

# Book of Faith and Order

*The Truths We Teach*

&

*The Principles that Govern Us*

*New Covenant Baptist Fellowship, Evans N.Y.*

## PREFACE

We find ourselves truly humbled and blessed of God to have been able to participate in the writing of this document.

No document of human origin ever has more authority than the Scriptures but this document allows us to establish from the Scriptures that which we believe is essential in reforming this body now called **New Covenant Baptist Fellowship**, located in Evans N.Y..

We have not only provided a body of work which we believe is Scripturally authentic but in studying the history of First Baptist Evans we discovered that when the church was formed in 1830 it began as a Regular Baptist Church. The Regular Baptists were the descendents of the Particular Baptists who came from England who believed in the Doctrines of Grace commonly referred to as Calvinism. This doctrine is the historical foundation of the church and was the prevailing doctrine of Baptists until the emotional Revivalist Movement of the pre-civil war era began to show that churches could experience growth more readily by emotionally stirring the hearers to accept Christ rather than preaching the Gospel with passion and concern for lost souls and waiting for God to prove salvation by genuine repentance and faith in the hearer. Sadly, even this church after a number of years began to follow the way of the General Baptists.

It is reflected in the governing principles of the church moving further from Scripture and adopting man-centered ideas on how to be a church.

Therefore, we also identify with the 1646 London Baptist Confession of Faith as a historical confession of the truths of Scripture that emphasize the uniqueness of the New Covenant and the Christ centered theology of the New Testament that emphasizes that salvation is and always was, a work of a Sovereign God through the work of Jesus Christ for both Old and New Covenant believers.

We look to the priority of Jesus Christ in all things and believe that the clearest approach to understanding Scripture is through the logical priority of the New Testament. This means we look to all of Scripture for it's meaning, first, through the lens of the New Testament because it is the fulfillment of all of what the Old Testament Scripture pointed to – and that is - the Glory of God with the priority of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

We are grateful to the elders at Clearcreek Chapel in Ohio and the elders at New Covenant Bible Fellowship in Phoenix, Arizona for the models they have provided us, in contemporary terms, that reflect the 1646 Confession and other historic Confessions of Faith. We are grateful to many elders/pastors who have prayed for us and consulted with us in these matters.

Elder Mike Tomczak

Elder Ted Kucewicz

Elder/Pastor Joseph Krygier

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## Prologue

To display the supreme worth of His glory, God has chosen to save a people and call them out of the world so that they might assemble themselves together in local congregations or churches. Throughout history, these local, gathered communities of the Lord have drawn up confessions of faith summarizing what they believed the Bible to be teaching. They have also drawn up by-laws as a means to function corporately.

Therefore, this gathered church has drawn up this Book of Faith and Order as our Confession, Covenant, and Constitution, organizing ourselves under the name,

New Covenant Baptist Fellowship located in Evans. N.Y. We also will refer to ourselves as NCBF

### Order:Part One

The members of New Covenant Baptist Fellowship of Evans constitute, establish, and willingly submit themselves to the following articles. This New York nonprofit religious organization has its principal offices in the proximity of Evans/Angola New York.

### Our Shared Mission

By God's grace and through His Word, we will cultivate in the hearts of God's people a passion for the supremacy of God *magnified* in love for Him and *manifested* in love for one another.

### Our Threefold Purposes

The church exists to glorify God (Ephesians 3:21). The universal church is the redeemed people of God placed into the Body of Christ. The local church is the people of God gathered together in localities: to carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) as the Kingdom of God in this world (Colossians 1:13-14), to meet regularly together in an outward worship that expresses inward and spiritual truths (John 4:23-24; Hebrews 10:19-25; 12:18-29), and to encourage, edify, and build up one another. Therefore, we exist as a church for the following primary purposes:

#### **Exaltation: Our *Doxological* Purpose**

Exaltation is all that we do in terms of pursuing God in worship. This is the overarching purpose of the church. The church exists to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

#### **Edification: Our *Discipleship* Purpose**

Edification is all that we do to know God better, to please Him in every facet of life, to learn, to believe, to understand and to obey the Scriptures fully, and to love God and one another in each sphere of life as we grow in Christ-likeness.

#### **Evangelism: Our *Declarative* Purpose**

Evangelism is all that we do to proclaim the gospel to every people group in order to see all of God's elect brought into His Kingdom.

## **Our Shaping Vision**

### **Savoring the Supremacy of God**

Our vision is to magnify God as the all-satisfying object of the believer's life in worship and service, here and forever.

### **Studying the Word of God**

Our vision is to work out both the large picture and the immediate texts in Holy Spirit enabled exposition and application in the public and private ministry of the Word of God.

### **Shaping the People of God**

Our vision is to see minds, affections, and wills transformed by the Word of God so that God is magnified by an obeying faith in every sphere of life.

### **Spreading the Gospel of God**

Our vision is to proclaim the gospel to all the people groups so that God is glorified in every tribe, language, and people group.

## **Our Church Government**

### **The Lord Jesus Christ -- The Head and Chief Shepherd of the Church**

We joyfully submit to Christ alone as the Head of His body, the church. We acknowledge Him as our Chief Shepherd. We recognize that He governs His church through the Holy Scriptures as the full and final authority in all matters of faith, church order, and discipline. While we may also seek the assistance and counsel of other churches when special concerns arise; we are neither accountable to, nor under the jurisdiction of, nor under the direct supervision of, any other ecclesiastical body. This congregation may never encourage, support, fellowship, or cooperate with any church or group which permits the presence of apostasy or undermines fundamental tenets of the Gospel by what it teaches or denies (Acts 15:1-35; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18; 2 Timothy 3:12-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).

### **The Elders -- The Servant-Leaders in the Church**

A plurality of elders shall lead this local church according to the Scriptures. These men shall at all times and in all activities stand under the authority of Christ and His Word. The Elders shall collectively and individually oversee, provide for, and encourage the spiritual life, welfare and total ministry of the congregation by equipping the saints for service so that they build up the body of Christ. This will result in believers who are mature, Christ-like, stable in doctrine, and not susceptible to false doctrine. The Elders, as a body, shall exercise authoritative and decisive leadership, but they must do so as servant-leaders and faithful stewards in the community, not as lords and dictators (Matthew 20:24-28; Acts 20: 17,28; Ephesians 4:12-14; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

### **The Deacons -- The Servant-Ministers in the Church**

The church itself is the ministering community (Ephesians 4:12-16). The church identifies the men who will be in charge of the day-to-day ministry and work

of the church. They are appointed by the Elders to lead or serve in ministry, serving as Deacons (Acts 6:1-6) so as to free the Elders for their ministry of the Word.

## **THE TRUTHS WE TEACH**

### **Articles of Faith**

#### **Scripture Alone as the Final Authority**

The Scripture alone is the final and ultimate authority in all matters related to the Christian life. Since God's Word remains the final authority for this community, statements of doctrine contained herein do not bind this congregation in a strict and absolute sense but are confessed together to assist its leaders and members in the event that controversy should arise.

#### **Truths Confessed by the Membership**

All members of NCBF shall confess their submission to the central truths of Biblical Christianity as summarized in *The Truths We Teach*. All members shall demonstrate both a willingness to abide by this *Book of Faith and Order* and a sincere desire to grow in their understanding of the Scriptures and the truths we teach.

#### **Truths Confessed by the Ministry Leaders**

All teachers, all members of our deaconate, and all missionaries commissioned by and sent out from NCBF will confess their essential agreement with *The Truths We Teach* and teach in full harmony with it.

#### **Truths Taught by the Elders**

All elders of NCBF will wholeheartedly confess their essential agreement with and teach in full harmony with *The Truths We Teach*. This statement has been adopted by the Elders as a brief systematic theology, helping them to develop and communicate a Biblical worldview that grounds the members of the church in the faith so that they will mature spiritually and become better equipped to glorify and serve God (1 Peter 3:15).

## **THE TRUTHS WE TEACH**

### **Article 1. Scripture The Canon of Scripture**

By Scripture, we mean the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, excluding the Apocryphal writings, which are not divinely inspired. While the Apocryphal writings may be of some interest, they have no more authority over us than any other human writing. The Canon of Scripture is now complete and therefore no new claims of canonical revelation will be accepted. *Hebrews 1:1-2*

#### **Inspiration**

The Bible has both human and divine authorship. Though written over many centuries by men of differing perspectives, experiences, styles, temperaments, and languages, it is entirely free of contradictions. This unity is explained by the fact that the Holy Spirit of God is the true author of Holy Scripture. He inspired, or

more precisely breathed out his message. He moved men to write what they wrote, incorporating their human personalities and literary styles into the text. *2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21, Luke 1:1-4, John 14:26, John 16:13-15, 2 Peter 3:15-16*

### **Inerrancy and Authority**

Scripture (the Bible) is the Word of God. The Bible is the only inspired, infallible, and inerrant writing that exists. By infallible, we mean that the Bible is incapable of error.

