



BETHEL
BAPTIST CHURCH

Church Constitution

To the Praise of His Glory
Ephesians 1:12

1948 Temperance Street
Westville, Nova Scotia
B0K-2A0
(902) 396-1813

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Covenant Preamble

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinance, discipline, and doctrines; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to 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 also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from all things which are harmful to the body, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE I:

NAME:

The official and legal name of this organization shall be BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH, of Westville, Nova Scotia.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Church shall be:

- 1) To glorify God in the salvation of souls through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:8,9)
- 2) To edify believers through the regular teaching of the Word of God. (2 Timothy 3:16,17)
- 3) To provide regular services for public worship, prayer and praise. (Acts 2:42-47)
- 4) To promote a Christ-centered home and the proclamation of the Gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth. (Matthew 28:19,20)
- 5) To earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. (Jude 3)
- 6) To fellowship with other born again believers in the work of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 10:25)
- 7) The Bethel Baptist Church shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its members and any profits or other gains to the Church shall be used in promoting its objectives.

ARTICLE II:

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section 1: Concerning the Scriptures

We believe the Authorized King James Version of scripture has been preserved by God for the English speaking people and will be used from the pulpit of this Church. We believe that the Scriptures comprising 66 books of the Old and New Testaments as originally written were verbally inspired by the Spirit of God and therefore are wholly without error. We believe the Bible is the supreme revelation of God's will for men and is the only authority of faith and practice and the true basis of Christian union. (Psalm 12:6-7; II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20,21).

Section 2: Concerning the True God

We believe in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, manifesting Himself in three persons, The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory and executing distinct and harmonious offices in the great work of redemption. (Exodus 20:2,3; I Corinthians 8:6; I John 5:7).

Section 3: Concerning the Lord Jesus Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was conceived (in a supernatural manner) by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary; He is very God of very God, being "God manifest in the flesh". He lived a life of absolute sinlessness, and in His death He made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins, dying not a martyr's death, but as a voluntary substitute in the sinner's place. He rose again bodily from the dead on the third day and ascended bodily to the right hand of God in Heaven where He now sits as our great High Priest "ever living to make intercession for us"; we believe in His second coming and that His coming will be personal, visible, bodily, imminent and premillennial. (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Jude 14; Revelation 1:7; Revelation 22:20).

Section 4: Concerning the Holy Spirit

We believe in the absolute essential deity and personality of the Holy Spirit who convinces the unbeliever of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, who regenerates, sanctifies, illuminates, guides, comforts and indwells those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 14:16,17; John 16:8-11; Romans 8:15,16; Ephesians 1:13,14; John 14:26; II Corinthians 13:14; II Thessalonians 2:13).

Section 5: Concerning Man

We believe that man was divinely created in the image of God; that he sinned, becoming guilty before God, resulting in his total depravity, thereby incurring physical and spiritual death. (Genesis 1:27; Romans 3:10-18; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12-19; Isaiah 53:6).

Section 6: Concerning Salvation

We believe the Scripture teaches that the salvation of sinners is wholly of God's grace through the mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ; it is wholly apart from man's works, and is upon the sole condition of repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; that in order to be saved the sinner must be born again, being regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit and thus becoming a recipient of a new nature called the Divine nature. We believe that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe on Him is justification which includes pardon of sin and the imputing of divine righteousness and sanctification solely through faith in the Redeemer's shed blood; that having exercised personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the believer is completely justified and is in possession of salvation which is eternally secure. (Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5-7; II Peter 1:4; John 3:3-6; Acts 13:38,39; John 10:28,29).

Section 7: Concerning the Eternal State

We believe the Scriptures teach that all who through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ will spend eternity in full enjoyment of God's presence in a place called Heaven, and that those who through impenitence and rejection of Jesus Christ as Saviour refuse to accept God's offer of mercy and salvation will spend eternity in everlasting punishment in a place the Bible calls Hell, the lake of fire. (John 14:2; II Corinthians 5:6-8; Matthew 25:41,46; Revelation 20:12-15; Revelation 21:8).

Section 8: Concerning Satan

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is a personal devil who is "the god of this age; the prince of the power of the air", who is full of all subtlety and mischief, who seeks continually to

frustrate the purpose of God and to ensnare the sons of men. (Ephesians 2:2; Revelation 12:9; II Corinthians 4:4; II Corinthians 11:13,15).

