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# **Countryside Bible Church Constitution**

## **ARTICLE I – NAME**

This organization shall be known as “Countryside Bible Church” Inc., of Jonesville, Michigan.

## **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

Members of this church work together to glorify God by sharing His Word and by mentoring, serving and supporting each other.

## **ARTICLE III – ORGANIZATION**

### **Section A. Phases of Its Ministry:**

The object of this church is the ministry of the Word of God for the salvation of souls, the edification of Christians through the teaching of God’s Word, the world-wide proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the promotion of Godly worship, the defense of the “faith once delivered,” and the cooperation with Christian activity functioning in harmony with God's Holy Word—The Bible—until He comes.

### **Section B. Independence and Autonomy:**

It is the purpose of the members that this church shall be, and shall forever remain an independent, undenominational organization, adhering to the fundamental and pre-millennial doctrines of the Christian faith, as set forth in the Holy Bible and as defined in our statement of faith and Doctrine. (Article IV)

### **Section C. Association with Other Churches:**

1. Fellowship with other local independent churches shall be maintained by this church. It may also enter into such cooperation with other fundamental churches as shall not jeopardize its undenominational and fundamental position. To this end, the church may be a member of and affiliate with the Independent Fundamental Churches of America, as long as such membership does not jeopardize its independence or undenominational character.
2. Affiliation or cooperation with local church councils, etc., shall not be such as shall not compromise the fundamental doctrinal position of the church.

## **ARTICLE IV – DOCTRINE**

### **Section A. The Scriptures:**

We believe that the Holy Bible (meaning thereby the sixty-six portions called “books” which together are commonly received as the Holy Bible) as originally written was wholly and verbally inspired of God and the product of Spirit-controlled men; and therefore, is infallible in its record. We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian union, and the one standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be judged. And we hold these things to be true of no other book or part of a book, of any character whatsoever. II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:19-21; Isaiah 8:20; Proverbs 30:5-6.

### **Section B. The Godhead:**

We believe in ONE Triune God, Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. Exodus 20:1-3; Matthew 28:19; John 14:16-17; I Corinthians 8:6; II Corinthians 13:14; Deuteronomy 6:4.

### **Section C. The Person and Work of Christ:**

1. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, the Second Person of the Godhead, having all the attributes of Deity, being eternal with the Father and partner with Him in the creation of the universe; that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. John 1:1-2, 14; Luke 1:35; Isaiah 7:14.
2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary, sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. Romans 3:24, 25; I Peter 2:24; Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 1:3-5; II Corinthians 5: 21.
3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to Heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. Acts 1:9-12; Hebrews 9:24; 7:25; Romans 8:34; I John 2:1-2.

#### **Section D. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit:**

1. We believe the Holy Spirit to be a divine person, eternally one with God the Father and God the Son, and so of the same nature. We believe He was active in creation; that in His relation to the world He restrains the evil until God's present purposes are fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. We believe He bears witness to the truth of the Gospel in preaching and other testimony; that He is the Supernatural Agent in the New Birth; that He baptizes every believer into the Church which is the Body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption, and that by His agency all who believe may acceptably pray, live, witness, and worship, and be assured of the hope that is set before them. Genesis 1:1-3; Job 26:13; John 14:16; 16:7-11; John 3:5-6; Ephesians 1:13; II Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:14; 8:26-27, etc.
2. We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who guides believers into all truth; and, that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit. John 16:13; I John 2:20, 27; Ephesians 5:18.

#### **Section E. The Total Depravity of Man:**

We believe that man was created directly by God; that he was created in the image of God, and so was innocent; that by voluntary transgression of the law of God he fell from his sinless and happy estate, and as a consequence all mankind are now sinners both by nature and by choice, totally depraved, alienated from God, being incapable of fellowship with God, justly condemned, without hope, or without excuse; and that mankind in this present estate can only look forward to judgment and an eternity apart from God; man, of himself, being utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:22-23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12.

#### **Section F. The Fact and Consequences of Sin:**

We believe and teach that sin is any want of complete conformity to the Person, affirmations, and decrees of God, and is the nature of every unregenerate man, wherewith he was born; and finds expressions in the thoughts, words and ways of all men after the flesh; that because of this sinful nature the unregenerate person has nothing of grace whereby he may please God or gain His favor; that the consequences of sin in the life of the unbeliever is eternal separation from God, and in the life of the believer it is broken fellowship with the Godhead now, and loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ. Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Romans 14:23; James 4:17; I John 5:17; I John 3:8 with John 8:44; I John 3:4; I Corinthians 6:9-10; John 1:5-10.

