

The Constitution of



Chatham
BIBLE CHURCH

Hazelwood, Missouri

(Revised May 21, 2017)

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The Constitution of Chatham Bible Church Hazelwood, Missouri

Preamble

We the members of the Chatham Bible Church, duly incorporated under the laws of Missouri on December 2, 1928, do hereby establish and enact the following articles in order to declare the purpose, beliefs, and operating methods by which this church shall function. Pursuant to a meeting of the church members on June 2, 2013, these articles are adopted:

Article 1. Our Mission

Chatham's purpose is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, helping everyone to enter into and grow in their relationship with Him. Our current vision which describes our primary areas of focus during specific periods of time can be found in the *Chatham Statement of Direction*.

Article 2. Our Doctrine

Doctrine is important, in fact, it is vital. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, a pastor in Ephesus, to watch his life and doctrine closely, and to persevere in them, to assure that he was saved, as well as his hearers. He was told to "guard the good deposit" that was entrusted to him. Another pastor, Titus, was told to appoint elders who "hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 1:14; Titus 1:9

2.1 The Scriptures

We believe that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original manuscripts, and therefore the infallible and final authority for faith and life.

Psalms 119:89; Matthew 5:18; John 12:47-48; 16:12-13; 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:20-21

2.2 The Godhead

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and that these three are one God, having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and equally worthy of the same worship, confidence, and obedience.

Genesis 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; Mark 12:29; John 1:14; 6:27; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 1:8; Revelation 1:4-6

2.3 God the Father

We believe that God the Father is co-equal and co-eternal with the Son and the Holy Spirit. He is the Father over all creation, Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ, and all believers in Jesus Christ. He is infinite, eternal, holy, unchanging, everywhere present, all-powerful, all-knowing, just, love, truth, and sovereign.

Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 14:2; 29:29; 1 Kings 8:27; Psalms 2:7-9; 90:2; 139:7-12; Matthew 3:17; John 3:16; Acts 15:18; 17:28-29; 17:31; Romans 3:4; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 1:3-6; 4:6; Hebrews 12:9; James 1:17; 1 John 1:5; 4:16; Revelation 19:6

2.4 God the Son

We believe that in our Lord Jesus Christ dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He is constantly and simultaneously God with all His divine attributes and man with all his human attributes except sin. His

deity and humanity are inseparably united forever. He was eternally pre-existent but voluntarily took upon Himself sinless human flesh and nature, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of virgin Mary.

Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:16; Luke 1:26-35; 19:10; John 1:1, 2, 14; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 2:4-11; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:8; 2:17; 4:15; 1 John 4:2-3

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was incarnated to reveal God to the world and redeem us from our sin and death. This redemption was accomplished through His death on the cross as our representative and substitute. His literal and physical resurrection out of death secures life everlasting for the redeemed. His resurrection body is a pattern of that body which will ultimately be given to all the redeemed. He is now exalted at the right hand of God, where as our high priest, He intercedes for us as our mediator and advocate.

Luke 19:10; John 1:29; 14:8-11; 20:19-29; Acts 1:9-10; Romans 3:25-26; 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 1:13; 7:25; 9:24; 10:5-14; 1 Peter 1:3-4; 3:18; 1 John 2:1-2; Revelation 5:9

2.5 God the Holy Spirit

We believe that God the Holy Spirit is a real person with all the attributes of personality and deity. His ministry in salvation is first convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and then regenerating this convinced sinner. He instantaneously indwells the believer, baptizes all believers into the body of Christ, and seals the believer's salvation from the day of conversion until the day of redemption.

John 16:8-11; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; 6:19; 12:11, 13; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; Titus 3:5

The Spirit's ministry to the Christian includes disclosing Biblical truth, guiding us into righteous living according to the will of God, and assuring the Christian of his salvation. Furthermore, He convicts us of sin, restrains us from evil and controls those yielded to Him. He produces spiritual fruit in the life of the believer and gives spiritual gifts, as He chooses, to every believer. These God-given abilities equip us for a ministry of edification to and for the church.