Section 9: Concerning the Local Church

We believe that a church is a company of born again immersed believers called out from the world, separated unto the Lord Jesus Christ, voluntarily associated for the ministry of the Word, the mutual edification of its members, the propagation of the faith and the observance of the ordinances. We believe the local church is a sovereign independent body, exercising divinely awarded gifts, precepts and privileges under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Great Head of the Church. We believe that its officers are Pastors and Deacons. (Acts 2:41,42,47; I Corinthians 11:2).

Section 10: Concerning the Ordinances

We believe that there are only two ordinances for the Church observed in the New Testament in the following order:

1. Baptism - which is the immersion of the believer in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, whereby he obeys Christ's command and sets forth his identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. (Matthew 28:19,20; John 3:23; Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-5).
2. The Lord's Supper - which is the memorial wherein the believer partakes of the two elements, bread and wine (as defined Biblically, "fruit of the vine" non-fermented), which symbolize the Lord's body and shed blood, proclaiming His death until He comes. (Matthew 26:26-29; I Corinthians 11:23-28).

Section 11: Concerning Separation

We believe in Ecclesiastical separation of the Church from combined meetings with any and all organizations or groups who deny the Inspiration of the Scriptures or the Deity of Jesus Christ (Romans 16:17,18; II Corinthians 6:14-17; II Thessalonians 3:6; Ephesians 5:11; Titus 3:11; II John 9-11). We believe the Scriptures clearly teach non-conformity to the world for every believer, that it is clearly commanded of God to all believers to live lives of separation from worldly, sinful and doubtful practices and associations, unto Christ. (Romans 12:1,2; I John 2:15-17; Colossians 3:17; I Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:1-3).

Section 12: Concerning Church and State

We believe in the entire separation of Church and State. (Matthew 22:21).

Section 13: Concerning Religious Liberty

We believe in religious liberty, that every man has the right to practice and propagate his beliefs.

Section 14: Concerning the Lord's Day

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day and that, in a special sense, it is the divinely appointed day for worship and spiritual exercise. (Acts 20:7; Mark 16:9; John 20:1,19; I Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10).

Section 15: Concerning Christian Stewardship

We believe that the stewardship of the believer consists of time, talent and tithe. We believe in personal, voluntary, regular, systematic and proportionate giving to the support of the local church and the spread of the gospel to the regions beyond. This is best accomplished as the Scriptures teach by the tithing of our income and the presenting of an offering unto the Lord. (Genesis 14:20; Numbers 18:25-29; Proverbs 3:9; Malachi 3:8,10; Matthew 6:3; Matthew 23:23; I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 9:6-15; Hebrews 7:1,2,6,9).

Section 16: Concerning Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of society, that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honoured and obeyed, except only in the things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only Lord of the conscience and Prince of the kings of the earth. (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-5; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13-17; Acts 5:29).

ARTICLE III

RECEPTION OF MEMBERS:

Section 1: Admission

1. Evidence of having received the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and having been baptized by immersion and having previously been interviewed by the Pastor and Board of Deacons.

2. By letter from another Baptist Church, or Church of like precious faith and having previously been interviewed by the Pastor and Board of Deacons.
3. By Christian experience and having previously been interviewed by the Pastor and Board of Deacons.
4. The Church shall vote on each name separately, a majority vote of the Church members present at any business meeting of the Church being necessary to elect to membership.

Section 2: Discipline

When and if any member of the Church shall be guilty of such conduct that would bring reproach upon the Name of our Lord and the testimony of His cause, as upheld by the Church (I Corinthians 5:11; II Thessalonians 3:6,14-15), it shall be the responsibility of the Pastor and Deacons to deal with the matter according to biblical principles. If the matter cannot be settled satisfactorily, it shall be submitted to the Church. All difficulties between members shall be dealt with according to Matthew 18:15-17; and heresy, according to Titus 3:10,11. “Reproach” shall be understood with such Scripture as Galatians 5:17-24.

Section 3: Absenteeism

- A) In the light of the Scriptures (Acts 2:41; Hebrews 10:23-25), continued absence for three months from regular services of the Church by a resident member shall be deemed evidence of lack of interest. During this time he shall be visited by the Deacons and Pastor. If habitual absence continues for one more month there will be a visit from the Pastor. Continuing habitual absenteeism, for a total of five months, he shall be placed on the inactive membership list by the Church Clerk upon instruction from the Deacons. As inactive members find they cannot be regularly present at the spiritual and business meetings of the Church, it follows, in all honesty before God (Philippians 4:8) that they are ineligible to vote. Only active members shall be eligible to vote.
- B) Item “A” of this Section 2 shall not apply to members whose prolonged absence is caused by employment, sickness, infirmity, and their kind.
- C) Inactive members may be reinstated under Article 3, Section I, #3.