By inerrant, we mean that the words themselves are without error. The Bible is without error even when it touches on subjects of history and science. It provides the absolute answers for all men, concerning how we are to be saved, what we are to believe, and how we are to live in order to please our Creator. *2 Timothy 3:16-17, John 10:34-35*

### **The Clarity of Scripture**

While all Scripture does not contain the same degree of clarity either by design or due to our limited understanding, we affirm that the Bible is sufficiently clear in revealing what one needs to know in order to come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

### **The Original Languages**

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic. The New Testament was originally written in Greek.

### **The Autographs**

All that has been said about the divine nature of the Bible applies strictly speaking to the original writings (the Autographs) and not to the translations. We believe that for all practical purposes we have the actual Word of God. Those parts of the Bible that we are not absolutely certain about do not affect the essentials of the Christian faith.

## **Article 2. General Revelation**

General or Natural Revelation is the knowledge of God that can be gained through his creation. This knowledge is limited and is not sufficient to bring someone to a saving faith. No one, as a result of Natural Revelation, will want to savingly know the true God. The knowledge of God revealed in creation serves to make all of mankind without excuse before the judge of all heaven and earth.

*Romans 1:18-20, Psalm 19:1-6*

## **Article 3. God and the Trinity**

### **The Incomprehensibility of God**

The God of Scripture, the only true God, is very different from man in his being. Man is like God, made in his image, in very limited ways. There is no way that man can fully grasp an infinite God with his limited capacity. There will always be incompleteness in our understanding of God. Some areas of incompleteness are the Incarnation, the Trinity, the relation between predestination and responsibility, and the concept of the eternality of God, that is, the truth that God has always existed. *Deuteronomy 29:29, 1 Samuel 15:29, John 1:1, Romans 9:10-21*

### **The Trinity**

The Scriptures clearly teach that there is one God who is an infinite being and who exists in three persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each person

is wholly God, equal in power and glory, and possesses precisely the same attributes and perfection. Though undivided in nature and being, they each have different roles, eternally functioning with perfect harmony. *Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 28:18-20, 1 Corinthians 1:3, John 1:1-14, John 20:28, John 10:29-30, John 14:5-14, Acts 5:3-4*

### **The Attributes of God**

God is a spirit who is infinite in being and perfection. He is unchangeable. He is eternal, without beginning or end. He fully exists everywhere, yet he is separate from his creation. He knows all things because he decrees all things. He is all-powerful, absolutely holy, and most wise. He is self-sufficient and is in no way dependent on his creation. He is a God of love, who is compassionate and forgiving. Yet, he is also the judge who executes perfect judgment on all mankind according to his holiness revealed in his law. God can do anything that is consistent with his nature and his eternal purpose. He cannot deny himself, nor can he lie. *John 4:24, Isaiah 6:1-3, 1 Samuel 15:29, 1 John 1:5, Genesis 1:1, Psalm 139, Ephesians 1:11, Romans 16:25-27, 1 Timothy 1:17, Exodus 3:14, Acts 17:24-25, 1 John 4:7-21, Psalm 86:15, Nahum 1:2-3, 2 Timothy 2:13, Titus 1:2*

## **Article 4. God's Decree**

### **Eternal Decree**

God never has been, nor ever will be taken by surprise. Of his own free will, without obligation to any, in infinite wisdom and goodness, he has decreed, or determined, before the foundation of the world, everything that has already happened as well as everything that will come to pass. *Ephesians 1:11, Romans 9:10-21, 1 John 1:5*

### **Foreknowledge**

God does know everything that is going to happen because he has determined everything that is going to happen. With regard to salvation, foreknowledge has the meaning of God making a loving choice in eternity past to save some. God has not determined the future by seeing what man will do and then decreeing it to come to pass. *Romans 8:28-30, Amos 3:2, Deuteronomy 7:7-8, Romans 11:1-2, Ephesians 1:4-5, Romans 9:10-13*

### **Man is Responsible**

Since God, in his being, is not like man, he is able to determine everything that will happen without forcing man, against his will, to carry out his decrees. Yet, God can never be blamed for the evil that is committed by man. Man is always blamed for his own evil that he commits. *Romans 9:19-21, 1 John 1:5, James 1:13-15, Acts 4:27-28*

### **Redemption**

God, in his grace, has decreed that a fixed number of men and angels will inherit eternal life. The rest he has determined to leave in their sin to suffer their just condemnation, thereby revealing his perfect justice. *Ephesians 1:4-5, 11, 1 Timothy 5:21, Matthew 25:41, Romans 6:23*

### **Calling His Elect**

God has, before the world began, predestined to eternal life all those who would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He chose them freely, according to the secret counsel of his own pleasure, to be in Christ and to share in his eternal glory. He

did not choose them because he saw that they would believe, since saving faith is a gift of God. Neither did he choose them because he saw any goodness in them, because all men come into the world as God-haters and are incapable of performing any good work. The elect do not live perfect lives after their conversion, but they will struggle to obey their Lord and will give evidence of a changed life. *Ephesians 1:4-5, 11, John 6:44, Romans 3:10-18, Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 9:10-13, 1 Corinthians 2:14, Galatians 5:16-18, Romans 8:1-14, Revelation 2:7*

### **Means**

Just as God has predestined the salvation of the elect, He has also determined the means of their salvation. They are redeemed from their fallen state in Adam through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ on the cross. They are called to Christ, in due time, by the Holy Spirit through the hearing or reading of the gospel. They are justified, adopted into God's family, and are guaranteed sanctification. They are also kept by his power throughout their lives by a God-given faith. God has also decreed their glorification, which is the guarantee that they will be with him forever in a perfect state. *John 6:44, John 3:16, Romans 10:1-15, Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 5:12-21, 1 Corinthians 2:14, Romans 8:1-17, Romans 8:28-30, Romans 3:21-26, Galatians 4:1-7, Ephesians 1:4-5, Philippians 1:6*

## **Article 5. Creation The Creation of All Things**

In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, from nothing, to speak into existence the universe and everything in it, whether visible or invisible. God created the angels, assigning their various ranks and functions. There was nothing before him, and without him nothing came into existence. God created the universe and everything in it in six days. On the sixth day, after he had made man, God viewed everything that he had made and said that it was very good. *Genesis 1:1-2:25, Hebrews 1:2, John 1:1-3, Job 33:4, Colossians 1:15-20*

### **The Uniqueness of Man**

After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasoning and immortal souls. Man was created in the image of God, a rational and moral being. Man was assigned to populate and have dominion over the earth. *Genesis 1:1-28, Romans 1:28-31, Romans 2:12-16, Colossians 3:10, Ephesians 4:24*

### **Man was Created Good**

Adam and Eve were created innocent and inclined to do good. They were not outwardly forced to obey God, but they obeyed willingly. God provided for their every need and pleasure. They were given only one restriction: they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. *Genesis 1:26-2:25*

## **Article 6. God's Providence**

### **Meaning of Providence**

God, who makes every creature for his own good pleasure, did not merely decree what should be, and then retire to heaven to watch what inevitably must come to pass in his universe. Rather, in his infinite wisdom and power, he controls all second causes (cause and effect events), upholding and governing all creatures

and circumstances, making all things work together for the accomplishing of his own eternal plan. This invisible governing hand of God is called his providence. *Colossians 1:16, Daniel 4:28-35, Romans 8:28, Ephesians 1:11*

### **Second Causes**

God's eternal decree, unchangeably decided before the world began, is the first cause of everything that happens in the universe. Nothing is left to chance, nor happens apart from his providence. His wise providence is brought about by the use of second causes (cause and effect events). The answer to the question, "What caused you to become a believer?" is two-fold. The first cause is God's sovereign choice. The second cause is whatever he used in your experience to bring you to himself. *Acts 4:27-28, Genesis 50:19-21, Ephesians 1:11*

### **Miracles**

A miracle is an event where God uses extraordinary means to cause something to happen. Examples of miracles are the virgin birth and the long day of Joshua. *Luke 1:26-38, Joshua 10:1-15*

### **The Problem of Evil**

God's providence is all-inclusive. His invisible hand is behind the rebellion of Satan, the temptation in the Garden of Eden, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and all other evil acts. He determined before the creation of the world to use everything, even the acts of evil men, in his eternal plan. The wicked are fully responsible for what they do. God cannot be blamed. *Acts 4:27-28, Genesis 50:19-20, Proverbs 16:4, Romans 9:10-21, Romans 11:33-36, 1 John 1:5*

## **Article 7. The Fall of Man**

### **The Temptation**

The Lord God, in the Garden of Eden, gave Adam and Eve the command not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or they would die. The woman was deceived by Satan and ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. She then gave some of the fruit to Adam and he willingly ate it. This first sin of Adam and Eve was part of God's wise plan. *Genesis 2:15-17, Genesis 3:1-7, Romans 5:12-21, 1 Corinthians 15:20-28*

### **The Consequences**

As a result of eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve, our first parents, died spiritually and began to die physically. Adam was our representative. When he sinned we sinned, that is, we were blamed for his sin. As a result of Adam's sin all mankind is born spiritually dead. Spiritual death consists of two parts, guilt (a BAD RECORD), and corruption (a BAD HEART). All mankind inherits the guilt of Adam's sin. Therefore we all come into this world with a BAD RECORD. Even if it were possible to live a perfect life one would still have the guilt of Adam's sin on his record to condemn him. We also inherit a BAD HEART from Adam. We come into this world as God-haters. No one would ever naturally desire to know or please the true God. All of mankind would willingly choose eternal damnation rather than embrace the God of all creation. From the point of conception everyone stands under the wrath of God. *Genesis 2:15-17, Genesis 3:1-24, Romans 5:12-21, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:1-3, Romans 1:30*

## Article 8. The Doctrines of Grace

(These are taken from Appendix D of Steele and Thomas' *ROMANS, an Interpretive Outline*.)