#### **Section G. Atonement for Sin:**

We believe that the salvation of the sinner is wholly of Grace, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the appointment of the Father freely took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin; by His personal obedience He honored the divine law, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins. We do not believe His death to be an example to us as a martyr, but rather the Just One dying for the unjust, a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's

place. We further believe that He has risen from the dead and is now seated in the heavenlies, and since He combines in Himself the tenderest of sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior. Romans 3:23-24; John 3:16; Matthew 18:11; Philippians 2:7; Hebrews 2:14; Isaiah 53:4-7; I John 4:10; I Corinthians 15:3-4; II Corinthians 5:21; etc.

#### **Section H. Salvation by Grace:**

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, which is the free gift of God; that the new creation is accomplished in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with the Word of God, working in us to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that the proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and holiness of life. We further believe that the only condition of salvation is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and by no means dependent on our own good works. John 3:3; II Corinthians 5: 17; I John 5:1; John 3:6-7; Acts 16:30-33; II Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; II Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 2:13; Titus 3:5; etc.

#### **Section I. Justification by Faith:**

We believe that Christ secures to such as believe in Him the blessing of justification, which we interpret to mean a perfect righteousness in the sight of God. We believe that justification includes the pardon for sin and the gift of eternal life, and this is not bestowed in consideration of any righteous works that we have done but that solely through our faith in the Redeemer's blood is His righteousness reckoned unto us. Isaiah 53:11; Acts 13:39; Romans 8:1; 5:1, 9.

#### **Section J. Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers:**

1. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 29-30; I Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; 1 Peter 1:5.
2. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word; which however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15.

#### **Section K. The Two Natures of the Believer:**

We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural. Romans 6:13; 8:12, 13; Galatians 5:16-25; Col. 3:10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-9.

#### **Section L. Separation:**

We believe that each believer is called upon by God through the Word, to reckon himself dead unto sin and alive unto God thereby not bringing reproach upon his Savior and Lord, and that he is enabled and commanded to separate himself from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful practices, conduct, and outlook of the world and to live soberly and righteously in this present evil world. II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Romans 6:1; I John 2:15-17; II Tim. 3:1-5, etc.

#### **Section M. Missions:**

We believe that it is the obligation of the saved to witness by life and by word to the truths of the Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind. Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; II Corinthians 5:19-20.

#### **Section N. The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts:**

1. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts; and that the gifts of evangelists, pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today; and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established. I Corinthians 12:4-11; II Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12.
2. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will, for the sick and afflicted. John 15:7; I John 5:14-15.

#### **Section O. The Church:**

1. We believe that all who by faith have received the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior have been baptized into the Holy Spirit into that spiritual body designated in Scripture as the Church of Christ and the Body of Christ, and as such are endowed with such gifts of the Spirit according to the will of God as will enable them to work together with their fellows to the edifying of that body; that Christ is the true and only Head of this Church; and that this Church shall one day be taken from this earth, without loss or division of membership, to be forever with the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. We believe that in the providence of God there have been formed on the earth in this present age local congregations that are called churches; that the New Testament defines their organization, purpose, mission, etc., in general terms, leaving the specific applications to each separate church as it may be led by the Holy Spirit. We believe that each such church is a congregation of believers associated in mutual agreement for the purpose of missionary evangelism, the edifying of the church through the ministry of preaching, the observance of the ordinances, the bringing to maturity of the saints, and in other ways bearing witness to the Lord Jesus as prescribed in the Scriptures.
3. We believe that a New Testament Church as thus defined is possessed of the right of self-government, absolutely free from the interference of any outside person, organization, or power; that while it is not against Scripture for any church to be associated with any other organization for the purposes for which the organization is formed, such an association cannot be interpreted as a surrender of the church's sovereignty over its own affairs, nor does such association limit the church's power to be the sole judge of the measure and method of such association and cooperation. In every detail, Christ is held to be the true Head of the Church, administering His will through the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:22-23; Col. 1:24; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 3:10; 4:11-16; Romans 16:1, 4-5; I Corinthians 1:2; 8:1; Titus 1:5-9.

#### **Section P. Dispensationalism:**

We believe in the dispensational view of the Bible interpretation but reject the extreme teaching known as "Hyper-dispensationalism," such as that teaching which opposes either the Lord's table or water baptism for the church in this age. Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; 18:8; I Corinthians 11:23-26.

#### **Section Q. The Personality of Satan:**

We believe that there exists a very real person known in Scripture as Satan and the Devil, who endeavors by every means to usurp the place and assume the prerogatives of God; that he seeks to imitate the works and the image of God, thus, to deceive the unwise and to gain for himself their loyalty and their service. We understand the Scriptures to teach that he is a spirit being, created by God; that he was made perfect and placed in a responsible position in the universe; through prideful self-assertion he fell from his glorious estate, taking with him a number of other spirit beings of lesser rank, through whom he maintains himself as the prince of this world and is, by permission of God, its present ruler. He caused the downfall of man at the beginning by deception, and deception has marked his dealings with man ever since; and that he is the source and inspiration of those religious agents and agencies that pervert, deny, or work contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures and the testimony of Christ. By the work of Christ at Calvary he became a defeated foe and will be brought to judgment and removed as a factor in the universe through the direct operation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Job 1:6; 2:1; Ezekiel 28:12-

15; Isaiah 14:12-17; Genesis 3:1-7; II Corinthians 11:14; Ephesians 2:2; I Peter 5:8; John 14:30; 16:11; Revelation 20:2-3, 7-8, 10.

