



CONSTITUTION

of

BIBLE FELLOWSHIP ASSEMBLY

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**CONSTITUTION
OF
BIBLE FELLOWSHIP ASSEMBLY**

1. NAME

This body shall be known as **Bible Fellowship Assembly**. It will be further referred to in the constitution and by-laws as the “Church”. The church office is presently located at 756 Fifth Line, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. The Church shall have the full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is to glorify God by obeying the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). The process is designed to produce disciples of Jesus Christ which involves at least the following four categories:

1. Worship - (Celebrating) “to love God with all your heart...” (Mt 22:36-40)
2. Ministry – (Caring) “Love your neighbour as yourself...” (Mt 22:36-40)
3. Evangelism – (Cultivating) “Go...and make disciples...” (Mt 28:18-20)
4. Discipleship – (Communicating) “...teach them to observe...” (Mt 28:18-20)

3. STATEMENT OF FAITH & DOCTRINE (adopted from the Associated Gospel Churches)

The Scriptures

The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is the complete Word of God. As originally given, it is verbally inspired, without error, and entirely trustworthy. The Bible constitutes supreme authority in all matters of faith, teaching, and behavior. The Bible has Jesus Christ as its focus and fulfillment.

2 Peter 1:16-21, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Luke 24:27, Matthew 5:17-18

God

God is the Creator and Sovereign Lord of all. The Lord our God is one God who eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three have the same perfect nature and attributes. Each Person of the Godhead is worthy of the same worship, confidence, and obedience.

Genesis 1, Psalm 8, Psalm 2, Romans 8:28-30, Deuteronomy 6:4, Matt. 28:19-20

- **The Father**– God the Father loves the world. He sent His Son into the world to save sinners. He raised Jesus from the dead, exalted Him – putting all things under his power -- and together with Him has sent the Holy Spirit.

Luke 3:22, John 3:16, 1 John 4:14, 1 Peter 1:21, Philippians 2:9-11, John 14:26

- **The Son**– God the Son became God incarnate as Jesus the Messiah. Jesus is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and lived a sinless life. He was crucified, raised bodily from the dead, and ascended into heaven where He reigns as King and serves as our High Priest and Advocate.

He will return as King of kings and Lord of lords to set up His earthly Kingdom.

John 1:1, John 1:14, Matthew 1:22-23, Isaiah 7:14, 2 Corinthians 5:21,
1 Corinthians 15: 3-4 Hebrews 1:3, Hebrews 7:25, Revelation 22:12-13

- **The Holy Spirit**– God the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ in all that He does. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. At the moment of salvation He regenerates, baptizes, indwells, gifts and empowers for Christ-like living and service.

John 16:8-15, Titus 3:5-6, 1 Corinthians 12:11,13, Romans 8:9-14, Galatians 5:22-25

Angels

God created angels for His glory and service. Some rebelled under the leadership of their fellow angel, Satan, and are opposed to God and His purposes. Though Satan is still active he has been defeated by the Lord Jesus Christ and will be committed forever to the lake of fire with all the fallen angels.

Hebrews 1:14, Jude 6, Hebrews 2:14-15, Revelation 20:10; Ephesians 6:12

Mankind

Human beings are created in the image of God. The first humans, Adam and Eve, were disobedient to the will of God with the consequence that every aspect of their human nature became sinful and corrupt. Thus, being spiritually dead, they became subject to physical death and the power of Satan. The image of God is distorted in all humanity, with the exception of Jesus, as we inherit a sinful nature at conception. Therefore we are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God and under His condemnation.

Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:16-17, Genesis 3:6, Ephesians 2:1-3, Romans 3:9-10,
Psalms 51:5, John 3:36; Romans 5:12-14

Redemption/Salvation

Redemption is accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was made to be sin and died in our place as an acceptable sacrifice to God. His atoning death is sufficient for all and effective for every person who repents and believes in Him, resulting in a reconciled relationship with God.

Salvation is available by grace through faith. This salvation is not our own doing. It is the gift of God.

Salvation includes being declared righteous by God [justification], being transformed into the likeness of Christ [sanctification], and being fully restored to the image of God [glorification]. This Salvation which includes our new birth and eternal inheritance is kept by God's power. It is therefore impossible for the saved to lose their salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 5:6-10, Galatians 3:13, 1 Peter 1:18-19, 1 Peter 2:24,
2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 5:1, John 17:17-19, 1 John 3:2, John 5:24, John 10:27-30,
Romans 8:28-39, 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 Timothy 4:10

The Church

The Church consists of all the redeemed who are united by the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ, of which Jesus is the Head. Local assemblies of believers are visible representations of the Church that gather regularly for the purpose of worship, which includes instruction in the Word, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer.