### **Total Depravity**

Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature; therefore, he will not--indeed he cannot--choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ--it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation--it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God. *Genesis 2:15-17, Romans 5:12, Psalm 51:5, 1 Corinthians 2:14, Romans 3:10-18, Jeremiah 17:9, John 6:44, Ephesians 2:1-10*

### **Unconditional Election**

God's choice of certain individuals for salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ. Thus God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation. *Romans 9:10-21, Ephesians 1:4-11, Ephesians 2:4-10, Romans 8:29-30, Acts 11:18, Acts 13:48*

### **Limited Atonement (Particular or Definite Atonement)**

Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith, which united them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation. *Matthew 1:21, Romans 5:12-21, Romans 3:21-26, Ephesians 2:8-10, Titus 3:5-6, Philippians 1:6, John 10:11-30, John 17:6-12, Romans 8:28-30, John 6:44, Acts 20:28*

### **Irresistible Grace**

In addition to the outward general call to salvation, which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected, it always results in conversion. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon

man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended. *John 3:16, Matthew 22:14, Acts 17:29-31, Matthew 23:37-39, John 6:44, Romans 8:28-30, John 1:12-13, John 3:1-8, Ephesians 2:8-10*

#### **Perseverance of the Saints**

All who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end. *John 3:16, John 6:35-40, John 6:44, Philippians 1:6, Philippians 2:12-13, Jude 24-25, Ephesians 1:13-14, Romans 8:28-30, Romans 8:35-39*

## Article 9. God's Covenants

### **The Noahic Covenant**

The Noahic Covenant is a covenant between God and all living creatures and it is a promise by God not to destroy the earth again by water. This is not a salvation covenant but rather a guarantee that the earth will continue until God's plan to save a people is accomplished. *Genesis 9:8-17*

### **The Abrahamic Covenant**

This is the agreement between God and Abraham and his descendants. It is a picture of God's plan of salvation that was revealed through the physical descendants of Abraham. God promised to give Abraham many descendants, the land of Canaan, and to make him a blessing to others. Jesus Christ is the true seed of Abraham. All of those who were represented by Jesus Christ on the cross are the true children of Abraham. The fulfillment of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant that were made to Abraham's physical descendants functioned as a picture of the true fulfillment that only true believers experience. The spiritual descendants of Abraham are all the elect in Christ. The land is heaven. The promise that Abraham would be a blessing to all the earth is fulfilled in the Great Commission when the gospel is taken to the entire world to bring in the elect from every tribe nation and tongue. *Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 13:14-17, Genesis 15, Genesis 17, Genesis 22:15-18, Galatians 3, Galatians 4:21-31, Hebrews 3:7-4:11, Revelation 5*

### **The Old Covenant**

The Old Covenant is also called the Mosaic Covenant or the First Covenant. This was a legal agreement between God and the nation of Israel that was given to Moses on Mount Sinai. This covenant was not a gracious covenant. Although the Lord had a gracious purpose in giving this covenant, the covenant itself was a legal covenant that demanded perfect obedience. The failure to obey would result in the curse of God. This covenant was used to prepare the way for the Messiah. Israel, as a whole, was not a believing people. The Old Covenant caused the Israelites to sin all the more. It was never the means of anyone's salvation. The Old Covenant functions as a physical picture of many spiritual truths that can be used to teach believers today. The Ten Commandments are the essence of the Mosaic Law or Mosaic Covenant. The pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost

brought to a close the Old Covenant era. *2 Corinthians 3, Hebrews 7-10, 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, Exodus 20:1-21, Deuteronomy 5, Deuteronomy 27-28, Hebrews 3:7-19, Romans 5:20, Romans 9:1-5, Galatians 3-4, Colossians 2:16-23, Acts 2*

### **The New Covenant**

This is a description of the saving work of Jesus Christ. He purchased a people who will all be God-lovers. Each of those who are a part of the New Covenant will necessarily experience a changed life. Although all true believers are part of the New Covenant no matter when they lived. The New Covenant era as a unique historical period began with the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost. *Hebrews 7-8, Hebrews 10:1-18, Romans 5:15-19, Romans 6, Romans 4, Matthew 27:45-56, Acts 2*

## **Article 10. Christ the Mediator**

### **The Eternal Mediator**

It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose the Lord Jesus, his one and only Son, to be the mediator between God and man. He was to be the Prophet, Priest, and King, the head and Savior of his church, the heir of all things and judge of the world. To the Lord Jesus the Father gave, from all eternity, a people to redeem, call, justify, sanctify, and glorify. *1 Peter 1:17-21, 1 Timothy 2:1-7, Hebrews 1:1-4, Hebrews 5:1-10, Luke 1:26-33, Ephesians 1:15-23, Romans 8:28-30, John 5:16-30*

### **Fully God and Fully Man**

Jesus Christ, the Son of God and second person of the Trinity, is God. He is of the same essence as the Father and equal to him. At just the right time, according to the predestined plan of God, the eternal Son became a man. He was made like us in every way, except for his sinlessness. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary. This union of the divine and human made Jesus forever both God and man in one person. He is fully God and fully man. His divine and human natures are neither altered, blended, nor confused. Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man, was, and is, fully God and fully man. *John 1:1-14, Romans 1:1-4, John 3:16, Matthew 28:18-20, John 14:5-14, John 10:22-39, Galatians 4:1-7, Hebrews 4:14-16, Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:18-24, 1 Timothy 2:1-7, Hebrews 2:5-18*

### **His Humiliation and Exaltation**

The Lord Jesus willingly accepted his appointment as mediator and perfectly fulfilled that office. He endured the most severe tortures of soul and body, was crucified, buried, and remained under the power of death for three days, without seeing corruption. He rose from the dead on the third day. He ascended into heaven, where he sat down at the Father's right hand and intercedes for his people. From the Father's right hand he shall physically return at the end of the world to judge all men and angels. *John 10:14-18, Galatians 3:10-14, Isaiah 53, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Acts 1:1-11, Acts 13:34-37, Romans 8:31-34, 2 Timothy 4:1-5*

### **He Perfectly Satisfied the Justice of God**

By his perfect obedience to God's Law, Jesus qualified as our substitute and perfect sacrifice. By his death on the cross he satisfied the justice of God and

purchased for his people their complete salvation. *Romans 3:21-26, Hebrews 9:11-15, Hebrews 10:1-18, Hebrews 2:14-18, Hebrews 4:15*

### **He is the Redeemer of Those Saved in the Old Testament**

The price of redemption was not paid by Jesus Christ until after his coming in human flesh. But the benefits of his finished work were applied retroactively to God's elect living before the cross, as well as to those of us who have followed. By means of promises, types, sacrifices, and ceremonies, the Messiah is progressively revealed to be the woman's "offspring" who would crush the head of the serpent. He is "the lamb that was slain from the creation of the world." He is the Savior for all the elect. *Galatians 4:1-7, Romans 3:21-26, Romans 4:1-8, John 3:16, Genesis 3, Hebrews 10:1-18, Colossians 2:13-23, Revelation 5, Revelation 13:1-10, Hebrews 13:1-8*

### **Jesus Christ, as our Prophet, Priest, and King**

The three offices of Jesus Christ, our Messiah, are necessary for us. Because of our ignorance we need him to be our Prophet. Because of our separation from God we need him to be our Priest so that we can be made to be acceptable to him. Because we have rebelled against him and have become God-haters there is absolutely no way for us to return to him, therefore we need him to be our King to convince, draw, deliver, and preserve us for his heavenly kingdom. *1 Timothy 2:1-7, John 1:15-18, Colossians 1:21-22, Romans 5:9-11, Ephesians 2:1-10, John 6:44*

## **Article 11. The Will of Man The Freedom of the Will**

All men have been created with freedom of choice. They are free to do whatever they want to do. God never forces men to do anything against their will, yet he is in complete control of their will. *Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 2:15-17, John 3:16, Acts 4:27-28, Romans 9:10-21, Romans 3:9-20, Ephesians 1:11*

### **The Bondage of the Will**

As a result of the Fall, man not only lost eternal life, but also his power to choose God or good. This is not to say that fallen man does not have the ability to choose; he does. What we are saying is that as a result of the Fall man is now a God-hater and is in bondage to his nature. He will on his own never choose to trust in Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. He will as an exercise of his freedom of choice freely choose eternal damnation rather than eternal life. *Ephesians 2:1-10, John 6:44, 1 Corinthians 2:14, Romans 1:30, Romans 8:5-7*

### **The Will of the Believer in This Life**

When God saves us he causes us to want to repent of our sins and receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. As a believer God makes us willing to choose that which pleases him, and gives us the power to do it. God works in such a way as to make us want what he wants without forcing us to do it. Nevertheless, in this life, the believer will never be able to live perfectly for his Lord. *John 1:12-13, Romans 6:15-18, Acts 11:18, Acts 16:11-15, Ephesians 2:1-10, Galatians 5:16-18*

### **The Will of the Believer after Death**

It is not until the believer dies and enters into heaven that he will be made perfectly and unchangeably free to will only what is good. He will want to do good and good alone for all eternity. *Revelation 21, 22*

## Article 12. God's Irresistible Call

### **The Outward Call**

The outward or general call of God is the free offer of the gospel to all without exception. God desires all to come to faith in Jesus Christ, yet he has not provided atonement for the sins of all. This outward call can be, and is, resisted by the reprobate. The reprobate are the non-elect. They will never believe the gospel.