John 16:12-15; Romans 8:14, 16, 26; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:7

2.6 The Creation, Fall, and Total Depravity of the Human Race

We believe that men and women were created in the image and likeness of God, but through Adam's willful sin they lost their condition of innocence, lost their spiritual life, and became spiritually dead and alienated from God. This spiritual death has been transmitted to the entire human race, with the only exception being Jesus Christ. We are totally depraved, utterly unable to remedy our lost condition through our own efforts. While everyone is the recipient of imputed Adamic sin, we are also responsible to God for the committing of personal sins.

Genesis 1:26-27; 3:1-21; Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:10, 23; 5:12-19; 6:2-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 2:1-3

2.7 Salvation

We believe that salvation, the gracious gift of God, is freely offered to all, but must be individually received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. His shed blood is the only means to satisfy God's just penalty for sin, and through His substitutionary death, salvation is offered to all. Salvation by grace through faith, of necessity excludes all attempts to earn salvation by meritorious efforts of any kind, including baptism, partaking of the communion meal, good works, or any such thing. All the redeemed, having been born again, are retained in that state by the power of God and therefore are secure in Christ forever, without interruption. The believer's assurance of salvation is based upon the declared Word of God and reassured by the Holy Spirit.

Luke 13:3-5; John 3:16-18; 10:27-30; Acts 16:30-31; Romans 3:24-26; 6:23; 8:1, 16, 38-39; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:5; 1:18-19; 1 John 5:11-13

2.8 Sanctification

We believe that every saved person is set apart to God in three ways: first, he is completely sanctified in his positional standing before God, in Christ. Second, although the believer in Jesus Christ is given a new

nature, he retains the flesh throughout this life. There is, therefore, progressive sanctification wherein the Christian is empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit to progressively gain victory over the flesh. Progressive sanctification is brought about wholly by God's grace as we yield to God's will and conform to His Word. Additional merit or favor with God cannot be earned through works of the law or human effort. Third, the believer will ultimately be fully sanctified when he shall see the Lord and be "like Him."

John 17:17; Romans 6:13; 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 5:17; 7:1; Galatians 5:16-17; Ephesians 4:24; 5:25-27; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 10:10, 14; 12:10; 1 John 3:2-3

2.9 The Christian's Conduct

We believe that the Christian is called to conduct himself with holiness according to the standard of God's righteousness by the power of the Holy Spirit. We should not pursue, make provision for, or fulfill the sinful desires of the flesh and its nature. The flesh with its fallen Adamic nature, which in this life is never eradicated, needs to be kept by the spirit constantly in subjection to Christ. When sin occurs, the Christian's fellowship with God is interrupted, but may be restored by simple repentant confession. However, we maintain that our position with God as his child is constant and unbroken.

Romans 8:1-10; 12:1-2; 13:14; Galatians 5:16; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 7:1; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 1:5-10; 2:1-2

2.10 The Sacraments or Ordinances

We believe that the believer's baptism and the Lord's supper are the only sacraments or ordinances of the church and that they are a scriptural means of testimony for the church in this age. Water baptism symbolizes the believer's identification with Christ, and the Lord's supper symbolizes the believer's fellowship with Christ, while memorializing his sacrifice for us.

Matthew 28:19; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 10:47-48; 1 Corinthians 11:20-34

2.11 The Church of Jesus Christ

We believe that the Church, which is the body and bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism comprised of all born again persons. Furthermore, we believe that the establishment and continuance of organized local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament scriptures. We believe that the one supreme authority for the church is Jesus Christ, and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The Biblically designated officers serving under Christ as His under-shepherds are elders. These men are to lead by godly example, and the congregation is to submit to their leadership.

Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 2:42-47; 14:23-27; 20:28; Romans 12:5; 16:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; 16:19; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 4:3-10; 5:25-27; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-5

2.12 The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan is a created being. Having willfully rebelled against God, he became the author of sin and the cause of the fall of humanity. He is the openly declared enemy of God and the human race. His ultimate defeat is assured, and he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire with the multitude of his followers.

Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; Revelation 20:10

2.13 The Return of Christ

We believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ, which will be a literal, physical event. He will return in just the same way as His disciples had seen Him depart. He also taught that His return would be a comfort to us because He will be returning to take us back to be with Him into His Father's presence.

John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; Revelation 19:11-16

2.14 The Eternal State

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 20:5-13

We believe that, at death, the souls of the redeemed are absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection when spirit, soul, and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord.

Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:22; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:4-6

We believe that, at death, the souls of the unbelievers remain in conscious misery until the last resurrection, when with soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment and suffer everlasting conscious punishment in the lake of fire.

Matthew 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15

Article 3. Church Government

3.1 Pastors

3.1.1 Appointment

Prospective pastoral candidates shall be selected by the Elder Council. Having examined his qualifications, experience, and references, the Elder Council must agree unanimously to present a candidate to the church membership where an 80% affirmative vote at a business meeting will suffice to issue a call to that candidate. Only one candidate may be presented at a time.

3.1.2 Qualifications

The Pastor should be a graduate of a Bible college or seminary, and preferably ordained. He shall agree with the church's doctrinal statement, as outlined in Article 2 of this constitution, and in the opinion of the Elder Council, meet the Biblical qualifications for an Elder as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3.

3.1.3 Duties

The Pastor's primary responsibility shall be to provide spiritual shepherding, direct the dispensing of the ordinances, be a member of the Elder Council, and prepare and deliver spiritual food which will produce growth and maturity in believers. The Pastor shall be an equal member of the Elder Council from the point of his installation. The Pastor shall, when necessary or expedient, act as the Elder Council's representative to coordinate the ministries of the church. He has direct responsibility for worship, shepherding by the elders, preaching, adult education, counseling, and supervision of church office and staff.

3.1.4 Resignation

Resignation must be submitted in writing to the Elder Council for their consideration. If the Pastor voluntarily resigns, it is requested that at least 60 days' notice be given.

3.1.5 Dismissal

The Pastor may be dismissed from his position by a two-thirds vote of the Elder Council and a two-thirds vote of the church membership at a business meeting. Grounds for dismissal may include unrepentant sin, differing doctrinally from Article 2, slothfulness, or failure to maintain any of the Biblical qualifications of an Elder as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3.

3.2 Associate Pastors

3.2.1 Appointment

Associate Pastors shall be appointed by the Elder Council and confirmed by a two-thirds vote of the congregation at a business meeting. After serving six months, his qualifications shall be verified and confirmed by the Elder Council.

3.2.2 Qualifications

Associate pastors shall agree with the church's doctrinal statement as outlined in Article 2 of this constitution, and in the opinion of the Elder Council, meet the Biblical qualifications for an Elder as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3. These qualifications shall be verified and confirmed after six months' tenure.

3.2.3 Duties

Associate Pastors shall be responsible for directing and coordinating their respective programs within the church. They shall lead their ministry team meetings, and secure and supervise personnel necessary to carry out needed functions. The elders may appoint an associate pastor to serve as either an elder or a deacon. An associate pastor whose primary responsibility is youth ministry shall be referred to as Youth Pastor.

3.2.4 Resignation

Resignation must be submitted in writing to the Elder Council for their consideration. If an associate pastor voluntarily resigns, it is requested that at least 30 days' notice be given.

3.2.5 Dismissal

An associate pastor may be dismissed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Elder Council or by a two-thirds vote of the church membership at a business meeting. Grounds for dismissal may include any of those listed in section 3.1.5.

3.3 Elders

3.3.1 Appointment

Qualified candidates shall be selected by the existing elders. Candidates shall be approved by a two-thirds vote of the church membership at the annual business meeting or a special business meeting. The size of the Elder Council shall be recommended to the congregation by the Elder Council as the elders perceive the needs of the church body. The number of lay Elders shall always be at least one greater than the number of pastoral staff elders. See 3.1.1 and 3.2.1 for appointment of pastoral staff.

3.3.2 Qualifications

Elders shall have been members for at least one year and shall, in the opinion of the Elder Council, meet the Biblical qualifications of an elder as stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3.

3.3.3 Duties

The elders are responsible before God to fulfill four primary functions in His Church: 1) guarding, 2) oversight, 3) being a godly example, and 4) shepherding. The spiritual authority for leadership and shepherding the flock rests in this body of men.

Acts 20:28-31; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter 5:1-5

The elders shall be accountable for the oversight of all ministries and matters of the church body, whether spiritual, practical, financial, or governmental. Their duties shall include the design and

execution of the church program, approval of funds appropriations, supervision of all sub-organizations, examination of candidates for membership, assisting in the dispensing of the ordinances, and other functions appropriate to their Biblical role as overseers and spiritual shepherds of the church body.

