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PREAMBLE

As a body of baptized believers, we place our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation. Having bound ourselves together in fellowship and believing it necessary to govern ourselves in an orderly and efficient manner, we do hereby adopt the provisions of the Church Covenant, Constitution, and Articles of Faith contained in this booklet.

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this organization shall be, "Altoona Regular Baptist Church" of Altoona, Iowa*

*Amended March 29, 1962

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is to operate and maintain a Baptist Church: to promote the worship of God by the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; to promote the propagation of the gospel through Baptist missionaries at home and abroad: to have Sunday School and youth groups; to preserve Baptist doctrine, trusting that as a result sinners shall be saved and believers edified; to administer the ordinances of the New Testament; and to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints.

ARTICLE III

ARTICLES OF FAITH

Believing the Articles of Faith as adopted by the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches to be the body of truth for which Baptists have always stood, we accept the same as the Articles of Faith of this Church (See Article XIX)

ARTICLE IV

ASSOCIATION

This church shall be an independent, autonomous Baptist organization and shall never be controlled or governed by a convention or association whatsoever. The right of fellowship with those of like faith and practice shall be engaged in upon the recommendation of the pastor and board of deacons and the 3/4 vote of the congregation. We believe that such scriptures as I Tim. 6:3-5; II Chron. 19:2; II Tim. 2:17-21; II Cor. 6:14-18; Romans 16:17,18; II Thess. 3:6; II John 10,11 constitute a mandate and am not subject to option, modification, or compromise on the part of the believer. They constitute the basic foundation upon which this church was founded in the matters of affiliation and separation.

ARTICLE V
MEMBERSHIP

The members of this church shall consist of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, who have been baptized by immersion after conversion (Acts 2:41). They shall agree with and be willing to follow the Articles of Faith (summaries from the Scripture) and the Constitution of this church (our household standards). No person can be a member of this church who is a member of a secret society or lodge.

A. Membership Status*

Membership is a means by which we describe relationships to each other and a method to establish a standard for ministry.

*Amended September 9, 1992

1. Active Status

Active members shall apply to those who have been received into this church according to our prescribed admission procedure. They are resident individuals within our community and shall have all the rights and privileges as set forth in our constitution.

2. Inactive Status

Inactive members shall apply to those members who have broken fellowship; i.e., because they have not attended services for 3 months, or are under discipline; i.e., because they are under disciplinary action due to sin. A member's name shall be placed on the inactive list by the church clerk upon the instructions of the Pastor and Deacons in keeping with inactive categories. The pastor and deacons shall investigate each case and make all efforts to get a response before placing someone on inactive status. Those on the inactive list shall be without voice, voting privileges and the right to hold an elected office. They shall not be counted in the quorum nor counted in the active membership statistics.

3. Non-resident Status

Non-resident members shall apply to those who are temporarily relocated; i.e., students, servicemen, or missionaries, are restricted; i.e., nursing home, health care centers or retirement centers, or having moved from the area and have not yet found a church home. A member's name shall be placed on the non-resident membership list by the church clerk upon the instructions of the pastor and deacons. They shall be without voice, voting privileges, and the right to hold an elected office. They shall not be counted in the quorum nor counted in the active membership statistics. Upon their return to church, the clerk in consultation with the pastor and deacons shall return their name to the active membership list. They may be dismissed from membership if no correspondence or communication occurs with the church after three months.

4. Associate Status

Associate members shall apply to those who are under the age of 18 and have been received into the church according to our prescribed admission procedures. They shall be without voice, voting privileges and the right to hold an elected office. They shall not be counted in the quorum nor counted in the active membership statistics. They may be placed on the inactive status based on the inactive categories. Prior to their 18th birthday the pastor and/or deacons will meet with them and explain the articles of our constitution, voting privileges, ministry opportunities and membership duties and obligations.

5. Watch-Care Status

Watch-care membership shall apply to those individuals who are of temporary residence; i.e., such as students, servicemen, or those having a temporary job obligation, who desire a church home in which to minister and be accountable while temporarily away from home. They are received into this church according to the prescribed admission procedure, except that no church letter will be sent to their home church. They may be dealt with under our discipline section if a problem should arise. They shall be without voice, voting privileges, and the right to hold an elected office. They shall not be counted in the quorum nor counted in the active membership statistics. When these individuals leave our church their names shall automatically be dropped from the church roll by the church clerk in consultation with the pastor or deacons.