### **Section R. The End of the Age and the Return of the Lord Jesus:**

1. We believe that according to the Scriptures we are living in the closing days of this age and therefore it is expedient that we maintain a worthy manner of life consistent with our expectancy, and that we be diligent to complete the work which He has entrusted to us.
2. We believe in that "Blessed Hope," the personal, imminent, pre-tribulation, and pre-millennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to earth, with His saints, to establish His Millennial Kingdom. I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-6; I Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; Revelation 3:10.

### **Section S. The Eternal State:**

1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Revelation 20:5-6, 12.
2. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. Luke 23:43; Revelation 20:4-6; II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23, 3:21; I Thessalonians 4:16-17.
3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment. Luke 16:19-26; Matthew 25:41-46; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 20:11-15.

## **ARTICLE V – ORDINANCES**

We recognize two ordinances of the church for this age—the Lord's Supper and Water Baptism. They are not to be regarded, however, as a means of salvation, nor as a means of grace by which special merit is obtained.

### **Section A. The Lord's Supper:**

This ordinance shall be observed as often as the Pastor or Board shall decide. It shall be administered by an elder. All who have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior and are walking in fellowship with the Lord are encouraged to join in this service. Luke 22:19-20; I Corinthians 11:23-29.

### **Section B. Water Baptism:**

When administered by this church, baptism shall be by immersion at the request of those who have personally acknowledged Christ as Savior. While we hold that Christians should obey the Lord in baptism, we believe it is not necessary for church membership, the condition of that membership being the New Birth. Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:36-39; 10:47-48; I Corinthians 1:14-17.

## **ARTICLE VI – MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section A. Qualifications:**

Persons who give testimony to their faith in Christ as Savior; who give assurance of their willingness to follow and submit themselves to the Word of God as the only rule of faith, doctrine and practice; who attend consistently the regular services of the church; who meet the responsibilities of membership; and who indicate their agreement with the constitution of this church shall be eligible for membership.

### **Section B. Reception of Members:**

1. Christians who desire to associate themselves with this church and who fulfill the qualifications for

membership shall make application to the Pastor or another member of the Official Board (Official Board refers to the Pastor(s), Elders and Deacons). They shall then meet with the elders for examination and approval.

2. Applicants who have been approved for reception into the membership shall be recommended to the church by announcement from the pulpit or in the bulletin for two consecutive Sundays. If no valid objections are received by the elders during that period, the right hand of fellowship shall be extended to them at the following Sunday Morning Service. Their membership shall then be in force.

3. New members shall have associate membership status until they have completed discipleship requirements as defined by the elders.

### **Section C. Status of Membership:**

The membership of this church shall consist of three groups, namely, Active membership, Associate membership, and Inactive membership

1. Active membership shall consist of such Christians who have completed discipleship requirements and have been received in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and who are not members of any other church.

a. Active members who have reached the age of 18 years shall be entitled to vote.

b. No minimum age shall be set for membership.

2. Associate membership shall be extended to those who meet the qualifications for active members who have not completed discipleship requirements or who are not permanent residents of this area, such as students and missionaries, who may hold regular membership elsewhere. They shall be permitted to teach or participate in a similar ministry subject to approval by the Elders. They shall have the right to attend the business meetings of the church but shall not have the right to vote.

3. Inactive membership shall consist of the following:

a. Those who no longer have residence in this area but still desire to hold their membership in this church.

b. Those who willfully and without reasonable cause absent themselves from the regular assembly of this church for six months, shall forfeit their right to hold office and to vote on any church matter, the reasonableness of the cause to be determined by the Official Board. This shall make it necessary for the church Board to notify such members at their last known address, of the intention of the church to retire their names to a list of inactive members. If at the expiration of thirty (30) days from the date of the notice, the absent members have failed to show cause deemed sufficient by the Board, they will be declared inactive.

c. Those who have come under some disciplinary action of the church as described in Section D. Inactive members shall not have the right to vote or hold any office in the church.

d. If their inactive status has not changed in 12 months, the Official Board may remove their name from the membership list.

### **Section D. Discipline:**

Although it is the conviction of this church that converts should be welcomed into this church so that they might be taught and edified and built up in the faith (Romans 14:1), it is likewise our conviction that discipline should be administered in accordance with the Word of God. Any disciplinary action that is deemed necessary shall be in the spirit of love and meekness (II Thessalonians 3:14-15; Galatians 6:1) and shall be conducted toward the end of repentance and restoration.