*John 3:16, Acts 17:29-31, Matthew 22:1-14, Matthew 23:37-39, 1 Timothy 2:3-7, 2 Peter 3:1-9, 1 Corinthians 2:14, Romans 9:10-24*

### **The Inward Call**

Only the elect receive the inward or specific call of God. At a time appointed by God, those whom he has predestined to eternal life are irresistibly drawn, by his Word and Spirit, out of the state of spiritual death which they are in by nature, to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our God enables them to understand the things of God, convicts them of their sin and danger, moves them to genuine sorrow and repentance, changes their hearts, and makes them willing to believe and obey the gospel. In his irresistible call he does not force anyone to come against their will. They come because they want to come. They want to come because he has made them want to come. *Romans 8:28-30, John 6:35-40, Matthew 11:25-26, John 6:44, John 3:1-8, Romans 9:10-21, Romans 10:14-15, Ephesians 2:1-10, Acts 11:18, Romans 6*

### **God Alone Gets the Credit**

The irresistible call of God is not based on anything man has done, is doing, or will do. For anyone to respond and embrace the free offer of the gospel he must first be empowered by the Spirit of God. This is the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. *Romans 9:10-21, John 6:44, John 1:12-13, John 3:1-8, Romans 8:5-11, Titus 3:3-8*

### **Those not Chosen**

Those not chosen by our God, the non-elect, are called the reprobate. They will never respond to the outward call of the gospel. Their end is eternal damnation. Everyone who goes to hell goes as a God-hater. They do not want to go to heaven. *Matthew 7:13-23, Revelation 20:11-15, 1 Corinthians 2:14, Romans 3:10-18*

## Article 13. Justification

### **Justification through Faith**

God freely justifies, that is he declares righteous, all those he irresistibly calls to himself. He does not justify anyone on the basis of their performance but by pardoning their sins and viewing them as perfectly forgiven and accepted which is the definition of righteousness. God imputes, or gives to the believer, the complete forgiveness of sins and full acceptance by God (the righteousness of Jesus Christ). Because of his sacrificial death on the cross as the perfect payment for sin, righteousness is secured for all those who believe. Justification is received by trusting in the work of Jesus Christ alone to save us from our sins. This

justifying faith is a gift of God and is not something that we are able to produce or attain on our own. *Romans 3:21-31, John 6:44, Romans 4:1-25,*

*Romans 10:3-4 Romans 5:12-21, Ephesians 2:4-10*

### **The Payment for Justification**

Jesus Christ, through his obedient death on the cross, completely paid the debt for sin that was owed by those who were to believe and be justified. He fully satisfied all the claims which God's justice had upon them. The justification of the elect is a work of God's grace, for no one deserves to be saved. *Hebrews 10:1-14, Romans 3:19-31, Isaiah 53, Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 5:18-19*

### **When Are the Elect Justified?**

From eternity past God decreed the justification of his elect. At just the right time Jesus Christ died for their sins and was resurrected for their justification. The elect are not personally justified until the Holy Spirit, at the appointed time, applies the saving work of Jesus Christ to them, then they believe and are justified. *Ephesians 1,2, Titus 3:3-7, Romans 5:6-11, Romans 4:1-8, Romans 10:9-15*

### **Justification in the Old Testament**

Believers in the Old Testament were justified in the same way as believers in the New Testament. *Romans 4, Galatians 3*

## **Article 14. Adoption**

God adopts all those he justifies into his eternal family. When they are adopted they become children of God and inherit rights and privileges, which include receiving the Holy Spirit, by whom they cry "Abba" or "Father," access in prayer to the throne of grace, and the Father's provision, protection, and loving concern. They also receive the discipline of the Father so that they will become more and more like him in holiness. Once someone has been adopted by the Father he will never be rejected or lost. As joint-heirs with Jesus Christ they inherit eternal life. *Ephesians 1:1-14, Romans 8:5-39, Hebrews 12:1-13*

## **Article 15. Sanctification**

### **The New Heart**

Those who have received Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord have been regenerated and have received a new heart. This new heart consists of a new desire created by God the Holy Spirit to make Jesus Christ the Lord of their life. Before someone becomes a believer he is a God-hater. He is in bondage to his sin. This means that he is unable to do, and doesn't want to do, anything that pleases the true God. As a result of conversion he now is a God-lover who desires to please the God of Scripture. *Romans 6, Hebrews 8:7-13, Romans 8:1-17, Ephesians 2:1-10, Romans 1:30*

### **Struggling with Sin**

It is God's good pleasure that believers struggle with evil desires throughout their entire Christian life. Perfection will never be experienced by the believer in this life. There will never be a time, this side of heaven, when the child of God will be able to do anything that is perfectly good. *Galatians 5:16-18*

### **Growth is Guaranteed**

Because of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross spiritual growth is guaranteed to the believer. Jesus purchased on the cross a transformed life for everyone who believes. Though the rate and amount of growth will be different for each believer, all Christians will experience a changed life and will bear the fruit of the Spirit. Believers may get caught in sin for a season, but they will eventually repent and be restored to fellowship with the Father. *Romans 6, Romans 8:1-17, Philippians 1:3-6, 1 John 9-11, Matthew 13:1-23, Hebrews 10:14, Revelation 2:7*

#### **Ultimate Victory is Guaranteed**

It is promised to the believer that he will be preserved till the end. Jesus not only purchased a saving faith and a changed life for his people, he also purchased a guarantee that they will persevere in their faith and enter into heaven. *Philippians 1:3-6, Romans 8:28-39, Jude 24-25*

## Article 16. Saving Faith

### **Saving Faith is a Gift**

Saving faith is a gift of God given to his elect at the appointed time by the Holy Spirit. This gift causes the elect to believe the gospel and enter into the family of God. This faith does not originate with man, nor does it come from any other source; it is a gift of God.

*Ephesians 2:4-10, Acts 11:18, Acts 13:48, John 1:12-13, Titus 3:4-7, John 3:1-8, 1 Corinthians 2:6-16*

### **The Effects of Saving Faith**

By this saving faith a Christian believes the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God. He is enabled to believe the Scriptures in all that they teach. The first and primary effect of saving faith is to cause one of the elect to receive Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord, to rest upon him alone for his salvation and to embrace him for all that Scripture says he is. Saving faith will result in a life characterized by good works. *2 Timothy 3:16-17, 1 John 2:3-6, Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 4*

## Article 17. Repentance

### **Definition of Repentance**

At the appointed time the Holy Spirit grants to each of the elect repentance that causes him to understand his rebellion against God and his guilt, which made the death of Jesus Christ necessary for his salvation. Repentance moves everyone who receives it to be genuinely sorry for having wronged his God and enables him to turn from his state of self-centeredness to a state of God-centeredness with Jesus Christ as his Lord. *Luke 3:1-20, Acts 2:37-41, Acts 20:21, Acts 11:18, 2 Corinthians 7:2-12, Romans 6:15-18*

### **The Necessity of Repentance**

The message of the Gospel is: "Turn from your sins (repent), trust in Jesus Christ alone to save you from your sins by His death on the cross, and follow Him as your Lord." Although repentance is not to be trusted as payment for sins, or as a means of earning pardon (that comes through embracing the cross-work of Jesus Christ alone), there can be no real salvation without repentance. *Acts 2:37-41, Matthew 24:14, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8*

### **Continuing Repentance**

Besides that initial act of repentance, without which no one can be saved, repentance is a lifelong concern for the believer. Since the believer continues to struggle with sin until he dies and enters into God's presence, it is his responsibility to repent of all known sin. All true believers will exhibit a life marked by repentance. *1 John 1:5-2:2, Romans 6:14, Matthew 5:1-12, 1 John 3:9-10*

## Article 18. Good Works

### **Definition of Good Works**

Good works are only those works that are in agreement with the Word of God and motivated by a desire to please the God of Scripture. Only believers are capable of doing good works.