*B. Membership admission, restoration, and dismissal

*Amended September 9, 1992

1. Admission

a. Preliminary Interview

Each candidate for membership will give their testimony as to the assurance or salvation and baptism by immersion to the pastor and deacons who shall make inquiry into their background. Upon recommendation by the pastor and deacons the same shall be presented to the church for acceptance or rejection.

b. Public Testimony

Each candidate shall be required to give their testimony as to the assurance of salvation and baptism by immersion at some public meeting at the church before a vote can be taken to receive him or her as a member.

c. Membership Vote

Candidates may be received at any regular service or business meeting by vote of the church providing such has been announced in one public service preceding admittance. Five dissenting votes shall constitute a refusal of admission. Any member giving a dissenting vote will be required to present the grounds for their objection before the pastor and deacons in a separate meeting with the membership candidate present or properly represented. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the pastor and deacons shall overrule the objection in light of the evidence and the name shall be presented once more to the church upon pastor and deacon recommendation.

2. RESTORATION

a. Inactive Restoration

Those members on the inactive status list as "broken fellowship" or "under discipline" may re-establish fellowship by meeting with the pastor and deacons, communicating a heart change and showing interest in our church by attending the regular services for one month. The pastor and deacons shall instruct the church clerk to restore their names to the active list.

b. Dismissed Restoration

Those members who already have been dismissed may be restored to membership upon recommendation of the pastor and deacons and then a vote of the church. In the event they were dismissed for broken fellowship or under discipline, they shall be required to give evidence of honest repentance and to make confession of wrong doing before the church when deemed necessary by the pastor and deacons.

3. Dismissal

a. Dismissal of members

Members may be dismissed at any regular service or business meeting by a vote of the church as governed by Article XI. Those members on the inactive status list who fail to correct the problem or communicate with the church after three months, will be dismissed from membership by a church vote. Those members on the non-resident status who fail to communicate with the church after one year will be dismissed from membership by church vote.

b. Letter of Dismissal

A letter by no means shall be thought of as a transfer of membership. A letter merely indicates that one was removed from our membership either by request of another church or by failure to communicate properly with our church. A letter may describe a member in good standing written to a church requesting that we would drop an individual's name because they are joining that church. Such a letter must be addressed to some particular church of like faith and sent by either the pastor or the church clerk. A letter may also inform an individual that they were removed from membership because of failure to communicate with us while being in broken fellowship or under discipline. Such a letter must be addressed to the individual and sent by either the pastor or the church clerk.

C. DISCIPLINE

*1. Since discipline is not harsh, inhuman and loveless, but divine; since a household without correction is a center or domestic anarchy; since church discipline is scriptural; and since a church without discipline is sickly and ineffectual in its ministry: Be it resolved that any member of this church who has been guilty of any of the following, and has failed to repent of the same shall be considered for disciplinary measures:

*Amended March 9, 1983

a. Scandalous Conduct

Sexual immorality, I Cor. 5:11

Greedy covetousness, I Cor. 5:11

Idolatry, I Cor. 5:11

Abusive speech, slanderer, railer, I Cor. 5:11

Drunkenness, Intoxication, I Cor. 5:11

Robbery, thievery, I Cor. 5:11

Laziness, refusal to work II, Thess. 3:6-15

b. False Doctrine Gal. 1:8-9; Titus 3:10, 11; Romans 16:17

c. Divisiveness, Irreconcilable Spirit, Reviler Matt. 18:15-18; 1 Cor. 5:11

2. All discipline enacted by the church must conform to the stand of God's Word as found in Matthew 18:15-18; II Thess. 3:8-15, and Galatians 6:1.

3. In case of personal differences between members of the church the board of deacons shall recommend that the parties endeavor to set differences in the manner of Matthew 18:15-18.

*4. The pastor and board of deacons shall constitute the discipline committee of the church, but in case of expulsion from membership action must be taken by the church. No member shall be expelled until every effort has been made, including, if physically possible, personal visits to reclaim them for Christ and the church. Upon the recommendation of the discipline committee, the church may order names of members dropped from the roll, whereupon they shall cease to be members of this church and corporation: by personal request of member (unless that member is being considered for disciplinary action),

by utter disregard of the church covenant pledge, or by continued unchristian conduct and refusal to repent of the same.

