

The Constitution of



Hazelwood, Missouri

(Revised June 1, 2025)

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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 1, 2025, 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 Statement of Faith

We affirm these truths as stated in the EFCA Statement of Faith adopted in 2019.

2.1 God

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

2.2 The Bible

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

2.3 The Human Condition

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

2.4 Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

2.5 The Work of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

2.6 The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

2.7 The Church

We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

2.8 Christian Living

We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

2.9 Christ's Return

We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

2.10 Response and Eternal Destiny

We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

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.