*1 Corinthians 10:31, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Romans 3:9-20, Ephesians 2:8-10*

### **Good Works Are Proof of Saving Faith**

Good works are the evidence of a true saving faith. Although you are not saved because of your works, no one will be saved without them. Good works are part of that salvation that Jesus purchased on the cross for the elect. You cannot receive one part of salvation, such as faith, without also receiving a changed life marked by good works. *Ephesians 2:8-10, James 2:14-26, Romans 8:5-17, 1 John 2:3-6*

### **The Source of Good Works**

The motivation and ability to do good works does not come from the believer, but from the work of the Holy Spirit who is working in him. All credit for good works must go to God alone. *Ephesians 2:8-10, John 15:1-4, Hebrews 8:7-13, Titus 3:4-7, Philippians 1:6*

### **Salvation is Not Earned**

The believer's good works cannot earn him eternal life. Everything the believer does is tainted with sin. The only reason the believer's good works are accepted as good works is because he is unconditionally accepted by God because of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. *Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 4, Galatians 3:1-14, Galatians 5:16-18, Philippians 3:12-14, Ephesians 1:11-14*

### **The Works of the Unsaved**

The only works that are acceptable to God and bring him pleasure are those works that come from a believer, done according to his Word, and done for the purpose of pleasing him. Religious or humanitarian works done by unbelievers may be called great in the eyes of the world, and helpful to themselves and others, yet they cannot please God. *Romans 3:9-20,*

*1 Corinthians 10:31, Philippians 3:7-8*

## Article 19. Assurance of Salvation

### **Definition of Assurance**

Assurance is the conviction that the promises of the gospel apply to you. The Holy Spirit gives assurance to all believers at conversion. Therefore, all who have saving faith will also have assurance of salvation. *Romans 8:5-17, John 10:22-30, 10, Acts 13:48*

### **Struggles with Assurance**

A true believer will never completely lose his assurance of salvation. He may struggle with his assurance for a period of time, but he will eventually regain his full assurance. The objective promises of the gospel and evidence of a changed life are used by the Holy Spirit to aid the believer in recovering his full assurance. *Romans 8:5-17, 2 Peter 1:10-11, John 3:16, 1 John 3:9-10*

## Article 20. The Law of God

### **The Essence of All Law**

The essence of all Law is summed up in these two commandments, "Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." *Matthew 22:37-40*

## Article 21. Worship

### **The Object of our Worship**

True worship is to be given to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to Him alone. Worship is not to be offered to angels, saints, Mary the mother of Jesus, or any other creature. Since the fall of man into sin, worship cannot be offered to God without the mediation of Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. The mediation of the priests in the Old Testament era served only to foreshadow the true Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man. *Matthew 22:34-40, Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 4:8-11, Hebrews 9:1-10:18, 1 Timothy 2:1-7*

### **The Place of Worship**

The "House of the Lord" is an Old Covenant concept that referred first to the Tabernacle, and then to the Temple. True worship, in the New Covenant era, is not confined to any particular location or building. Believers, both individually and corporately, are now the Temple of the Holy Spirit. *Exodus 23:19, 1 Kings 8:41-43, John 4:1-26, Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, Ephesians 2:22, 1 Peter 2:5*

### **The Day of Worship**

Although the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week, believers are not commanded to meet together on this day. Sunday is not the Christian Sabbath. The Sabbath was a picture of our salvation and has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The commandment requiring the keeping of the Sabbath day came to an end at the close of the Old Covenant era. In the New Covenant era believers are commanded to gather together with the people of God, the church. Believers are free to gather together on any day of the week. *Matthew 28:1-10, Acts 20:27, Colossians 2:6-23, Hebrews 4:1-11, Hebrews 10:24-25*

### **Worship in the New Covenant Era**

In the New Covenant era, all of life is worship and every day is holy for the believer. *Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 10:31.*

## Article 22. Civil Government

### **Ordained by God**

All governing authorities have been appointed by God. Therefore, to rebel against any of these authorities is to rebel against God. *Romans 13:1-7*

### **Governing Authorities have Limited Authority**

The believer is bound to obey the governing authorities as long as he is not required to do something that the Word of God prohibits, or is prohibited from doing something that the Word of God commands. *Romans 13:1-7, Acts 4:1-22*

### **Participation in Civil Government**

Since civil government is ordained by God, it is proper for the believer to participate in it in any capacity. In his participation he must not violate his conscience as it is held captive to the Word of God. *Romans 13:1-7, Luke 3:1-14, Acts 10:1-8*

### **Giving Civil Authorities Their Due**

Believers are commanded in Scripture to pray for those in authority, to treat them with respect, to pay taxes, and to obey their commands. Whether or not those in authority are believers is irrelevant. *1 Timothy 2:1-7, Romans 13:1-7*

## Article 23. Marriage and Divorce **Definition of Marriage**

Marriage was established by God to join a man and a woman together for life. A believer is only allowed to marry another believer. *Genesis 2:18-25, Ephesians 5:22-33, 1 Corinthians 7:39-40, Romans 7:1-3*

### **Purpose of Marriage**

Marriage serves a variety of God-ordained purposes. Its primary purpose is to provide companionship. A secondary purpose is procreation. Another reason for marriage is to provide a legitimate outlet for our sexual drive. Marriage also functions as a picture of the relationship between Jesus Christ and the church. *Genesis 2:18-25, Genesis 1:26-31, Proverbs 2:17, Malachi 2:13-14, 1 Corinthians 7:1-7, Ephesians 5:22-33*

### **The Legitimacy of Singleness**

Although most individuals will get married, there is a special enabling for some to be single. Singleness provides greater freedom for service to the Lord and is to be honored in the church. *Matthew 19:10-12, 1 Corinthians 7:25-40, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, 1 Corinthians 7:8-9*

### **Grounds for Divorce**

There are two legitimate reasons for a believer to seek a divorce. The first reason is unrepentant adultery. The second reason is when the unbelieving spouse chooses to leave. *Matthew 19:1-12, 1 Corinthians 7:10-16*

### **Grounds for Remarriage**

In the New Covenant era, remarriage is always allowed after a divorce, except for the professed believer who divorces someone for an unbiblical reason. *Matthew 19:8-9, 1 Corinthians 7:10-16*

## Article 24. The Church

### **The People of God**

All of God's elect who have ever lived, are now living, or ever will live, make up the one true universal church. *Revelation 5:9-10*

### **The People of God in the New Covenant Era**

While there has always been a people of God, the church in the New Covenant era has a unique historical beginning at Pentecost. The church is made up of both Jew and Gentiles and is not regulated by the Mosaic Law, but by the Law of Christ.

*Ephesians 2:11-22, Colossians 1:15-20*

### **The Local Church**

We joyfully submit to Christ alone as the Head of His body, the church. We acknowledge Him as our Chief Shepherd. We recognize that He governs His church through the Holy Scriptures as the full and final authority in all matters of faith, church order, and discipline.

The church in the New Covenant era is given visible expression in local churches. All professed believers are commanded to gather together in the local church to build up one another in the faith. *1 Corinthians 12, Hebrews 10:24-25, Acts 2:42-47, Revelation 1:4-3:22*

### **Church Leadership (expanded in the by-laws)**

God has given two positions of leadership in the local church: elders and deacons. Elders are responsible to shepherd and teach the local church. The elders are the final authority in the church. They are to be qualified according to the qualifications of 1 Timothy chapter 3 and Titus chapter 1. They are never allowed to lord it over the people. A church without at least one elder is incomplete. All elders have equal authority and are the pastors of the church. Women are not allowed to be elders. *Titus 1:5-16, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Ephesians 4:9-16, Philippians 1:1-2, Acts 14:21-25, Hebrews 13:17, Matthew 20:20-28*

Deacons assist the elders. They are called upon to serve at the decision of the elders and their duties are determined by the elders. Deacons are to meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy chapter three. *1 Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6:1-6, 1 Timothy 2:11-15*

### **Church Discipline (expanded in the by-laws)**

It is the responsibility of the local church to exercise church discipline. The method to be used is described in Matthew 18:15-17.. Any verifiable, unrepentant sin is grounds for church discipline. When someone is removed from the church, or excommunicated, he is denying that he wants Jesus Christ to be his Lord.