Section 4: Voting

- A) In the best interest of the Church it shall be considered wise that the privilege of voting be withheld from junior members until they reach the age of sixteen (16) years.
- B) If deemed necessary by the Board of Deacons, the Church Clerk shall be instructed to correspond with all non-resident members, with the exception of Missionaries and Bible school students, two months before the annual meeting asking if they still desire

their names on the Church roll. Non-resident members shall not be entitled to vote in Church business meetings.

Section 5: Termination

Membership in the Church shall be terminated by the following:

- 1) By death.
- 2) By letter of recommendation. Members in good and regular standing may at their request receive a “letter of recommendation” (transfer) to any other Baptist Church of like principles and spirit.
- 3) By letter of dismissal. A member desiring to join a Church other than Baptist, or any member shall at his own request, be granted a “letter of dismissal”. No “open letter” will be granted. (An “open letter” is defined as a Church letter given personally to the member requesting it.)
- 4) By discipline (See 2).

Section 6: Duties

- A) All members of the Church shall be required to conduct themselves in accordance with the doctrines and practices of this Church. They shall attend the services regularly and shall contribute regularly to the financial support of the Church “as God hath prospered.”
- B) Members of the Church shall not hold dual membership in any other church, denomination, sect or cult in order that we might work together in the unity of the Spirit and be undivided in interest for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 7: Holding Office

A member in good standing in the Church shall be eligible for election to office. No person shall be nominated for any office or committee in the Church unless he or she is present or signifies by word to the nominating committee or in writing his or her willingness to accept such office. To hold office a member must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age.

ARTICLE IV

GOVERNMENT

Section 1: Autonomous

The government of this Church is vested in its membership, is self governing and facilitated through its Scriptural offices and as provided in its Constitution. The final authority rests

with the corporate action of the congregation. It is independent in its polity and shall not be under the control of any outside body. Its relation to other churches of like precious faith or convention of churches shall be for the purpose of fellowship, and in whatever way the Church deems to co-operate by corporate act.

Section 2: Offices

1. Pastor (Ephesians 4:11)
2. Board of Deacons (I Timothy 3:8)

Assistants to these offices shall be Trustee, Clerk, Treasurer, and Superintendent of Christian Education, to facilitate the work of the ministry.

No person shall be deemed a bonafide officer who does not gain and maintain a 75% vote of confidence.

Section 3: Committees

The following standing committees and assistants shall be elected annually:

1. Trustee
2. Clerk
3. Treasurer
4. Superintendent of Christian Education
5. Christian Education
6. Flower
7. Music Coordinator
8. Usher
9. Food
10. Nursery
11. Nominating
12. Other committees may be elected from time to time as found necessary for the proper carrying out of the work of the Church.

Section 4: Pastor

1. Calling of the Pastor.

- a) No minister shall be deemed invited to be Pastor of this Church unless he can, gladly and without mental reservation, affirm the doctrinal basis of this Church as set forth in Article II, Statement of Faith of the Church Constitution. Any minister under consideration for the pastorate of this Church shall be clearly informed of such doctrinal position.
- b) Only one candidate shall be presented to the Church and voted upon at a time.
- c) He shall be voted upon at a Business Meeting of the Church, public notice of such action having been given by announcement from the pulpit and bulletin for two consecutive Sundays preceding the date of such a meeting. A three-quarters vote or 75% vote of qualified voters present shall be necessary for his calling.
- d) The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite term unless specifically stated otherwise in the agreement.
- e) He shall become a member of the Church as soon as possible after occupying the pulpit.

2. Dismissal of Pastor.

- a) The Pastor shall give the Church a notice of writing not to exceed sixty days and not less than thirty days, of his intention to discontinue his position as Pastor.
- b) If at anytime the personal belief, preaching or teaching or manner of life of the Pastor shall not be in full accord with the doctrinal statement of this Church, his service as Pastor shall be terminated. (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
- c) The Church may by a two-thirds vote of the qualified voters present at a regularly called business meeting declare the pulpit vacant on the basis of (#2 Dismissal of Pastor) provided a written notice of not less than thirty days from the time this action is taken be given to the Pastor occupying the pulpit to vacate the same. Such a meeting for dismissing a Pastor shall be given public announcement for the two preceding Sundays.