1. Reasons for Discipline:

a. Non-attendance, as described in Article V, Section C. paragraph 3b. A semi-annual review of the active membership shall be conducted by the Official Board.



- b. Doctrinal deviation of heresy: I Timothy 6:3-5; Titus 3:10, 11; Romans 16:17-18.
  - c. Immoral Conduct: I Corinthians 5:9-13; II Corinthians 6:14-17; II Thessalonians 3:6.
  - d. Any action or conversation that would harm the testimony of the church as a whole, such as an ungodly life.
  - e. Any action or conversation that would cause division or party spirit in the church.
2. The discipline of this church in doctrinal and moral matters, as well as those involving improper testimony, shall be entrusted to the Elders.
- a. No accusation shall be brought against any member except upon the testimony of two or three witnesses. Matthew 18:16; II Corinthians 13:1; I Timothy 5:9.
  - b. The suspected person shall be confronted with the charges with the desire and effort to correct the difficulty and restore proper fellowship. If this does not lead to restoration of fellowship, charges shall be put in writing and placed in the hands of the suspected person, and he or she summoned to meet the Elders at some date not more than two and not less than one week subsequently. Failure on the part of the accused to appear for trial will not prevent the Elders from examining the case and rendering a verdict in accord with the testimony received.
  - c. A woman subject to discipline may request that other women be involved in the investigation and recommendation related to the matter of discipline. In this event, two godly women in good standing will be appointed by the Elders to participate in any meetings with or involving the woman being investigated.
  - d. The Elders may require public confession, restitution, mentoring or other biblical forms of correction as part of a process leading to restoration.
  - e. In the event the individual being disciplined is not satisfied with the decision of the Elders, he or she may appeal to the membership and will have the privilege of being tried before the membership. A simple majority vote (excepting that prescribed in Article VIII. Section A, paragraph 7) of the members present at the final hearing will decide the case.
  - f. On the recommendation of the Elders, the Official Board is authorized to place a name on the inactive roll for any of the reasons cited above (Section D, paragraph 1). Those who persist in any of these behaviors may be removed from the membership and/or fellowship of the church.
  - g. The names of any whose status of membership has been changed shall be reported at a Sunday morning service by publication in the Sunday bulletin, indicating whether they have been placed on the inactive roll, erased from the roll, or excommunicated.
3. The purpose of all discipline shall be to restore the individual to fellowship and active membership in the church. Such efforts shall be made in the light of the following Scriptures: Galatians 6: 1-2; II Thessalonians 3:14, 15; Hebrews 10:24-25; James 5:19-20.
4. Upon request by the individual and upon his giving evidence of a desire to participate in the fellowship of the church as well as upon due repentance, any inactive member may be restored to active membership upon recommendation of the Board and by three-fourths majority vote of the active members present at any regular or specially called business meeting.

#### **Section E. Letters of Transfer:**

- 1. A letter from another church shall be recognized as a release from that church, but a candidate must follow the regular procedure to obtain church membership.
- 2. Letters of transfer to fundamental churches shall be granted to those on the active roll. Application for dismissal from this church for membership in other fundamental churches should be made by letter to the church secretary, being careful to state the name of the church with which it is desired to affiliate. Letters shall be granted by action of the Official Board.

## ARTICLE VII – GOVERNMENT

We believe that the government of the local church should be autonomous, democratic, and simple; sufficient to allow things to be done decently and in order. Final authority in this church shall be vested in the members of the assembly but all business and government must be conducted in accordance with the stipulations of this constitution. Although this local church is independent, we reject that independence of attitude that has no respect for God given leadership, discipline, or the welfare of others. Although the final voice of authority is the membership, nevertheless, we choose our leaders under the guidance of God expecting most items of business and procedure to be carried on by those in positions of authority.

### Section A. The Congregation:

The government of this church shall be vested in the active membership and executed through duly elected officers, boards, and committees and in accord with all the provisions of this constitution.

### Section B. The Elders:

1. The Board of Elders shall be composed of pastors and elders.
2. This Board meets regularly, and shall consist of at least four men, depending on the spiritual qualifications of those considered as well as the availability of qualified men.
3. The Board of Elders shall be responsible for the spiritual oversight and direction of the church. They may develop and implement programs and ministries consistent with the purpose of this church and within the framework of this constitution and budgets approved by the membership.

### Section C. The Ministry Council:

1. A ministry council shall be comprised of Deacons and Directors.
2. This council assists the Elders in various service, management, ministry and maintenance functions.
3. The Council meets regularly for purposes of information and input.
4. The Council is chaired by the senior pastor, or by a pastor or elder appointed by the Elders.