The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances: Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Though not the means of salvation, these ordinances testify of the gospel.

The Church has been entrusted with the task of global discipleship as found in the Great Commission.

Matthew 16:17-18, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Acts 2:42
1 Corinthians 11:23-28, Luke 22:19-20, Romans 6:3, Matthew 28:19-20

End Times

At a time known only to God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ will return bodily and in glory, receive His own, and establish His earthly thousand year reign.

God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world.

The unsaved will be cast into the lake of fire to suffer eternal conscious punishment. The saved of all ages will be forever with the Lord.

God will rule over His Kingdom in the new heaven and the new earth for all eternity.

Matthew 24:36, Acts 1:7, Mark 13:26, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, John 14:1-3, Revelation 20:1-15,
Revelation 14:11, 1 Corinthians 15:50-54, Revelation 21:1 Revelation 22:1-5

4. COVENANT OF MEMBERSHIP

We will:

- Confess Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior in the presence of all. ¹
- Walk together in Christian love and seek to help and encourage our another. ²
- Endeavor to first settle all private offenses without making the matter a public issue as Christ taught. ³
- See to lead people to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, through personal example and spoken word. ⁴
- Agree to pursue godliness and walk according to God's Word, our ultimate authority and promote spiritual growth in ourselves, our families, and our church. ⁵
- Faithfully gather for worship, prayer, Lord's Supper, and fellowship. ⁶
- Cheerfully and regularly support the mission of our church through prayer, serving and finances. ⁷
- Strive to live authentic Christian lives, abstaining from any conduct that would bring reproach upon the name of Christ or harm the testimony of His people as fellow heirs of His mercy and grace. ⁸
- Seek to do good to all people, especially those of the household of faith. ⁹

Notes:

1. Romans 10:9,10
2. John 13:35; Romans 12:9,10; 1 John 4:20
3. Matthew 18:15-17
4. Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8
5. Acts 17:11; 1 Peter 2:2; II Timothy 2:15
6. Acts 2:42; Hebrew 10:25
7. 11 Corinthians 9:7; Ephesians 6:18,19; Colossians 4:3; Ephesians 4:11
8. Romans 14:15-21; Philippians 1:27; 1 Peter 1:15
9. Galatians 6:10; Acts 2:44,45

5. **GOVERNMENT**

The government shall be vested in the body of believers constituting the membership of the Church, exercised at regular or special meetings, or through officers appointed, or other duly constituted agencies, and according to this Constitution as amended from time to time.

6. **AFFILIATION**

The Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denomination control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches, the Church voluntarily affiliates with the Associated Gospel Churches of Canada.

7. **MEMBERSHIP**

- a. For the scriptural definition of the Local Church, hereinafter called 'the Church', refer to the Statement of Faith.
- b. Membership Committee: The Membership Committee shall consist of the pastor and elders.
- c. Membership List: The Church will maintain a list of members. The membership list shall be reviewed annually by the Membership Committee.
- d. Qualifications for Membership: Persons, aged 16 or older, desiring to unite with this congregation upon profession of their faith shall be examined by the Membership Committee as to their:
 - i. Christian experience,
 - ii. the basis of their salvation,
 - iii. and to their being in basic agreement with the statement of faith and covenant of membership.

Those with letters of recommendation from other evangelical churches shall present them in person to the Committee. Applicants whose examination is satisfactory will be recommended to the Church for membership.

- e. Acceptance and Recognition of Membership: Names of those persons recommended by the Committee for acceptance shall be posted in the bulletin. If no objection has been lodged with the Membership Committee, such applicants shall be received publicly into the membership of the Church.

All objections shall be referred to and dealt with by the Membership Committee.

- f. Termination of Membership: A member's name may be deleted from the membership list if any of the following conditions occur:
 - i. They move to another area and therefore are transferred by letter of recommendation.
 - ii. They are called home to heaven.
 - iii. They withdraw voluntarily.
 - iv. They are asked to withdraw as a matter of discipline, for conduct inconsistent with the articles of this constitution. Cf. I Corinthians 5:11-13.
 - v. They are absent from the regular services for a period of one year without giving satisfactory reason for such absence.
- g. Rights of Membership: Every member shall have the right to participate in, and vote on, the following activities of the church:
 - i. The annual budget
 - ii. The disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the Church.
 - iii. The merger or dissolution of the Church.
 - iv. Acquisition of property.
 - v. Amendments to the Constitution and the Bylaws of the Church.
- h. Required Membership: Membership is required for officers of the Church, committee chairs, Sunday school superintendent and teachers, and leader of any of the Church's ministries.