*Amended August 2, 1987

*5. All matters of discipline are in efforts of restoration and shall be carried out in the spirit of love. A person will never be excluded from membership for the offense alone, but only because he refuses to repent and show genuine fruit of change. If he responds to God's Word, he is to be forgiven, received and helped (Matt. 18:21-35; II Cor. 2).

*Amended March 9, 1983

D. Standing

A member shall be considered in good standing when he shall regularly attend church services and communion, contribute to the church properly in proportion to his ability, and demonstrate in his daily living the Christian way of life.

ARTICLE VI

ORDINANCES

A. Baptism

Those professing saving faith In Jesus Christ as personal Savior shall by the pastor or some person authorized by the church, be immersed in water with the scriptural teaching. Immersion shall be prerequisite to church membership.

B. The Lord's Supper

1. The Lord's Supper (Communion) shall normally be served to the assembled church by the pastor (or some person authorized by the church) and the deacons at the discretion of the pastor or deacons. Since it is the Lord's table none who are His shall be barred: but the pastor shall frequently state the Scriptural order which places baptism as preceding communion, and shall explain the meaning of the ordinance.

2. The church covenant shall be read by the assembled church at this service.

ARTICLE VII

ORGANIZATION

The officers of this church must be members of the church in good and regular standing for a period of one year unless otherwise indicated.

A. THE PASTOR

1. His Qualifications

a. He shall meet the qualifications according to I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

b. When it becomes necessary to call a pastor, the pulpit committee will without delay investigate a minister of the Gospel who is of good report, sound in doctrine, Biblical in separation, and Baptist by conviction, and invite him to supply the pulpit for a Sunday, meet with the board of deacons and state whether or not he is willing to be considered for the pastorate. Upon the recommendation of the pulpit committee a special business meeting shall be called by the deacons to consider a call for the prospective candidate. Two notices shall be given at regular church assemblies with not less than a week intervening between the two notices that a business meeting will be held for the purpose of calling a pastor.

c. A three-fourths (3/4) majority of the members present and voting is required to call a pastor.

d. To avoid confusion, only one prospective pastor shall be considered at one time.

e. If he accepts the call he shall become pastor and also a member of the church.

2. His tenure

a. He is called for an indeterminate period of time and shall continue as long as that relationship is mutually agreeable to both the pastor and the church.

b. Termination

The pastor may resign at any time and his duties be terminated thirty days from the date of his resignation or at another time mutually agreeable to both the pastor and the church.

c. Any difficulties arising from unsatisfactory service shall be investigated by the board of deacons. If it is considered by the deacons to be necessary, a special business meeting shall be called. The church shall consider their findings and decide regarding the members present and voting by secret ballot shall be required in dismissing a pastor. In such cases, his pastoral duties shall terminate immediately, and his salary shall cease ninety days from the date of the dismissal.

3. His duties

a. The pastors duties shall be in fulfillment of I Peter 5:1-4.

b. The pastor is ex-officio member of all boards and committees.

4. His Privileges

a. He may take an annual vacation of three (3) weeks not to exceed two (2) Sundays with full pay, The three (3) weeks may be taken at his own discretion. Other absences are to be approved by the board of deacons.

b. He may attend family camp for one (1) week. This shall not be considered as part of his vacation.

c. The pastor and family shall be sent by the church to the annual meeting of the GARBC conference and the State conference each year. Reasonable expenses will be paid by the church.

d. The pastor shall be granted two (2) weeks leave of absence each year for special meetings as God gives opportunity. In such absences, he is responsible to provide a pulpit supply

*5. His Assistant

As the need arises, the church shall make provision for an assistant to the pastor's ministry. His salary shall be approved by the church. The pastor and board of deacons shall interview and appoint the individual to fill this position. His duties, responsibilities, and tenure of office shall be arranged by the pastor and deacon board.

*Amended January 27, 1968

B. The Deacons (trustees)

1. Their qualifications

a. The deacons (trustees) shall meet New Testament standards given in I Timothy 3:8-15.

b. The deacons (trustees) are chosen by "by the whole multitude" (Acts 6:5); i.e., the congregation, and appointed "over this business" (Acts 6:3), in order that the spiritual mission of the church, "prayer and ministry of the Word" (Acts 6.4), may be kept preeminent.

