God, and to lead the church to accomplish its mission. The deacons have the responsibility to assist the pastor(s) in caring for the practical and benevolent aspects of church life. The Pastoral Ministries Team will recommend to the church deliberative bodies as needed.

In addition to the biblical offices of pastor and deacon, our church under this Constitution and the Bylaws recognizes the administrative positions of trustees, clerk, and treasurer.

Article VIII - Finances

The Holy Scriptures are clear that everything we have comes from God above (*James 1:17; Psalm 85:12; John 3:27; I Corinthians 4:7*), and we owe our very life and breath to Him (*Acts 17:28; Job 12:10; Daniel 5:23*). Scripture also clearly teaches that all who are true followers of Jesus Christ and are growing as disciple-makers experience an increasing desire to give cheerfully (*II Corinthians 9:6-9*) and regularly (*I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 8:3, 11*) in response to the great blessings God continues to pour out upon us. With God's provision through the obedient grace giving of His people, Bethel Baptist Church will be biblically responsible stewards of the resources He provides.

Article IX - Dissolution and Distribution of Property

In the event of the dissolution of Bethel Baptist Church of Owasso, Inc., after the obligations of the church have been met, upon the recommendation of the Pastoral Ministries Team and approval by the congregation, the assets and remaining funds will be distributed to a non-profit religious corporation whose purpose is the same as the purpose of this church as defined in Article II of this Constitution.

Article X – A Quorum for Conducting Business

Ten percent of the number of those members in good standing will constitute a quorum for conducting regular congregational business.

Twenty percent of the number of those members in good standing will constitute a quorum for the election of officers and leaders and for conducting other special congregational business (such as the adoption of the budget).

Thirty percent of the number of those members in good standing will constitute a quorum for the purpose of calling or dismissing a pastor.

The latest revision of Roberts Rules of Order will be a guiding document for congregational meetings.

Article XI – Adoption of and Amendments to the Constitution

This Constitution, and corresponding Covenant and Confession of Faith, was adopted by the congregation on January 29, 2012. The adoption will have the effect of superseding all previously adopted principles and practices.

These Articles may be amended by a three-fourths majority of the members in good standing, present and voting at a called congregational meeting. A two-week notice of such meeting will be given to the congregation by announcement at a Sunday morning service.