Denial of the Lordship of Christ is a denial that one has saving faith. That is why all those who are put out of the church are viewed as unbelievers. *Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, Galatians 6:1-5, 1 Timothy 5:17-20, 1 John 2:3-6*

## **Article 25. The Ordinances**

The New Covenant people of God have been given two ceremonies to perform. They are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both of these ordinances were instituted by Jesus Christ and are to be observed by the church until the Lord returns. The ordinances are outward pictures of spiritual truths. There is no saving power in the ordinances. *Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 6:1-4, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Luke 22:7-38, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34*

## Article 26. Baptism

### **The Meaning of Baptism**

The ordinance of baptism is the formal profession of faith for the believer. It is an outward sign of an inward reality. When someone is baptized he is saying that he is now trusting in Jesus Christ alone for his salvation, and desires Him to be the Lord of his life. Baptism is a necessary part of the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and is to be practiced by His church until the end of the world. *Romans 6:1-4, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:37-41*

### **The Mode of Baptism**

The key element in the ordinance of baptism is water. Baptism symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Scripture does not require one particular method or mode of baptism. *1 Peter 3:18-22, Romans 6:1-4, Acts 8:36-40*

### **The Practice of Baptism**

Scripture recognizes every believer as a priest. Therefore, any believer is authorized to perform the ordinance of baptism. Since baptism is the believer's formal profession of faith, and since many of the baptisms recorded in Scripture are private, it is not necessary for baptism to be performed in a public service. It is proper for a believer to baptize someone once they have professed faith in Jesus Christ. *1 Peter 2:9-10, Acts 8:26-40, Acts 16:16-40*

## Article 27. The Lord's Supper

### **Institution**

The Lord's Supper was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ on the night he was betrayed. This ordinance of the New Covenant age is to be observed in the church until the second coming of Jesus Christ. *Matthew 26:17-30, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34*

### **The Meaning of the Lord's Supper**

The elements, the bread and the fruit of the vine, are a reminder of the sacrifice on the cross of Jesus Christ for his people. The bread symbolizes his body, which was cursed on our behalf, and the wine symbolizes his blood which was poured out for the forgiveness of our sins and the purchase of our salvation. The elements of the Lord's Supper do not become the actual body and blood of the Lord (Transubstantiation). Jesus is not physically present even though the elements remain bread and wine (Consubstantiation or Real Presence). Jesus is not spiritually present in a way that he is not present at any other time. The Lord's Supper is a memorial and a means by which we corporately testify to his saving grace. It is a time to remember the most important part of our faith, the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, as a payment for the sins of the elect. *Luke 22:7-23, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34*. The Lord's Table is the ordinance of the church whereby believers, in Christian unity and harmony, look back to remember the Lord's death, look inward in self-examination, look outward in proclaiming the gospel and look forward until the Lord returns as those united in the New Covenant

### **The Warning**

Any professed believer who takes part in the Lord's Supper in an irreverent, self-centered manner, or is willfully hanging on to unrepentant sin, is eating and drinking judgment on himself. Our Lord promises to discipline all those who do not take to heart the seriousness of commemorating the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. *1 Corinthians 11:27-32*

## **Article 28. The State of Men After Death and the Resurrection of the Dead**

### **What Happens at Death**

When we die our bodies decompose and return to dust. Our souls or spirits (both terms refer to “the real you”) live on forever. At death believers are received into heaven where they will be with the Lord and will await the full redemption of their bodies. Unbelievers are immediately thrown into hell, where they experience conscious torment while they await the great Day of Judgment. The Bible knows of no other place for souls at death. *Genesis 3:19, Matthew 16:24-28, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Matthew 25:31-46, Romans 8:18-25, Philippians 1:21-26, Matthew 13:24-43*

### **What Happens When Christ Comes**

Believers who are alive at the second coming of Jesus Christ will not die, but they will be instantly changed into a resurrected state. At that time, the bodies of the believing dead will also be raised incorruptible with a resurrected body and all believers will be with the Lord Jesus Christ in the new heavens and the new earth. The unbeliever will experience the full fury of God’s wrath forever in the Lake of Fire. *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Matthew 24, 1 Corinthians 15:12-58, Revelation 20-22*

## **Article 29. The Last Judgment**

God has appointed a day when he will judge the world with perfect justice through Jesus Christ, to whom he has given all power and authority. On that day the fallen angels will be judged as well as everyone who has ever lived on the earth. All must appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give account for everything they have done (their thoughts, words, and actions) while they lived on the earth. The Lord Jesus will give his unchangeable verdict on that day, forever sealing the destinies of everyone. The wicked will be sent into the Lake of Fire to experience eternal torment, while the righteous, those whom Jesus purchased on the cross, will be rewarded and will enter into eternal life. *John 5:16-30, Jude 5-7, 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 1 Corinthians 4:1-5, Matthew 25:31-46, Revelation 20:11-15*

## Article 30. The Role of Women

### **Men and Women are Equal**

Scripture clearly states that men and women are equal before the Lord. The priesthood of all believers, both men and women, clearly demonstrates this truth.

*Galatians 3:26-29,*

*1 Peter 2:4-12*

### **Men and Woman have Different Roles**

In the beginning God created mankind male and female. He made Adam first, and then made Eve from Adam's rib. This order of creation subordinates wives to their husbands in marriage, and women to men in the church. As an act of submission to their Creator, women are commanded to submit to their husbands and to male leadership in the church. Women are not allowed to teach or have authority over men in any formal capacity in the church. Genesis 2:4-25

## Order: Part Two- The Principles that Govern Us (by-laws)

### **Membership**

#### **Definition and Function**

All those who have been born of the Holy Spirit and have put their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed into the universal church, the body of Christ, of which He is the head (1 Corinthians 12:12-20; Ephesians 1:22). All believers in Christ should join with a local church, thus becoming members of a clearly defined local community of believers (Acts 2:41-47; 14:21-23; Hebrews 10:25).

#### **NCBFCovenant**

Recognizing our responsibility to obey all the Scriptures and the need to distinguish ourselves from the world as a community of believers, all members shall affirm their commitment to please God in all areas of life by entering into this covenant:

*Having, as we trust, been brought by Divine Grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to Him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith,  
in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully covenant with each other.*

*We will, for the glory of God our Father and our Savior Jesus Christ, strive to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves.*

*We will be obedient to the command of our Lord to make disciples, to baptize them in the name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit and continue to instruct them in the way that they should go.*

*We will assemble ourselves together as we are able and we will not neglect to pray for ourselves and others.*

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

*We will pray for one another that we will grow in grace, wisdom, knowledge and the understanding of our Lord and Savior and that we will live in a manner that is worthy of our Lord*

*We will strive to forgive when we have been offended and to ask for forgiveness when we have offended and therefore be willing, if need be, to be reproved, rebuked, corrected or disciplined according to the Scriptures knowing that our purpose is for the brethren to be reconciled whenever possible as Christ has reconciled us to Himself.*

*We will cultivate an attitude of rejoicing with those who rejoice and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.*

*We will give of our material wealth as the Lord prospers us and we will do so cheerfully, conscientiously, consistently and do so for the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.*

*We acknowledge that the pastors/elders are gifts to the body of Christ and that they and the deacons who assist them have our best interests at heart and bear a great responsibility and that all men do not qualify for these offices.*

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

*Amen.*

Requirements for Membership with NCBF: Members must profess repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, submit to Him as Lord and Sovereign, be Biblically baptized following this profession, and must not be under Biblically administered church discipline. Having met these requirements, this person shall joyfully enter into this Covenant with this people, expressing willingness to follow the beliefs and practices of this community, and evidencing willingness to submit to its Elders.

### **Admission to Membership**

The Elders shall be responsible to receive applicants into membership. This shall include reviewing the application, conducting an interview, and evaluating their standing when coming from another church. Upon determining that the applicants meet the requirements, the Elders shall present them to the church as members.

### **Categories of Membership**

**Membership** is for those active, participating members who comprise the majority of NCBF.

### **Congregational Voting Privilege**

To be eligible to vote at congregational meetings, one must be a resident member on the day of the vote, at least eighteen (18) years of age, in attendance at the meeting and not have forfeited their voting privilege by being placed on the inactive list or being subject to discipline. NCBF may permit absentee ballots in exceptional circumstances as requested of and granted by the Elders on a case-by-case basis.

## **Removal from Membership**

Membership will end by physical death, transfer of membership to churches holding to Biblical doctrine, or by the process of corrective discipline ending in excommunication.

**Inactive** is described as a member who is proven to be not living according to their covenantal responsibilities and obligations. At the discretion of the elders an attempt will be made to interview any member prior to being placed on an inactive list.

## **Corrective Discipline**

The Scriptures require us to implement the Biblical steps in discipline. The primary aim of all steps of discipline is the repentance and restoration of the erring member. Failing that, the aim is to protect the purity of the church and the reputation of Christ.

### **One-on-One Attempt to Restore**

Any member of NCBF having *factual knowledge* of an erring member's heresy, sin, or refusal to be reconciled must approach that person in private, loving confrontation, and seek his or her restoration (Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1-2).

### **One or Two Witnesses Attempt to Restore**

If, after repeated attempts, the erring member refuses to heed such warnings, then the warning member should return, privately, with one or two witnesses. These witnesses, after self-examination and prayer, should adjudicate the matter and seek to reconcile the parties and/or to restore the erring member (Matthew 18:16, 19-20).

## **Members Attempt to Restore**

### **Stage 1 — Report to The Elders**

If the witnesses determine that the erring member refuses to heed such warnings, they should report the matter to the Elders, who are responsible to keep watch over the flock (Hebrews 13:17). At this stage, the witnesses along with the Elders, after self-examination and prayer, should adjudicate the matter and seek to reconcile the parties and/or to restore the erring member (Matthew 18:16, 19-20).