2. Their election

The board of deacons shall consist of members of this church not less than 21 years of age; preferably married men.

*a. There shall be three (3) deacons for the first fifty (50) members, and two (2) additional deacons for each additional fifty (50) members until the membership reaches a total of one hundred fifty (150), at which time one (1) deacon will be added for each additional fifty (50) members.

*Amended January 25, 1978

*b. The term of office shall be for three years and so arranged as to expire alternately. No deacon may serve more than two terms in succession. After one year's absence, he may be reelected.

*Amended January 25, 1978

c. For election procedures, see Meetings and Elections Article XI

d. Vacancy(ies)

Vacancy(ies) occurring in the deacon board with an unexpired term of twelve months or more shall be filled by the same procedure as Article IX, A, 1-5. Vacancy(ies) occurring in subsidiary offices may be filled by majority vote of the church at any monthly business meeting.

3. Their duties

They shall prepare and distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper, assist in caring for the necessities of the needy, and aid the pastor in jealously guarding and fostering the spiritual life of the church.

4. Their Organization

The board shall organize itself annually as soon as possible after the annual election meeting and shall elect from among themselves the following officers:

a. Chairman of the board of deacons

b. Secretary of the board who shall keep a record of the transactions of all deacon board business meetings.

*c. Officers or legal trustees who in accord with our Articles of Incorporation shall sign all legal documents for and on behalf of the church as authorized by the church from time to time. They shall be three (3) in number. They shall elect from their number a chairman who will have general oversight of their work. They shall supervise the care of all buildings and property belonging to the church. The trustees shall not have any authority to purchase, sell, lease, give away, or dispose of in any manner church property to exceed \$500.00 in value. All actions are subject, upon demand, to the approval of the church. The trustees shall make a full report of their activities to the church at each annual meeting.

*Amended January 26, 2000

5. Their meetings

There shall be a stated monthly meeting of the deacon board. The election of officers from the board is to be held the first board meeting of the new fiscal year.

ARTICLE VIII

SUBSIDIARY OFFICERS

A. Their Qualifications

1. Must have been a member of the church for at least six (6) months,
2. Must be an example to others in consistent Christian living.

B. Their responsibilities

1. Clerk of the Church

It shall be the duty of the clerk to keep an exact record of all business meetings of the church to keep a complete register of the membership, to make out all letters of dismissal, and to conduct such correspondence as may be directed. All church records shall be turned over to the church at the end of his/her term.

*2. Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall keep a record of Individual giving and issue receipts (for income tax purposes) to each individual, Two individuals, approved by the pastor and deacons, shall count all contributions received by the church ushers. They shall make duplicate copies of this count to be retained as a permanent church record.

*Amended March 14, 1984

3. Church Treasurer

*a. The board of deacon-trustees shall appoint from the congregation a church treasurer each year. The board of deacon-trustees shall have the liberty to appoint a bookkeeper from the church membership to keep the books during the year. The treasurer will sign all checks.

*Amended March 14, 1984

*b. The treasurer shall keep an accurate record of all receipts and shall pay all bills when they are due as authorized by the church or deacon-trustees. He shall make all disbursements paid by check. He shall prepare and make a report to the church at the annual business meeting and all monthly meetings.

*Amended January 25, 1978

4. Church Moderator

The pastor shall serve as moderator of all business meetings with the exception of those pertaining to himself. In such cases, the chairman of the board of deacons shall moderate the meeting,

5. Superintendent of the Sunday School

a. Shall have general oversight of Sunday School programs (subject to the approval of the deacon board).

b. Shall with the pastor appoint the assistant superintendent, secretaries, all teachers, and department superintendents in Christian Education programs.

c. Shall with the assistance of the pastor and deacon board select the material to be used.

6. Sunday School Secretary

Shall keep a record of the Sunday School attendance, gather and record the offerings of the Sunday School, and see that the study material is ordered and distributed.

ARTICLE IX

STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Nomination Committee

1. Shall consist of the pastor and board of deacons.

2. Shall prepare a nomination (primary) ballot indicating the elected officers of the church, those who occupy each office, those whose terms expire, a list of the eligible, resident

members, and other pertinent information and instructions which are necessary to complete the nomination ballot.

3. Shall send the nominating ballot to those resident members of the church at least one month prior to the annual election meeting and instruct them to complete them within two weeks.