### Section D. The Official Board

1. The Official Board is comprised of all members of the Board of Elders and the Deacons.
2. Shall administer all business matters of the church, shall handle all legal transactions, and shall be responsible for the maintenance of all church property.
3. Shall meet at least quarterly to determine and approve items to be brought before the congregation at its regularly scheduled business meetings.
4. All members of the official board must annually affirm in writing the following questions:  
*Have you read the Scriptures pertinent to the office you hold?*  
*Is it your purpose, God enabling you, to meet the standards in these Scriptures?*  
*Are you in complete accord with the constitution and doctrinal statement?*  
*If married, is your wife in accord with the constitution and doctrinal statement?*

### Section E. Election of Officers:

1. Nominating Committee:
  - a. A Nominating Committee, composed of an Elder and two deacons shall be appointed by the Official Board at a meeting held three months prior to the annual meeting.
  - b. This committee shall meet to consider the qualifications for office of all members of the Church. It shall present to the church a slate of candidates for the various offices to be filled. It shall

recommend the number of Deacons and Directors to be elected and shall nominate, if possible, more than one candidate for each vacancy in all offices to be filled.

c. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be approved by the Official Board and shall be announced from the pulpit and posted in the bulletin one month prior to the annual meeting. Members of the church who object to any part of the report or who desire to nominate additional candidates shall notify the committee within two weeks of the day the report appears with reasons for their action. All nominations must be approved by the committee.

2. Election Procedure: Officers shall be elected at the annual meeting of the church. Voting shall be by ballot. A simple majority is required to elect all church officers except the Pastor.

3. Vacancies: In the event of an office being vacated after the annual meeting, the remaining members of the Official Board may appoint a qualified member to fill this office until the next annual meeting of the church.

## **Section F. Other Offices:**

1. Other officers of the church shall include a Recording Secretary, a Director of Christian Education and a Director of Church Finance as well as other Directors who shall be recommended by the Official Board as needed for the orderly and effective operation of the church.

### **2. Duties**

a. The recording secretary shall keep a record of all business meetings of the church as well as the roll call of such meetings. The secretary shall maintain a current list of members and be prepared to declare the voting membership at each business meeting.

b. The Director of Church Finance shall receive, safeguard, disburse, and be responsible for the funds of the church, and shall keep an accurate account of the same. He or she shall be assisted by a Deacon appointed by the Official Board to act as the Deacon of Finance, with a division of labor as determined by the Official Board.

c. The Director of Christian Education shall supervise various children's discipleship ministries, as defined by the Elders.

d. The Elders shall maintain a current job description of all Directors. Directors serve indefinitely but may be removed by unanimous agreement of the Board of Elders or a simple majority of the Official Board.

## **Section G. Coordinators and Committees:**

Various committees and program coordinators may be appointed by the Board of Elders as needed. Coordinators and committees may begin work as soon as they are appointed but are subject to approval by the Official Board and the congregation at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

## **Section H. Arbitration Board:**

1. In the event the internal affairs of the church should reach such a state of controversy that it seems impossible to achieve peaceful negotiations between the Pastor and the congregation, and/or between factions in the membership, a board of arbitration shall be called in to aid in the reaching of a point of agreement.

2. This board shall be composed of pastors of three independent fundamental churches, named by the Official Board and approved by the Official Board and approved by the congregation. The Board of Arbitration shall have the privilege of calling in two additional qualified consultants.

3. The Board of Arbitration shall be called in by a two-thirds majority vote by secret ballot of the Official Board, or by a petition bearing the names of forty percent (40%) of the voting membership.

4. The decisions of this Board shall be binding upon the congregation, and its conclusions must be accepted by all with the following exceptions:

- a. It has no power to change the constitution or doctrinal statement nor even to pass judgment upon it. It must uphold the constitution.
- b. It has no power to dissolve the church or dispose of real estate.

## **ARTICLE VIII – MINISTRY**

### **Section A. Responsibility of the Membership:**

1. Each member must accept the doctrinal statement, constitution, and by-laws of the church in their entirety. He or she is expected to faithfully adhere to the program of the church.
2. All members of this church shall be expected to participate in its ministry, in such measure as talents and circumstances enable them. Such service shall be voluntary and subject to the supervision of the Official Board.
3. The members of this church are urged to cultivate all those graces in their Christian lives that will glorify the Lord, promote spiritual growth, and further the ministry of the church. They are further entreated:
  - a. To engage in private and family prayer, and the regular attendance at the services of the church. Hebrews 10:25; I Timothy 4:12-16.
  - b. To practice daily living that is consistent with the Scriptural principles of the Christian life; to abstain from worldliness and destructive addictions, avoiding such alliances which would constitute an unequal yoke with unbelievers including memberships in secret, oath-bound societies; and to guard against religious apostasy and false teaching. Titus 2:11-15; II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; I John 2:15-17.
  - c. To support the financial program with systematic proportionate giving, pledging themselves to a systematic contribution for the support of the church, of such a portion of their income as they believe God requires of them according to the principle laid down in I Corinthians 16:2.
  - d. To fellowship in Christian love and unity with the entire membership, to avoid the development of factions. I Corinthians 1:10; James 2:1-5.
4. All public and private means of grace, such as attendance at the Lord's Supper; a willingness to follow the Lord in water baptism; the daily systematic reading of the Bible; private and family prayer; personal and public testimony; and the winning of others to Christ, shall be urged upon our members.

