



# Southside Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida Constitution

## PREAMBLE

This constitution is established to secure and preserve our faith, to affirm the mission and purpose of the Southside Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida (hereinafter called the Church), and to set forth the scriptural truths and mandates upon which it is based and governed.

## ARTICLE I Mission

The mission of the Church is to lead people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

## ARTICLE II Purpose

The purpose of the Church is to glorify God by fulfilling the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). The Church gathers to celebrate God's presence through worship, grows in the likeness of Jesus Christ through the study of the Bible, and goes in the power of the Holy Spirit to make disciples of all nations.

**Gather** – We gather to worship God and to encourage and equip His people (Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 2:44-47)

**Grow** - We grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ through the teaching of the Bible. (2 Peter 3:17-18; Ephesians 4:11-13 & John 20:30-31)

**Go** - We go in the power of the Holy Spirit, proclaiming the Good News of His Kingdom to all people (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19-20)

## **ARTICLE III**

### **The Church Membership Covenant**

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with Southside's statements, strategy, and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Southside Baptist Church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

#### **I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH ...**

By acting in love toward other members  
By refusing to gossip  
By supporting its leaders

#### **I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH ...**

By praying for its health  
By investing in and inviting the unchurched to attend  
By warmly welcoming those who visit

#### **I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH ...**

By discovering my gifts and talents  
By being equipped to serve  
By developing a servant's heart

#### **I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH ...**

By sharing the Gospel  
By living a godly life  
By attending faithfully and giving regularly

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **Statement of Faith**

The Church's statement of faith describes our theological beliefs on key aspects of faith. Centered in Christ and His message, ours is a biblical theology rather than a theology that is speculative, subjective or merely rooted in tradition. These beliefs are derived directly from Scripture (both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible).

#### **The Bible**

We believe the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments are entirely originated by God. God inspired the writing of the Scriptures by human authors through the power of His Holy Spirit. The Bible speaks with the authority of God while simultaneously reflecting the backgrounds, styles, and vocabularies of these human authors. Holy Scripture is the record of God's revelation of Himself to mankind. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It reveals the



principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. There are no other writings similarly inspired by God. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

## God

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

### God the Father

We believe God is the eternal Father who reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in his attitude toward all.<sup>2</sup>

### God the Son

We believe Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself the demands and necessities of human nature and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of all people from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, partaking of the nature of God and of mankind, and in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and mankind. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission.<sup>3</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 1:1; 2:7; Ex. 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Levit. 22:2; Deut. 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chron. 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isa. 43:3,15; 64:8; Jer. 10:10; 17:13; Matt. 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Rom. 8:14-15; 1 Cor. 8:6; Gal. 4:6; Ephes. 4:6; Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

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



## God the Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men and women to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts the world about sin, righteousness and judgment. He calls all people to the Savior, and effects regeneration. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. His presence is manifested in the believer by the fruit of the Spirit. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the assurance of God to bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.<sup>4</sup>

## Humanity

We believe humans were created by the special act of God, in His own image, and are the crowning work of His creation. In the beginning we were innocent of sin and were endowed by the Creator with freedom of choice. By our free choice we sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan we transgressed the command of God, and fell from our original innocence; whereby our posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin, and as soon as we are capable of moral action become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring us into His holy fellowship and enable us to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created us in His own image, and in that Christ died for all humanity; therefore every person possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.<sup>5</sup>

## The Family

We believe God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship is one of mutual submission. As such, marriage models the way God relates to His people. Just as Christ loved the church more than His own life, submitting Himself to death, so a husband is to love his wife more than he loves himself. The husband has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. Likewise, a wife is to submit herself to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to

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<sup>4</sup> *Gen. 1:2; Judg. 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isa. 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matt. 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Rom. 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Cor. 2:10-14;3:16; 12:3-11; 6; 5:22-23; Ephes. 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thess. 5:19; 1 Tim. 3:16; 4:1; 2 Tim. 1:14; 3:16; Heb. 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Rev. 1:10; 22:17.*

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



the headship of Christ. Husbands and wives, both being made in the image of God, are co-equals and share the God-given responsibility to manage the household and nurture the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. The responsibility to disciple children primarily belongs to the parents. The church serves as supplemental support to parents in the discipleship of their children. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.<sup>6</sup>

## Salvation

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

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

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

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

**Glorification** is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; 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 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; 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.