4. Shall collect the ballots, tabulate the results and seek the consent of leading nominees in preparing the election ballot. In cases where the same leading nominee shall be nominated for more than one office, the nomination committee shall seek the consent of the leading nominee as to which office he prefers. His name would then be put only once on the election ballot. This procedure will eliminate the possibility of one person holding more than one office during any given term. If an incumbent does not intend to allow his name to be nominated for re-election, he must make his intentions known to the nomination committee prior to the distribution of the nomination (primary) ballots,

5. Shall prepare an election ballot to be used at the election meeting, listing at least two leading nominees for each office.

B. Auditing Committee

1. Shall consist of two members of the church who have some knowledge of bookkeeping or accounting methods, who shall be elected annually by the board of deacons.

2. Shall see that the books of the church treasurer are audited or verified prior to the annual meeting of the church and shall present a report of its findings at the annual meeting.

C. Pulpit Committee

The board of deacons shall constitute the pulpit committee (Article VII, Sec. A, 2).

D. Discipline Committee

The pastor and board of deacons shall constitute the discipline committee (Article V, Sec. C, 4).

E. Other Standing Committees

As the need arises, other standing committees may be recommended by the board of deacons and ratified by the church at any monthly business meeting.

*F. Missionary Committee

1. The missionary committee shall consist of the pastor, who shall act as chairman, and five additional members of the congregation who shall be elected at the annual election meeting.

2. The term of office shall be for two years and so arranged as to expire alternately.

3. It shall be the duty of this committee to recommend missionary projects to the church for support. The committee shall recommend an annual missionary budget to the deacons for inclusion in the annual church budget.

*Amended January 26, 2000

*G. Budget Committee

1. The pastor, board of deacons, and church treasurer shall constitute the budget committee.
2. The deacon board shall meet with the pastor at least thirty (30) days prior to the annual business meeting to discuss pastor's support and the support of other salaried personnel.

*Amended January 26, 2000

ARTICLE X

FINANCES

- A. The fiscal year shall be from January 1 through the following December 31.
- B. Believing the scriptural method for supporting the church is through "tithes and offerings" (Mal. 3:8-10; I Cor. 16:2, Matt 23:23) which is the only proportionate way for every member to give their part, the selling of anything by an organization of the church for the purpose of raising money to support the work of the church shall be prohibited.
- C. No financial obligation shall be pieced upon the church, either as a mortgage, note, outstanding bill, or in any other form, unless money is in hand to meet the same, except as stated in Article VII, B, 4, c, or by corporate act of the church.

ARTICLE XI

MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS

A. Meeting for worship

1. The church shall meet each Sunday for public worship both morning and evening. Occasional changes may be made by vote of the church.
2. The mid-week service of Bible study and prayer shall be held on Wednesday evening. Necessary changes may be made by vote of the church.

B. Meeting for business

In the conduct of business. rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all cases to which they apply. In exception, a majority vote shall establish the rule. Routine business may be conducted at any regular meeting of the church.

*1. Monthly Business Meeting

The monthly business meeting shall be conducted on the second Wednesday of each month. Necessary changes may be made by vote of the church.

*Amended January 25, 1978

2. Monthly Board Meeting

There shall be a stated monthly business meeting of the official board. This meeting should precede the monthly business meeting.

3. Special Business Meeting

Special business meetings may be called by the official board at any time, providing public notice is given of the same on the Lord's Day preceding, except that of dismissing a pastor, which shall be given public announcement for two (2) preceding Sundays.

4. Annual Meetings

a. There shall be an annual election of officers on the second Wednesday of November (New terms of office officially begin January 1).

b. There shall be an annual business meeting of the church on last Wednesday in January.

C. Quorum

1. A quorum of 20% of the active resident membership, eighteen (18) years of age or over, shall be required for all business meetings, except where otherwise stated.

2. In incidental business meetings, the members present shall constitute a quorum.

D. Voting

It is understood that all matters shall be settled by a majority vote of members present, eighteen (18) years of age and older.

E. Order of Business

1. Reading and approval of minutes of previous meeting.

2. Clerk's report.

3. Treasurers report.

4. Report of deacons.

5. Report of trustees.

6. Report of Bible school superintendent.

7. Report of committees.

8. Election of board, officers, and standing committees.

9. Unfinished business.

10. New business.

11. Adjournment.

ARTICLE XII

MISSIONS

It shall be the policy of this church to support only missions, schools, and individuals who are principally engaged in evangelism and in hearty agreement with our Articles or Faith both in doctrine and practice.