### **Section B. Leadership and Duties of the Senior Pastor:**

1. Qualifications:
  - a. The Pastor shall be a man who gives evidence of the call of God to the ministry of the Gospel, who is ordained, and who meets the Biblical requirements for an Elder (I Timothy 3 and Titus 1). He shall be recognized as the God-appointed leader of the congregation.
  - b. Any man to be considered as a candidate for this pastorate shall have read this constitution and shall have signified in writing his unreserved agreement with its provisions and with the undenominational position of this church.
2. Call:
  - a. The Official Board shall act as a pulpit committee or shall appoint a pulpit committee to investigate possible candidates and arrange for them to speak at Sunday services. Investigation of possible candidates shall include the constitution and a questionnaire regarding training, pastoral experience, and qualifications mentioned in Section B-1 above.
  - b. When a qualified candidate has spoken at the Sunday Services upon two different occasions, his name may be presented by the Official Board for a vote at a specially called membership meeting. A three-fourths majority vote shall be required to extend a call. A visit by members of the Official

Board to his present pastorate is advisable where possible. Only one candidate shall be considered at a time.

c. The Pastor and his wife, upon accepting the call, become members of this church.

### 3. Duties:

- a. The Pastor's duties shall be those generally associated with his office, including ministry of the Word, administering of the ordinances, and the care of the spiritual welfare of the members. He shall be an ex-official member of all committees and organizations within the church. He chairs the Board of Elders and moderates congregational meetings.
- b. Activities and ministries outside the local field, such as attendance at conferences, Bible teaching, and evangelistic campaigns, vacationing, etc., shall be arranged in conference with the Official Board.

### 4. Termination:

- a. The Pastor's term of office shall be indefinite. A notice of 60 days shall be given to terminate with remuneration and services continuing through this period, unless otherwise mutually agreed.
- b. A vote may be taken by the membership at any time to terminate the Pastor's services, subject to the following:
  - i. A special meeting may be called for that purpose in accord with Article IX. Section A-4.
  - ii. It shall be placed on the agenda of the special meeting, provided that previous action has been taken by the Official Board, or a petition of 20% of the membership has been presented to the Official Board.
  - iii. A two-third majority vote by members present (provided qualifications of Article IX. Section A. are met) shall be required to terminate the Pastor's services.

## **Section C. Qualifications and Duties of the Associate Pastor(s):**

### 1. Qualifications

- a. One who is ordained or committed to a process resulting in ordination within two years and meets the Biblical qualifications of an Elder (I Timothy 3 and Titus 1).
- b. Any man to be considered as a candidate for this position shall have read this constitution and shall have signified in writing his unreserved agreement with its provisions. If married, his wife must also agree in writing.

### 2. Call:

- a. The Associate Pastor shall be recommended to the congregation by the Official Board and accepted by a majority vote in a regular or specially called membership meeting.
- b. If not already members, the Associate Pastor and his wife will become members upon their acceptance of the call.

### 3. Duties:

- a. Serve as a member of the Board of Elders and the Official Board, attend meetings of the Board of Elders, and attend faithfully all scheduled services of the church.
- b. Assists the Senior Pastor in the ministry of the Word, administration of the ordinances, and spiritual care of the members.
- c. Other duties as defined by the Official Board.

4. The procedure for terminating the term of office of an Associate Pastor shall be the same as the procedure for terminating the term of office for a Senior Pastor.

## **Section D. Qualifications and duties of the Elders**

### **1. Qualifications.**

- a. One who meets the Biblical qualifications of an Elder (I Timothy 3 and Titus 1).
- b. Any man to be considered as a candidate for this position shall have read this constitution and shall have signified in writing his unreserved agreement with its provisions. If married, his wife must also agree in writing.

### **2. Call:**

- a. The Elder shall be recommended to the congregation by the Official Board and accepted by a majority vote in a regular or specially called membership meeting.
- b. An elder shall have been a member for seven years, be at least 35 years of age, and shall have faithfully executed as a member of this church the responsibilities of a pastor, director or deacon for a period of at least two years.

### **3. Duties:**

- a. Serve as a member of the Board of Elders and the Official Board, attend meetings of the Board of Elders, and attend faithfully all scheduled services of the church.
- b. Assists the Senior Pastor in the ministry of the Word, administration of the ordinances, and spiritual care of the members.
- c. Other duties as defined by the Official Board.