<sup>7</sup> Gen. 3:15; Ex. 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matt. 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Rom. 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Cor. 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Cor. 5:17-20; Gal. 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephes. 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 2 Tim. 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Heb. 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Rev. 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

## God's Purpose of Grace

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

We believe all true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.<sup>8</sup>

## The Church

We believe a New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ (baptism and the Lord's Supper), committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.

This church is an autonomous body, operating in accordance with the Scriptures under the Lordship of Jesus Christ by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In such a congregation, members are equally responsible.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages.<sup>9</sup>

## Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that believer's baptism is an act of obedience to the teachings and example of Jesus Christ as a public profession of faith in Christ. It symbolizes the believer's regeneration. Baptism is a testimony to faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience and unity whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Gen. 12:1-3; Ex. 19:5-8; 1 Sam. 8:4-7, 19-22; Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 31:31ff.; Matt. 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Rom. 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Cor. 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephes. 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Col. 1:12-14; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 2 Tim. 1:12; 2:10,19; Heb. 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.*

<sup>9</sup> *Matt. 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephes. 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 3:1-15; 4:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Rev. 2-3; 21:2-3.*

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



## The Lord's Day

We believe the first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Members are encouraged to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.<sup>11</sup>

## The Kingdom

We believe the kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over all who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men and women enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.<sup>12</sup>

## Last Things

We believe God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in heaven with the Lord.<sup>13</sup>

## Evangelism and Missions

We believe it is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth, made available through God's Holy Spirit, means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Ex. 20:8-11; Matt. 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Col. 2:16; 3:16; Rev. 1:10.*

<sup>12</sup> *Gen. 1:1; Isa. 9:6-7; Jer. 23:5-6; Matt. 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Rom. 5:17; 8:19; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Col. 1:13; Heb. 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Rev. 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.*

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

<sup>14</sup> *Gen. 12:1-3; Ex. 19:5-6; Isa. 6:1-8; Matt. 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30,37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Rom. 10:13-15; Ephes. 3:1-11; 1 Thess. 1:8; 2 Tim. 4:5; Heb. 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Rev. 22:17.*



## Stewardship

We believe God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship of their possessions. We are therefore under obligation to serve Him with our time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to us to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.<sup>15</sup>

## Cooperation

We believe Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and his Word as revealed in the Bible.<sup>16</sup>

## The Christian and the Social Order

We believe every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his or her own life and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among us can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. The Christian should oppose in the spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and should work to provide for the widowed, the orphaned, the needy, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with everyone of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and his truth.<sup>17</sup>

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

<sup>16</sup> *Ex. 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judg. 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Neh. 4; 8:1-5; Matt. 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Cor. 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Cor. 8-9; Gal. 1:6-10; Eph. 4:1-16; Phil. 1:15-18.*

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



## **Religious Liberty**

We believe God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of humans which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or 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 every person and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.<sup>18</sup>

## **ARTICLE V Adoption and Amendments**

The constitution of this church may be altered, amended, or rescinded by the church at any regularly scheduled or special called church conference, provided that such proposed changes have been submitted for review to the Council of Trustees ninety days prior to being presented to the church. Notice of the proposed changes shall be given from the pulpit at all Sunday worship services and through other usual means of communication to the church not less than ten days prior to the meeting in which the vote is to be taken. All proposed changes and amendments of the constitution must receive the affirmative vote of at least three-fourths (3/4) of the members present and voting, with a quorum of not less than fifty (50) qualified resident members.

## **ARTICLE VI Governing Documents**

The church bylaws shall be interpreted and implemented in accordance with this constitution and the church charter to govern in an orderly manner and to preserve the liberties of each member. In the event of any inconsistencies or conflicts between the church's governing documents, the order of precedence shall be:

1. The Church Charter
2. The Church Constitution
3. The Church Bylaws

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<sup>18</sup>*Gen. 1:27; 2:7; Matt. 6:6-7; 24:16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Rom. 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Gal. 5:1,13; Phil. 3:20; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.*