### **Stage 2 — Report to the Membership**

If the erring member continues to refuse to heed such warnings, the Elders will report the matter to the members of NCBF, requiring them to associate with the erring member *only to warn him or her of their error*. During this sobering time, the erring member will be excluded from participation in the Lord's Table and the privileges of membership, according to the guidelines of Scripture (Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15). Further, according to 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, if the sin is public, known to the congregation, and not repented of, the Elders may go immediately

to this step when they have found it impossible to implement the informal and private steps first.

## **Excommunication**

### **Upon Unrepentance**

If, after members of NCBF have attempted to restore the erring member, he or she still refuses to repent, he or she shall be publicly dismissed from NCBF, and the congregation will be instructed to treat him or her as an unbeliever on the grounds of his or her unrepentance (Matthew 18:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5, 13; 1 Timothy 1:18-20). Any church that receives a member under discipline into their number shall be informed of that person's status.

### **Upon Resignation**

If, during any of the steps of corrective discipline, the erring member seeks to resign from the membership of NCBF the Elders shall accept the resignation. The Elders shall in such instances report the reasons for the resignation to the members, publicly disclosing any unresolved issues, and instructing the congregation to treat the resigning member as an unbeliever on the grounds of his or her unrepentance (Matthew 18:17 and 1 Corinthians 5:9-11). Any church that receives a member under discipline into their number shall be informed of that person's status.

## **Restoration of the Erring Member**

### **At the Informal and Private Level of Discipline**

If the erring member repents at the informal and private level of discipline or the sin is not known publicly, then repentance, confession, and restoration shall be private (Matthew 18:15-16; Luke 17:3-4; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13).

### **Formal and Public Level of Discipline**

If the discipline proceeds to the formal level of public disclosure before the congregation, or if the sin of the erring person is public, then the repentance, confession, and restoration must also be formal and before the congregation (2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

## **Responsibility of Membership**

At whatever level restoration occurs, members must forgive the offender upon his or her confession and repentance (Luke 17:3-4; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Ephesians 4:32).

## **Ordinances**

The Scriptures have commanded only two ordinances in the church, Baptism and the Lord's Table. No ordinance has saving efficacy, and both are commanded of believers as deeply meaningful outward symbols of spiritual realities.

## **The Ordinance of Baptism**

Baptism is the ordinance of the church whereby believers publicly confess their allegiance to Christ. We practice baptism only by immersion. Any person who wants to publicly profess faith in Christ or who has not been Biblically baptized may ask for baptism. The Elders, upon ascertaining a credible profession, shall schedule the person to be baptized.

## **The Ordinance of the Lord's Table**

The Lord's Table shall be scheduled as often as the Elders wish. All believers and only believers present at its serving, shall be invited to participate, being reminded of its Biblical characteristics and waiting on one another for all to be served (Mark 14:22-23; 1 Corinthians 11:23-33).

## **Offices**

The Bible establishes two permanent offices in the local church, Elders and Deacons (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13). The governance and oversight of the church is the responsibility of the Elders who are to shepherd or pastor the church. The Deacons are responsible to serve God in the church and, under the Elders, to lead the ministry teams doing the daily work of the ministry.

## **The Elders**

Jesus Christ alone is Lord of the church and her Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). As the risen Lord, He rules the church from heaven by the Spirit, mediating that rule through the Word of God, the Scriptures (Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 5:4).

Jesus Christ has ordained that the church shall be overseen by elders who shall shepherd the church according to His will (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2). The Elders shall govern the church (1 Timothy 5:17) and the church shall lovingly and prayerfully submit to their authority (Hebrews 13:17).

## **Body of Elders**

### **The Plurality of the Elders**

The church shall at all times, in God's providence, seek to have a plurality of elders. There shall be no maximum number of elders, the number of which shall be determined by men available who are qualified and who desire to serve (Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5,7).

When there is not a plurality of elders it will be incumbent upon the elder/pastor and the church to use established relationships with sister churches that practice plurality of elders and the elder/pastor and the church will, as he or the church sees the need, consult with these elders on any matters that would require such counsel.

### **The Equality and Unanimity of the Elders**

The Elders of NCBF shall constitute a body in which all members shall be equal and shall have one vote. In the spirit of unity in the body, all decisions shall be by unanimous vote of the Elders (Acts 15). Exceptions to the unanimous vote rule include: when an issue

needs to be voted on when an elder is incapacitated or the issue would (or could) be construed as a conflict of interest.

From time to time, an item of business may require immediate attention. Matters needing immediate attention may be resolved by not less than 2 elders and shall be reviewed by the entire body at the first opportunity. Electronic means for meeting and voting may be implemented according to guidelines established by the Elders. An elder being removed or disciplined shall be ineligible to vote on decisions regarding himself.

### **The Shepherding by the Elders**

The Elders are charged by God to shepherd the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4) by:

1. Preaching and teaching the Word of God (Colossians 1:28; 1 Timothy 5:17; 2 Timothy 4:1);
2. Establishing the theological and doctrinal purity of the church and guarding the flock of God against error and heresy (Acts 20:28-31);
3. Discipling, counseling, and admonishing believers, confronting sin, and teaching individuals and families as men who will give an account to God (Ezekiel 34; Acts 20:20; Colossians 1:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:17);
4. Praying for the congregation and the work of God (Acts 6:3-4);
5. Equipping the membership for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 2:2).

### **The Overseeing by the Elders**

The Elders are charged by God to oversee the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1), governing it as a father manages his family (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; 5:17). Therefore, the Elders shall govern the NCBF by:

1. Providing for the public ministry of the Word;
2. Overseeing all the ministries of NCBF by being *ex-officio* members of all church ministry teams; designating all ministry teams and their leaders; appointing those identified by the congregation to serve as Deacons and assigning them their responsibilities.
3. Leading in the correction or disciplining of erring members; confronting any member or attendee who may create dissension that impairs the doctrinal or spiritual unity of the church.
4. Reviewing and approving any missionaries or organizations NCBF will support, financially or otherwise, and providing opportunities

for congregational involvement in support, prayer, communication, and fellowship with them.

5. Ensuring that the financial offerings of NCBF are used with integrity and accountability, preparing a budget, overseeing the disbursement of funds, receiving regular reports from those delegated with this responsibility and making report to the congregation.

### **The Qualifications for Elders**

Elders shall be men who meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. They must be able to teach, have a desire for the privilege and responsibility of the office, shall not seek the office for the sake of money or power (1 Peter 5:2-3), and are in essential agreement with *The Truths We Teach* statement.

### **The Terms of Office for Elders**

Elders shall be appointed to an indefinite term of office. The term may be ended by disqualification or resignation. The Elders shall arrange for sabbaticals to be taken as needed. An elder may resign from office for reasons sufficient unto himself after giving proper notice.

### **The Appointment of Elders**

The Elders shall establish a process to identify, examine and qualify men for the Eldership that culminates in their being publicly appointed to the office. The Elders are responsible to identify those men whom God has given to the church to be an elder. The Elders shall examine the prospective elder to determine Biblical qualifications, fitness for the office, and affirmation of the church's doctrine, distinctives and Mission and Vision Statement. They shall give the prospective elder opportunity to teach as a way to begin to present the prospective elder to the church (1 Timothy 3:2; 5:22).

The Elders shall present the prospective elder to the church in a Special Congregational Meeting. After the presentation, at least two weeks shall be designated for members of the congregation to have the opportunity to resolve any personal issues with the prospective elder regarding his qualifications by meeting with him privately. If the issues cannot be resolved privately, a meeting shall be arranged with the Elders. The prospective elder shall be present at all such meetings and shall have the opportunity to respond to issues that are presented.

During these same two weeks, the congregation shall be called to a season of prayer and fasting. At the end of the prescribed time the Elders shall meet again with the prospective elder to review all the issues brought forth. Upon agreeing to appoint the prospective elder to the office, the Elders shall set a date on which the prospective elder

will be publicly installed into office. They shall give notice during regular worship services at least two weeks before the installation date.

## **The Removal of Elders**

### **Reasons for the Removal of an Elder**

An elder may be removed from office for the following Biblical reasons:

1. Disqualification under 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9;
2. Not holding to the doctrines clearly taught in the Word (Acts 20:30; 1 John 2:19);
3. Other unrepentant sin. No charge of sin may be received against an elder except by two or more witnesses having factual knowledge of the sin (1 Timothy 5:19-21);
4. Inability to discharge the duties of their office.

### **Process of Removing of an Elder**

The Elders shall receive and consider an accusation that is brought by no less than two members having factual knowledge of the sin or the false teaching. They shall investigate and verify the charges. If the charges are verified and the elder does not repent, then the Elders shall bring the unrepentant elder before the congregation, shall rebuke him publicly, and dismiss him from the Eldership. If necessary, discipline may be administered as outlined in Corrective Discipline

### **Restoration of a Removed Elder**

An elder who has previously been dismissed from the Eldership, after an appropriate time, shall be eligible to be identified, examined and re-qualified by the Elders. Care should be taken to preserve the reputation of Christ and the purity of the church in such a restoration to the Eldership.