4. The procedure for terminating the term of office of an Elder shall be the same as the procedure for terminating the term of office for a Senior Pastor.

## **Section E. Qualifications and Duties of the Deacons:**

1. All Deacons must be active members of this church for a period of at least one year before election and shall be at least 21 years of age.
2. The qualification set forth in I Timothy 3:1-13, and Titus 1:5-9, shall be required of all Deacons.
3. Every Deacon shall annually sign a statement indicating unreserved agreement with this constitution and doctrinal statement.
4. Every Deacon must attend faithfully all scheduled services of the church.
5. They shall, with the Elders, minister to the needy and supervise the benevolent funds of the church.

## **Section F. Terms of Service:**

1. All officers shall be active members of this church for a period of at least one year before elections and shall be at least 21 years of age.
2. Terms:
  - a. Deacons shall be elected for a period of two years, and their election shall be so arranged by the Nominating Committee that all shall not terminate at the same time. He may be reelected for one consecutive term. After an intervening term he shall be eligible to serve again.
  - b. The Recording Secretary shall be elected for a period of two years and may be reelected for one consecutive term. After an intervening term he or she shall be eligible to serve again.
  - c. Directors shall be recommended by the Elders, approved by the Official Board, and elected by the congregation, although they may serve from the time of appointment until a regularly scheduled meeting of the congregation.
  - d. Service shall continue until terminated by mutual agreement with the Elders, or until removed by a unanimous vote of the Board of Elders.
  - e. No pastor, elder, deacon or director shall serve while subject to any disciplinary process described in Article VI, Section D.

## **Section G. Discipleship programs**

1. Various discipleship programs may be organized as an extension of the teaching ministry of the church.
2. All teaching staff shall be active or associate members for at least one year and shall meet the expectations of members as defined in VII.A.
3. Teachers and curriculum materials must be approved by the Board of Elders.
4. All offerings and expenditures will be handled through the general fund of the church.

## **ARTICLE IX – MEETINGS**

### **Section A. Congregational Meetings:**

1. Members shall meet regularly for purposes of fellowship, worship and discipleship. Such meetings shall be held in times and places as determined by the Board of Elders.
2. The annual meeting of the membership shall be held during the first full week in October of each year. The agenda shall be set by the Elders and approved by the official Board and include the annual election of officers and such other matters as are deemed necessary.
3. Quarterly business meetings of the congregation may be scheduled when needed the Wednesday after the first Sunday of January, April, and July.
4. Special business meetings of the membership may be held at any time upon call of the Pastor, the Official Board, or by written request of 20% of the voting members of the congregation. The call of such a meeting and its purpose must be announced at the morning service on the two consecutive Sundays preceding the date of the meeting.
5. The Pastor shall preside at the annual meeting, quarterly meetings, and at all special business meetings. In the event of the absence of the Pastor, the chairman of these meetings shall be appointed by the Official Board.
6. A roll call of all active members shall be made at every annual, quarterly and special meeting. They shall be marked clearly as present or absent.
7. A quorum at the annual, quarterly, or special meetings of the membership shall be 25% of all voting members. When less than fifty percent (50%) are present, a two-thirds majority shall be required to pass any measure.
8. In the conduct of business meetings, any parliamentary questions not covered in this constitution shall be decided by the latest edition of "Robert's Rules of Order."

### **Section B. Official Board Meetings:**

1. Special meetings of the Official Board may be called upon request of the Pastor or any two members of the Board. If possible, all members should be notified.
2. The Official Board shall meet at a time established by the current Board, and at other times when deemed necessary upon call of the Pastor. The Pastor shall preside at these meetings. In the absence of the Pastor, an Elder shall be appointed by the Official Board from its membership.
3. A quorum of the Board shall be two-thirds of the members of the Board, not including the Pastor. A simple majority will decide all matters pertaining to board business unless otherwise specified in this constitution.
4. The presiding officer votes only in the case of a tie.

### **Section C. Other Church Organizations:**

1. All organizations of this church shall be approved by the Elders.
2. The officers and teachers shall be either Active members or Associate members of the church.

3. Unless otherwise stipulated by this constitution, the Elders shall be empowered to set up whatever methods of regulations are necessary related to the various organizations of the church.

## **ARTICLE X – FINANCES**

### **Section A. Offerings:**

The financial program of this church shall be supported only through the free will offerings of Christians interested in its ministry.

### **Section B. Fiscal Year:**

The fiscal year of the church shall begin the first day of January of each year. The congregation shall approve an operating budget for each fiscal year.

### **Section C. Designated Funds:**

1. Any temporary use of funds for purposes other than designated must have approval of the Official Board.
2. If the purpose for which funds have been designated is to be changed, it must be done with congregational approval.
3. Gifts designated through the church for a specific purpose or person shall be so used, unless the donor approves a change. Otherwise, the gift shall be returned.