3. Duties of the Pastor

The Pastor shall have the general oversight of the spiritual life, regular services and ministration of the ordinances of the Church, shall be responsible to preach the Word regularly at the Church, look after the spiritual welfare of the members and perform the various other duties pertaining to his welfare of his office as Pastor as indicated in the Scriptures. He shall be ex-officio member of all boards or committee meetings connected with the Church, or any of its affiliated organizations.

4. Responsibility of Church toward Pastor

The Church shall recognize the Pastor as a servant of God, acknowledging his office in the Church in its Scriptural authority, be willing to submit to his leadership as the Lord's under

shepherd of the sheep, provide for his physical needs and “to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake”. (I Thessalonians 5:12, 13; Hebrews 13:17; I Peter 5:1-4).

The Pastor shall be entitled to a vacation annually.

Section 5: Deacons

The Board of Deacons shall consist of up to ten members, elected for a one year period.

Duties of Deacons:

1. Measure up to the qualifications for this office as set forth in the Scriptures. (I Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-3).
2. Assist and co-operate with the Pastor in spiritual supervision of the Church.
3. Assist the Pastor at the Lord’s Table.
4. Assist the Pastor in the administration of the ordinance of baptism and to be present to assist the candidates for baptism.
5. Examine with the Pastor all candidates for church membership.
6. Visit the sick and those needing spiritual help and to seek out such members as need financial assistance.
7. The Deacons shall elect from their number a Chairman whose duties shall be to call and arrange for regular Deacons meetings, notifying all members of the same, make necessary preparation for the Lord’s Table and baptism and in the absence of the Pastor from the field give the necessary spiritual oversight required until the Pastor returns.
8. The Deacons shall also elect from their number a Secretary whose duties shall be to keep accurate minutes of all meetings, bring all recommendations from the Board of Deacons to the Church business meeting, inform the Church Treasurer of any financial arrangements for visiting speakers and arrange accommodation for visiting speakers.
9. In the event of a vacancy in the pastoral office, they shall act as the pulpit committee in co-operation with the Church membership. It shall have authority to select and recommend to the Church the names of suitable candidates for the office of Pastor.
10. The Deacons shall serve as the Missionary committee. Responsibilities outlined in Article VII.

Section 6: Church Clerk

The duties of the Clerk shall be:

1. To keep correct and permanent records of all the transactions of the Church done in business meetings.

2. To sign all letters of dismissal.
3. To maintain a register of all members of the Church, both resident and non-resident.
4. To take charge of all Church records.
5. The Church Clerk shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be determined by the Board of Deacons.

In the event of his/her absence from any Church business meeting the Assistant Church Clerk shall take minutes of the meeting and give such minutes to the Church Clerk for permanent recording.

Section 7: Church Treasurer

The Treasurer shall:

1. Collect and hold all incoming funds and have the care and custody of all funds and securities of the Church.
2. Keep full and accurate account of all receipts and disbursements of the Church in proper books of account and deposit all moneys or other available effects in the name and to the credit of the Church in such bank or banks or in such depository or depositories as may from time to time be designated by the Church.
3. Prepare an Annual Report and statement showing receipts and disbursements.
4. Disburse the funds of the Church, taking proper vouchers therefore, and render to the Board of Deacons at their meeting thereof, or whenever it is required at Church business meetings an account of all transactions as Treasurer and of the financial position of the Church.
5. Perform such other duties as may from time to time be determined by the Church.
6. Two counters shall assist the Treasurer in counting the offering after each service, and shall be appointed monthly by the Board of Deacons.

In the event that the Treasurer is absent the Assistant Treasurer shall handle all moneys and present an accounting to the Treasurer on his return.

Section 8: Chairman of Christian Education

The Superintendent shall be the Chief Administrative Officer of the Bible School with the responsibility of appointing all necessary teachers subject to ratification of the Pastor and Board of Deacons. At all times the Superintendent shall be subject to the will of the Church. He shall work in full co-operation with the Pastor and will be responsible for the calling of regular teachers meetings, the supervision and arranging of classes, the arranging of special

programs and the general promotion of the Bible School, which includes but is not limited to Sunday School and Vacation Bible School.

An assistant shall assume these responsibilities in the absence of the Superintendent, and be a general helper to the Superintendent.