### **The Meetings of the Elders**

The Elders shall meet regularly and as often as is necessary to fulfill their responsibilities. Minutes of the meeting shall be kept and filed.

### **The Roles among the Elders**

Recognizing the different gifts, abilities, and experience each elder brings to the Eldership, the Elders recognize and will fill the following roles on the Eldership.

### **Chairman of the Elders**

This elder is responsible to moderate all meetings of the Elders and special congregational meetings of NCBF. He shall be responsible to prepare and carry out the agenda for the meetings and to enforce Biblical order and decorum in discussions, debate, and decisions of

issues as well as all other responsibilities the Elders deem appropriate.

#### **Vice-Chairman of the Elders**

This elder is responsible to assist the Chairman in his duties, to moderate in the absence of the Chairman or when the Chairman is excused due to a conflict of interest as well as all other responsibilities the Elders deem appropriate.

#### **Secretary of the Elders**

This elder is responsible to take accurate minutes of the meetings of the Elders. He shall record the minutes, submit them to the Elders for approval, and ensure that they are filed in the permanent records of the church. He shall also ensure that all policies and procedures arising from the decisions by the Elders are compiled in *The Appendices*.

#### **Teaching Elders**

On the principle of first among equals, the Elders shall have among their number at least one who is gifted and designated as a Teaching Elder. They will be primarily responsible for the doctrine and the public preaching of the Word of God. These elders should be financially supported whenever possible.

#### **Other Roles and Responsibilities**

The Elders shall assign ministry oversight responsibilities among themselves according to their gifts, abilities, and experience. The Elders may create other formal roles, assigning each role a specific set of responsibilities and appointing elders to fill those roles, including non-elder staff positions.

#### **Legal Trustees**

To meet the legal requirements, the Trustees of NCBF shall be the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary of the Elders with their respective titles. Deacons or others may be asked to serve in the absence of a plurality of elders.

#### **Financial Support of Vocational Elders**

The NCBF family is responsible to provide generous financial support to those men who devote all or large portions of their time and energy to their work as vocational elders (1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 Corinthians 9:9-11). When considering a vocational elder, the Elders should look among themselves first. Then they may invite men from outside the local congregation to come into its midst and serve in this capacity. The Elders shall establish procedures for (1) the request by an elder for financial support, (2) the consideration of a member or an elder for financial support, and (3) the consideration of a man from outside the

church for a vocational elder position. Any man called from outside the congregation to be a vocational elder must be able to conscientiously affirm his essential agreement with the *The Truths We Teach*. Should he at any time move from this position, he is under obligation to make this fact known to the Elders.

## **Deacons**

The Bible has charged the deacons with the ministry of assisting the Elders and the congregation in the work of the ministry.

### **The Functioning of the Deacons**

Deacons assist the Eldership by assuming responsibility to lead or to serve in those ministries assigned to them by the Elders so that such work will not interfere with the Elders' ministry of the Word and prayer (Acts 6:1-7). They will be accountable to the elder overseeing the ministry area in which they are ministering.

### **The Qualifications for Deacons**

Deacons shall be men who meet the qualifications as set forth in Scripture, particularly in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, demonstrate a willingness and ability to serve, and are in essential agreement with *The Truths We Teach* statement.

### **The Terms of Office for Deacons**

Deacons shall be appointed to an indefinite term of office. The term may be ended by disqualification or by resignation. The Elders shall arrange for sabbaticals to be taken as needed. Deacons may resign from office for reasons sufficient unto themselves after giving proper notice.

### **The Selection of Deacons**

The Elders must carefully consider the needs of the church and seek to add qualified people to serve as deacons. The members of the congregation shall identify those who are qualified and willing to serve, recommending them to

the Elders who shall examine them regarding their qualifications. Those who are appointed to serve as deacons shall be publicly installed into office.

### **The Removal of Deacons**

#### **Reasons for the Removal**

A deacon may be removed from office for the following Biblical reasons:

1. Disqualification under 1 Timothy 3:8-13;

Not holding to the doctrines clearly taught in the Word (Acts 20:30; 1 John 2:19);

2. Other unrepentant sin;
3. Inability to discharge the duties of their office.

### **Process of Removal**

The Elders shall receive and consider an accusation that is brought by no less than two members having factual knowledge of the sin. They shall investigate and verify the charges. If the charges are verified and the deacon does not repent, then the Elders shall remove the unrepentant deacon from office. If necessary, discipline may be administered as Corrective Discipline.

### **Restoration of One Removed**

A deacon who has previously been removed from office, after an appropriate time, shall be eligible to be identified, examined and re-qualified by the Elders. Care should be taken to preserve the reputation of Christ and the purity of the church in such a restoration to the office.

- **The Deaconess** – A deaconess is a woman who may or may not be a deacon's wife. A deaconess is *not* an office of the church but a special servant. The role of the deaconess is to assist the elders and particularly the deacons under the direct supervision of the elders or deacons in specific ways of serving that are designated by the elders and or the deacons. Their ministry is different than the ministry of other women in the church in that they are working alongside the deacons.
- **The Deaconess** must meet the qualifications given in 1 Tim.3:11. They are selected following the same procedure as the deacons, with the same terms of a deacon and are subject to removal and restoration following the procedure for the deacons.

### **Stewardship and Finances**

#### **Financial Oversight**

The Elders are responsible for the financial oversight of the church. The Elders shall oversee the development and implementation of an annual budget as a financial guideline. The budget shall be presented to the church for affirmation at the Annual Congregational Meeting. At the Elder's discretion, unbudgeted expenditures may be made.

#### **Financial Support**

NCBF shall be supported by free-will offerings and sacrificial giving. Special project fund-raising shall require Eldership approval. The disbursement of all moneys including designated moneys shall be at the discretion of the Elders.

## **Financial Non-indebtedness**

It is the intention of NCBF to finance its growth as God provides and not to incur indebtedness beyond accounts payable.

## **Meetings**

### **Regular Worship Meetings**

The Elders shall set the frequency and times of the regular meetings of FBE including worship on the Lord's Day and other services as is desirable to best fulfill the Mission, Vision, and Purposes of NCBF

### **Congregational Meetings**

Major decisions such as those relating to finances, budget, and major capital improvements, as well as other issues affecting the SGBF family as a whole, may be presented to the congregation for affirmation. The Elders, in the spirit of not lording over the church (Acts 6:5; 15:22; 1 Peter 5:1-4), shall openly communicate with the congregation, teaching relevant truths, receiving input, and carefully considering the responses and counsel of the Body. To foster cooperation and unity for the sake of the Kingdom, the Elders will be ever mindful of being servant leaders who set an example (1 Peter 5:1-4) and the congregation of being wisely and lovingly submissive to its leaders (Hebrews 13:7,17).

### **Annual Congregational Meeting**

The Annual Congregational Meeting of NCBF shall be held each ministry year at a time set by the Elders for the presentation and adoption of a budget, giving of ministry reports, and any other business scheduled by the Elders.

### **Special Congregational Meetings**

The Elders may call special congregational meetings to bring before the

NCBF family matters needing the support or input of the congregation.

### **Congregational Affirmation/Vote**

At their discretion, the Elders may ask for a Congregational Affirmation/Vote at any Special Congregational Meeting on an issue before them. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the active resident members in good standing shall constitute a quorum. All members who are in good standing are eligible to participate. Affirmation/Vote shall be conducted by a show of hands or by ballot. Ballots are valid only when a member has written his or her name on it. Except when otherwise stated, a two-thirds (2/3) majority affirmation is required to pass an issue.

## **Appendices to the Constitution**

Appendices to the Book of Faith and Order (A Church Handbook) can be added at any time by the elders. Appendices do not in any way contradict or violate the doctrine or practice of the church. These would be ongoing practical matters that need to be defined such as searching out sister churches and listing them and the names of the elders or any other affiliations; how the church may be used for funerals or non-church functions such as wedding anniversaries; the use of church property for the benefit of the members ie. ladders, chairs or any other equipment one might need to borrow for some function privately. This could include the writing of a new members course based on our Book of Faith and Order and for example a guide to Christian Discipleship based on the series of sermons from The Sermon on the Mount or any other published teaching from the elders that would benefit the body.

## **Amendment**

*The NCBF Book of Faith and Order* may be amended by a three-fourths (3/4) majority affirmation of the eligible members voting at a duly called Special Congregational Meeting. The proposed amendments must be presented to and approved by the Elders. The proposed changes will be presented in written form at least two Sundays prior to the congregational meeting.

## **Dissolution**

### **The Process of Dissolution**

Only the Trustees, acting upon the recommendation of the Elders, may recommend the dissolution of this corporation to the congregation. A three-fourths (3/4) majority affirmation of the eligible members shall be required in order to dissolve this corporation.

### **The Responsibilities at Dissolution**

In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, all debts are to be satisfied. The official trustees shall ensure that there is no division of assets, and all assets herein are to be distributed to another corporation or corporations with purposes similar to those identified in the Prologue and The Truths We Teach A three-fourths (3/4) majority affirmation of the eligible members shall be required in order to decide on the distribution of assets.