ARTICLE XIII

MESSENGERS

The church shall, as far as possible, send messengers to meet with other church councils or association of the churches of like faith and order at such times when the church shall be represented. These messengers shall be vested with the power to vote or speak for the church at the meeting they attend.

ARTICLE XIV

USE OF CHURCH BUILDING

A. No secret society shall be permitted to hold services in the church. The burial of any person so associated may be held in the church if conducted by an approved minister.

B. No pastor, pulpit orator, or musician shall be permitted to preach from the pulpit of the church who denies the fundamentals of the faith once delivered unto the saints. Any visiting speaker must have the approval of the pastor and/or the board of deacons.

C. Any course of action by any organization of the Sunday School or church shall be subject to review by the advisory board and approval by the church.

ARTICLE XV

READING OF BY-LAWS

These by-laws shall be in the hands of the clerk at every regular business meeting. A copy of the covenant, articles of faith, and by-laws shall be presented to and studied by every prospective member.

ARTICLE XVI

MEMORIALS

Money or merchandise given to the church in memory of deceased members, relatives, or friends shall be received subject to the following rules:

- A. Items of merchandise given as memorials must be approved by the pastor and board of deacons before being received.
- B. Cash given as a memorial and specifically designated by the donor to be spent for the purchase of a designated item or Items must be approved as to suitability and desirability by the pastor and board of deacons before the money may be spent for their purchase.
- C. Whenever it becomes desirable to spend money that has been received as memorials and has not been designated by the donor as to its use, the following shall apply: A committee of three active members of the church shall be appointed to serve with the pastor and board of deacons in the selection and purchase of suitable and desirable items to be used in the church: and these items may be, if desired, appropriately labeled in memory of the person or persons In whose memory the money was given.

ARTICLE XVII

LICENSING AND ORDINATION

A. Licensing

- 1. When a man in this membership is called to the Christian ministry and desires to be licensed, he shall make his desire known to the board of deacons. if the deacon board is satisfied concerning his salvation, call to the ministry, and consistent Christian living, they shall recommend to the church that license be granted. The church may act upon this recommendation at any meeting of the church.
- 2. A license can be annulled or withdrawn at any time should the church in its judgment have sufficient reason for such action.

B. Ordination

- 1. When, in the judgment of the deacon board, a man in this membership is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of the deacon board to recommend to the church that a council, composed of a pastor and two messengers from churches of like faith and practice, be called for the purpose of examining the candidate. This examination council shall be called by church action.
- 2. The examination council shall thoroughly examine all applicants for ordination as to their call to the Christian ministry, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal belief and efficiency in Christian service. After hearing the recommendation the church may

proceed with the ordination at a future date as agreed upon by both the church and candidate.

3. The following shall not be ordained to the ministry by this church:

a. One who has not served six (6) months as pastor, assistant pastor, or in definite Christian work in such manner to convey reasonable evidence of God's call to the ministry.

b. One who does not conform to the qualifications of a pastor as set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

4. It shall be within the power of the deacon board to discipline, even to the revoking the ordination credentials of any minister ordained by this constitution, after an impartial trial conducted in the ministry of I Corinthians 13. The minister under trial shall have the privilege of appealing his case to the congregation within sixty (60) days after the decision of the board.

ARTICLE XVIII

AMENDMENTS

This constitution, with the exception of Article II and Article III, may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at any annual business meeting, or a called business meeting, providing that such proposed amendment has been clearly stated, submitted in writing to the church, and public announcement has been made for four consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting at which action is desired. Articles II and III may be amended only by a unanimous vote.

ARTICLE XIX

ARTICLES OF FAITH

I. Of The Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible as originally written was verbally inspired and the product of Spirit-controlled men, and therefore, has truth without any admixture of error for its matter. We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian union and the only supreme authority by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried (II Tim. 3:16,17; II Pet 1:19-21).

II. Of The True God

We believe there is one and only one living and true God, an infinite Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (Ex, 20:2,3; I Cor. 8:6; Rev. 4:11; 1 John. 5:7).