3.3.4 Term and Dismissal

The term of office for elder shall not exceed three years. When a term of office expires the elder may serve successive terms.

An elder may be dismissed from office by a two-thirds vote of the Elder Council or by a two-thirds vote of the church membership at a business meeting. Grounds for dismissal may include any of those listed in section 3.1.5.

3.4 Deacons

3.4.1 Appointment

Qualified candidates shall be appointed by the Elder Council and confirmed by a majority vote of the church membership at a business meeting.

3.4.2 Qualifications

All deacons shall be members of good reputation. Generally, they will have been members for at least one year. However, being a member less than one year is acceptable with special approval by the elders if they have been active at Chatham for at least one year. Deacons shall, in the opinion of the Elder Council, meet the Biblical qualifications for a Deacon as stated in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Because the deacon's function is one of service and not spiritual authority, either men or women can be appointed.

3.4.3 Duties

In Acts 6:1-6 we find that deacons were established when the need arose within that New Testament congregation. The elders knew they should be devoting themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. Deacons were appointed to be responsible for other ministry needs that would be a distraction to the elders. Deacons assist the elders by helping to provide oversight in various ministry areas including but not limited to finances, facilities, children's ministries, mercy ministries and missions. A pastor or elder may provide direct oversight of any of these ministry areas in lieu of a deacon.

3.4.4 Term and Dismissal

The term of office for deacon shall not exceed three years. When a term of office expires, the deacon may serve successive terms.

These officers may be dismissed from office by a decision of the Elder Council. Grounds for dismissal may include failure to maintain any of the Biblical qualifications of a Deacon as stated in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13, or unrepentant sin.

3.5 Trustees

3.5.1 Appointment

The Deacon responsible for facilities and one or more of the elders will be designated to represent the church as trustees. Trustees shall be approved by a majority vote of the church membership at a business meeting.

3.5.2 Duties

Trustees are individuals given the legal authority to represent Chatham Bible Church in the marketplace and legal system of the world. They must carry all documents in the corporate name

rather than in their own names. They shall be delegated the authority to carry out all business affairs of the church not specifically assigned to another officer.

3.6 Coordinators

3.6.1 Appointment

Coordinators may be appointed to assist a Deacon and may be assigned specific duties normally reserved for that Deacon. Coordinators shall be appointed by a Deacon and then confirmed by the Elder Council.

3.6.2 Qualifications

All coordinators shall be members of good reputation.

3.6.3 Duties

Coordinators are responsible for all duties outlined in this constitution and in their job descriptions given by the deacon in their area of ministry.

3.6.4 Dismissal

A coordinator may be dismissed at the discretion of the Elder Council or the responsible deacon, after which the dismissal must be discussed with the Elder Council.

3.7 Teachers

3.7.1 Eligibility

Teachers are subject to the same eligibility requirements as members; see paragraph 5.1.

3.7.2 Appointment

Teachers shall be appointed by the Pastor, Associate Pastors, elders, deacons, or their coordinators. Teachers who are not members shall be approved by the Elder Council.

3.8 Church Employees

3.8.1 Appointment

In addition to Pastors and Associate Pastors, other positions may be established by the Elder Council and confirmed by a majority vote of the congregation at a business meeting.

3.8.2 Resignation

Resignation must be submitted in writing to the Elder Council for their consideration. Church employees are requested to give at least two weeks' notice.

3.8.3 Dismissal

Dismissal of church employees shall be by action of the Elder Council.

Article 4. Meetings

4.1 Church Business Meetings

Notification of all church business meetings shall be given at least two weeks prior to the meeting. Twenty-five percent of the church membership shall constitute a quorum. Only members eighteen years of age and older shall be eligible to vote on any appointments or referendums at a business meeting. A simple majority

of eligible voters present shall be required to decide any issue, unless otherwise specified in this constitution. All votes on appointments or referendums shall be cast by secret ballot.

4.1.1 Annual Business Meeting

The annual business meeting should be held during the month of May. All business proposals must be presented through the Elder Council and placed on the agenda two weeks prior to the annual meeting. This meeting shall include: a review of the new annual report and other necessary business, approval of elders and/or deacons, and confirmation of the fiscal-year church budget. Changes to the budget during the year shall be proposed and confirmed by the congregation at a Special Business Meeting.