### **Section D. Limitations:**

The Elders shall not authorize unbudgeted expenditures over \$500.00 without the unanimous consent of the Official Board, subject to a limitation of \$1500. Without such agreement, any such expenditure must be approved by the congregation.

### **Section E. Auditors:**

The Official Board shall appoint auditors from the active membership to review the annual financial reports of both the general and missionary treasurers.

## **ARTICLE XI – MISSIONS**

### **Section A. Missionary Outreach:**

Missions are a vital link in God's program and God's blessing rests on local churches committed to advancing His kingdom (Matthew 28:19-20). A board member shall be designated to oversee the outreach ministries of the church, including the support of both home and foreign missionaries and outreach programs.

### **Section B. Missionary Finance:**

1. All money received for outreach purposes shall be so used. Unless personal gifts are indicated by the giver to be in addition to the customary support, they shall be considered as part of the missionary's regular allowances.
2. Gifts designated for individuals who are not supported by the church are transmitted immediately and without deduction.
3. Twenty percent of all general fund receipts will go into the missionary fund.

## **ARTICLE XII – PROPERTIES**

### **Section A. Title:**

The title to all property of this church, both real and personal, shall be and remain vested in that portion of the membership that shall remain faithful to the original purpose stated in Articles II and III of this



constitution.

### **Section B. Acquisition and Sale of Property:**

1. The church shall have the power to acquire and hold property, both real and personal, for the general purpose of the church. All property so acquired shall be in the name of the church.
2. Any sale, mortgage, or transfer of real or personal property valued in excess of \$500.00 shall be approved by unanimous consent of the Official Board or, in excess of \$2000, by two thirds majority vote of the membership.

### **Section C. Use of Property:**

1. All properties belonging to the church shall be available to the membership for purposes consistent with the ministry of the church, subject to regulation by the Official Board.
2. The Pastor or other representatives of the Official Board shall have access at all times and under all circumstances to all properties owned by the church.

### **Section D. Dissolution:**

No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, director or officer of the corporation or to any private individual; and no donor, member, director, officer of the corporation, or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporation assets. Upon dissolution, any assets of the corporation must be distributed to the Independent Bible Mission of Michigan, or the Independent Fundamental Churches of America, in that order if it then exists and is exempt from Federal Income Tax, otherwise to one or more organizations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as one organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes.

## **ARTICLE XIII – ORDINATION**

### **Section A. Composition and Functions of Council of Ordination:**

1. When, in the judgment of the Official Board, a man in this membership, or in special cases a non-member, is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of said Board to call and conduct a Council of Ordination after the approval of the church has been obtained by vote. This Council shall consist of ordained Christian ministers, and, if possible, one delegate from each fundamental church invited to participate.
2. The Council of Ordination shall thoroughly examine the applicant regarding his personal Christian experience, call to the ministry, educational training, doctrinal belief, reputation, and demonstrated efficiency in Christian service. The applicant shall give evidence of agreement with those provisions of the constitution of this church with respect to doctrine, independence of the local church, and Scriptural qualifications for church leadership.

### **Section B. Licensing:**

Trusting as we do that Spirit-filled men will be called out from among us to proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God, church men may be given a license to preach and administer the ordinances by a two-thirds vote of the church, provided the Board are unanimous in their conviction that the candidate has scriptural gifts and qualifications. The duration of such license shall be for a period of one year after which he may again reapply.

### **Section C. Discipline of Ordained Ministers:**

1. The Board shall have the power to discipline, even to the revoking of the ordination credentials of any minister ordained under this constitution, if the said minister is found guilty of doctrinal or moral defection after an impartial trial conducted in the spirit of I Corinthians 13.
2. The minister under discipline shall have the privilege of appealing his case to the church membership

within 60 days after the decisions of the Official Board.

## **ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS**

### **Section A. Necessary Majority:**

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present, with the exception of Articles III and IV, at the regularly called meeting, provided that such amendment is presented in written form at least one month previous to the meeting, and by public announcement for four consecutive Sundays.

### **Section B. Amendments of Articles III and IV:**

Amendments of Articles III and IV shall require unanimous consent of the active membership.

## **ARTICLE XV – REVIEW**

It shall be the duty of the Board to review the contents of this constitution, exception Articles III and IV, every even-numbered year.

Revised: 1999 Pastors: John Lillie, Robert Thompson, Ivan Hoyt

Board: Wally Metts, David Duncan, George Carpenter, Merl Morehead

Revised 2003 Pastors: John Lillie, Robert Thompson, Rob Stewart, Ivan Hoyt

Task Force; Wally Metts, Phyllis Branstetter, Darren Beuhrer, Dave Whitehead.