Section 9: The Nominating Committee

The nominating committee shall consist of five members, at least two of which must be Deacons. The duties shall be to submit a suggested slate of officers and standing committees for the new year. After procuring consent of the nominee, the committee shall post its list of nominees on the bulletin board for at least two Sundays before the annual meeting. Any member of the Church wishing to submit the name of other nominees may do so during this period, if such nominee has signified his or her willingness to act. Such individually submitted names shall be posted on the list provided, along with the name of the person making the recommendation.

Section 10: Other Committees

Other committees shall be appointed or elected by the Church when and as they are deemed necessary.

1. Flower Committee: shall consist of as many as shall be deemed necessary to see that the Church is properly provided with flowers or the like on the Lord's day.
2. Music Committee: shall consist of a music coordinator whose duty shall be to make provision for the special music of the Church. He may seek help as he deems necessary.
3. Ushers Committee: shall consist of the Chairman and committee of up to seven. It shall be the duty of the Ushers to greet all strangers and visitors at the door of the Church, and see that they are properly seated. They shall assist in the service of the Church by receiving the offering, and in such ways and means as will add to the comfort of all those who attend.
4. Fellowship Committee (Dining room and food): shall consist of at least three members. They shall plan and delegate all matters pertaining to fellowship meetings involving kitchen responsibilities.
5. Trustees: three to ten men may be elected, who along with the Deacons and Pastor shall serve as a council overseeing the ministry, handling normal affairs. They shall be responsible for proper care and maintenance of the Church and parsonage property including furnishings belonging to the Church.

The Board shall not have any authority to sell, lease, give away, or dispose of in any manner, Church property, without the express order of the corporate body of members. All irregular financial recommendations must be approved by the membership. (Irregular being defined as apart from budgeted items). In event of an emergency, the Board may act to remedy the situation with the allocation of funds necessary. The combined council of Deacons and Trustees shall draw up and recommend a yearly proposal in the budget for the Pastor's salary.

Any real properties gained or purchased by the Bethel Baptist Church shall be held by the Trustees in the name of the Church.

ARTICLE V

SERVICES AND BUSINESS MEETINGS

Section 1: Worship

1. Public services shall be held statedly on the Lord's Day, Sunday. They shall be given to the preaching and promotion of the Gospel and honoring Christ.

2. A mid-week Prayer Meeting shall be held each week.
3. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday of each month, unless circumstances dictate otherwise.

Section 2: Church Business

The regular Annual Business Meeting shall be held before the end of February. The purpose of this meeting shall be for the election of officers and committees, for the receiving of annual reports, and any scheduled Church business. Any business items must be submitted to the Pastor, or in his absence to the Chairman of the Deacon board, prior to the meeting. Special meetings of the Church may be called by the Pastor, Deacons, or any twelve adult members of the Church. Such special meetings must be publicly announced from the pulpit during a regular Sunday morning worship service at least three days prior to the meeting.

One-third of resident active voting membership shall consist of a quorum.

ARTICLE VI

ORDINATION

Upon recommendation by the Board of Deacons, the Church may vote to call a council to consider the propriety of ordaining to the full work of the Gospel ministry any member of this Church. A three-fourths vote of those present at any regularly called meeting shall be required.

ARTICLE VII

MISSIONARY POLICY

Section 1: Candidate

The personal belief of any Missionary under consideration for support must be in conformity with the general doctrinal position of this Church.

Section 2: Mission Board

The mission board under which the Missionary candidate is affiliated must conform to the general doctrinal position of this Church.

Section 3: Communication

All Missionaries or Missions supported by the Church shall support the home-front by reporting their activities to the Church at least once every six months.

Section 4: Support

Any Missionary on furlough shall be supported by the Church for a period of up to twelve months, after which time their support shall be reviewed for continuation or cessation, pursuant to decision of Church Board.

ARTICLE VIII

AMENDMENTS

Section 1:

Article II Statement of Faith sections 1-16 of this Constitution may **not** be amended, except by a 100% vote of the Deacons Board, and then recommended to the Church, where a 75% agreement is necessary for passage. Guidelines Article V Section 2.

Section 2:

The By-laws of this Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of those present at any regular business meeting or at a special meeting regularly called, provided that notice of the proposed amendment shall have been given at the regular services on the two Sundays immediately preceding said meeting. Guidelines Article V Section 2.

Section 3:

Upon adoption of this Constitution and By-Laws all previous Constitutions and disagreeing regulations become null and void.