4.1.2 Special Business Meetings

Special church business meetings may be called by the Elder Council, or if petitioned in writing by over 50% of the church members eighteen years of age and older.

4.2 Elder Council Meetings

The Elder Council shall meet on an appointed schedule at least one day each month. A Chairman and a Vice Chairman shall be appointed each year. The Chairman leads at meetings of the Elder Council and is responsible for coordinating constitutional revisions, nominations, annual meetings, and leadership conferences. The Vice Chairman assists the Chairman with these duties. Two thirds of the elders must be present to constitute a quorum. Additional meetings may be called, as required, by the Chairman or Vice Chairman.

The Elder Council shall appoint one Elder to be Church Clerk. He shall keep a proper record of all congregational business meetings and Elder Council meetings. He is responsible for conducting necessary correspondence, and maintaining custody of all vital papers and documents of the church. His appointment shall be for one year.

All Elder Council decisions shall be made in accordance with Scriptural exhortations, “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love” and being “united in the same mind and the same judgment.” (Ephesians 4:1-3; 1 Corinthians 1:10) In some cases, the Elder Council shall make a decision by voting; such cases are specified in this constitution where applicable.

Article 5. Membership

5.1 Eligibility

To be eligible for membership a person must be able to give assurance of having received Jesus Christ as his or her personal savior, be willing to abide by the constitution of this church, and be in agreement with the church’s doctrinal statement, as outlined in Article 2 of this constitution.

5.2 Approval

A person must be approved for membership by the Elder Council, and be accepted by the congregation at one of its public meetings upon recommendation of the Elder Council. The congregation shall be notified two weeks prior to the candidate’s acceptance. Any questions from the congregation concerning the eligibility of candidates for membership should be made known to the Elder Council during this two-week interim.

5.3 Responsibility of the Believer

Members should recognize that believers in Jesus Christ are responsible to God for worshipping and fellowshiping regularly with the local church body, as well as other Biblical responsibilities such as regular prayer, Bible study, witnessing, giving, exercising spiritual gifts, etc., for the edification of the body of Christ.

5.4 Discipline

The authority for all church discipline shall be vested in the Elder Council.

5.5 Dismissal

A person may be dismissed from membership as disciplinary action for unrepentant sin. Dismissals of this type require a majority vote of the church membership at a business meeting.

5.6 Removal from Membership Roll

Members' names may be removed from the roll after a one-year absence if they have not notified the church of their desire to continue membership.

Article 6. Ceremonies

6.1 Ceremonies and Activities

Chatham Bible Church reserves the right to oversee the performance of all ceremonies and activities involving members and non-members, as well as the use of church facilities for these events. These events, such as marriages, ordinations, dedications, funerals, installations, memorials, membership acceptances, etc., and all informal activities shall not be in violation of Biblical imperatives. The church property and premises shall also be used in a manner consistent with scriptural guidelines.

6.1.1 Marriage

God ordained marriage to be a life-long union between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-6). Therefore, the premises of this church shall not be used to marry people who have been divorced unless they have been the innocent party to desertion or adultery (Matthew 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:12-15). Nor shall the premises be used to marry two people of the same sex.

The premises of this church shall not be used to unite in marriage believers with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14).

6.1.2 Ordination

This church may give its endorsement, through ordination, to men called by God into the ministry.

Article 7. Amendments to the Constitution

7.1 Method of Amendment

Proposals to amend this constitution may be initiated by the submission of a rough draft of the proposed amendment by any member to the Elder Council. Approval of the elders is required to present the proposal for congregational approval.

7.2 Approval of Amendment

The proposed amendment, in final draft wording, must be made available to the congregation by the Elder Council at least two weeks prior to the date of the business meeting along with an explanation of the need for the change. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present at the business meeting is then required for approval.

Article 8. Dissolution

In the event of dissolution, no private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the church's assets. Upon dissolution, the Elder Council shall distribute assets of the church to those ministry organizations that

are, or have been, directly supported by the church, organized exclusively for charitable religious purposes, and are recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as having an exempt purpose within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.