III. Of The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person with God the Father and God the Son, and is of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He

restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; that He bears witness to the truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the agent in the New Birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer (John 14:16,17; Matt. 28:19; Heb. 9:14; John 14:28; Luke 1:35; Gen. 1.1-3; John 16:8-11; Acts 5:30-32; John 3:5,6; Eph. 1:13,14; Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 11:16, Luke 24:49; Rom. 8:14; Rom. 8:16; Rom. 8:26,27).

IV. Of the Devil or Satan

We believe in the personality of Satan, that he is the unholy god of this age and the author of all the powers of darkness, and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire (Matt 4:1-3; II Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:10).

V. Of Creation

We accept the Genesis account of creation and believe that man came by direct creation of God and not by evolution. (Gen. 1 &2; Col. 1:16,17; John 1:3)

VI. Of the fall of man

We believe that man was created in innocence under the Law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not only by constraint, but of choice; and therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse (Gen. 1-6, 24; Rom. 5:19; Rom, 5:12; Rom, 3:10-19; Rom. 1:18; Rom. 1:32)

VII. Of the virgin birth

We believe that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner, born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can ever be born of woman, and that He is both the Son of God and God, the Son (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:4).

VIII. Of the atonement for sin

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace: through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins: that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust: Christ, the Lord, bearing our sin in His own body on the tree; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in Heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the most tender sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior (Eph. 2:8; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24; John 3:16; Matt. 18:11; Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14; Isa. 53:4-7; Rom. 3:25; John 4:10; I Cor. 15:3; II Cor. 5:21).

IX. Of grace in the new creation

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience

to the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life (John 3:3; II Cor. 5:17; John 5:1; John 3:6,7; Acts 16:30-33; II Pet. 1:4; Rom. 8:23; Eph. 2:1; II Cor. 5:19; Col. 2:13; and John 3:8).

X. Of Justification

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification:

A. That Justification includes the pardon of sin and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness;

B. That it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness imputed to us. (Acts 13:39; Isa. 53:11; Zech. 13:1; Rom. 8:1; Rom. 5:9; Rom. 5:1)

XI. Of faith and salvation

We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation (Acts 18:31).

XII. Of the local church

We believe that a local church is a congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel; and observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers are pastors and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties, are clearly defined in the Scriptures. We believe the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is Scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel; that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final (Acts 2:41,42; I Cor. 11:22, 23; Eph. 4:11; Acts 20:17-28; I Tim. 3:17; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23, 24; Acts 15:13-18).

XIII. Of baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life, that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation. We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He comes, and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination (Acts 8:26-39; John 3:23; Rom. 6:3-5; Matt. 3:16; Col. 2:12; 1 Cor. 11:23-28).

XIV. Of the security of the saints

We believe that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father in Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6; John 10:29,29; Rom. 8:36-39; Jude 1).

XV. Of the righteous and the wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous in His esteem: while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost (Mal. 3:18; Gen. 18:23; Rom. 6: 17,18; I John 5:19; Rom. 7:6; Rom. 6:23; Prov. 14:32; Luke 6:25; Mat. 25:34-41; John 8:21).

XVI. Of civil government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the Kings of the earth (Rom. 13:1-7; II Sam. 23:3; Ex.18:21,22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22 :21; Acts 5:20; Acts 4:19,20; Dan. 3.17,18).

XVII. Of the resurrection, personal, visible, premillennial return of Christ, and related events

A. We believe in the Bodily Resurrection (Matt. 28:6,1; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Cor. 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2-6).

B. The Ascension (Acts 1:9-11; Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; Rev.3:21;

Heb. 12:2).

C. The High Priesthood (Heb 8:6; I Tim 2:5; I John 2:1; Heb. 2:17; Heb. 5:9-10).

D. The Second Coming (John 14:3; Acts 1:1 1; I Thess. 4:16; James 5:3; Heb. 9:28).

E. The resurrection of the righteous dead (I Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 52).

F. The change of the living in Christ (I Cor. 15:51-53; I Thess. 4:13-18; Phil. 3:20, 21).

G. The Throne of David (Luke 1:32; Isa. 9:6-7; Acts 2:29,30).

H. The Millennial Reign (I Cor. 15:25; Isa. I I:4, 5; Psa. 72:8; Rev. 20:6, 14)