8. ADHERENTS

Persons who regularly attend the services of the Church, but who are not members, shall be considered adherents. Adherents do not have the right to vote on any business arising at any of the regular or special meetings of the membership, .

9. BUSINESS MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERSHIP

- a. Annual Meeting: The annual meeting of the membership to receive and adopt the annual report, the Church budget, the election of officers, and the transaction of general business shall be held in the month of January each year.
- b. Periodic and Special Meetings Called by Leadership: Periodic and Special meetings of the membership may be called by the pastor or by the Board of Management and shall be duly constituted.

- c. Special Meetings Called by Membership: Special meetings may be called by the membership if 15% of the membership is in agreement with such a meeting and shall be duly constituted.
- d. Voting/Approving at Meetings: Only items identified in the notification can be voted upon by the membership at a business meeting. A vote of at least two-thirds is required to carry an item, unless otherwise noted elsewhere in this constitution.
- e. Notification of Meetings: Notification of members for business meetings may be given by any one of the following methods:
 - i. Oral announcement to the congregation on each of the two preceding Sundays.
 - ii. Distribution of written material to the congregation in attendance on each of the two preceding Sundays.
 - iii. By first-class letter to all of the members.
- f. Quorum: A quorum shall consist of those members present and voting. ¹

10. THE CREDENTIALLED PASTORAL TEAM²

- a. The Lead Pastor shall be chosen by at least a two-thirds vote of the membership present at a meeting duly called for the purpose and shall be a person approved and accepted as a Pastor by the Associated Gospel Churches' Doctrine and Credentials Committee. In addition to, or in conjunction with, the preceding AGC requirements the pastor shall also illustrate the qualities of an elder as outlined by the scriptures (Titus 1:5-9; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:1-4) and as such shall be considered to hold the office of an elder in the church.

The lead pastor is vested with the oversight of the pastoral team.

- b. Any other paid pastoral team members (associate, youth, CE directors, etc.) shall be chosen by at least a two-thirds vote of the membership present at a meeting duly called for the purpose and shall be a person approved and accepted by the Associated Gospel Churches' Doctrine and Credentials Committee (AGC). Those who are also ordained shall be considered to hold the office of an elder in the church. Other staff, though it is not a requirement, can hold the office of deacon or elder as defined under the respective offices.
- c. Pastors and pastoral team members must give a minimum of 30 days notice of resignation. In the case of dismissal for cause, at least a two-thirds vote of the membership is required at a duly constituted meeting called for that purpose.

11. CHURCH OFFICERS

The officers of the Church shall be the following:

- a. The Elders shall not be less than three in number, one of whom is the Lead Pastor. They shall constitute the Elders Board, having the spiritual oversight of the work and

ministry of the congregation. They shall assist in the ordinances of the church and perform such other spiritual offices as the Word assigns.

As the spiritual leaders of the local church, elders must be men who are desirous of the office of elder (I Tim., 3:1), who, by their lives and service to others, illustrate the qualities required by the Scriptures (Titus 1:5-9; I Tim. 3:1-7; I Peter 5:1-4); and who have the availability to accomplish the defined responsibilities.

As a leader among leaders the Lead Pastor shall have the gifts and experience deemed necessary to enable him to give such leadership.

- b. **The Deacons** shall not be less than 3 in number. They shall be responsible for the conduct of all administrative business of the church and have general oversight and management of the church properties. Deacons shall give oversight to practical needs within the membership (e.g. financial or practical assistance, transportation, etc. – in the spirit of Acts 6:1-3).

The qualifications for this ministry shall be those found in Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:8-13. This office may be filled by men or women (see Rom. 16:1).

- c. **The Treasurer** shall be responsible for, and keep an accurate account of the receiving, recording, banking and disbursing of the regular funds of the congregation and shall prepare monthly, quarterly and year-end statements for the Board of Management. He/she shall supply the auditor with such records as may be required when auditing the church books.
- d. **The Trustees** shall not be less than two in number. Trustees shall remain in office until such time as they resign, decease, or are dismissed by the church. They shall hold the church property in trust for the church, and shall sign legal documents on behalf of the church as the assembly may direct. They shall be responsible for the safe-keeping of all legal and valuable items of the church.
- e. **The Clerk** shall keep a proper record of all meetings of the membership and the Board of Management, conduct the correspondence and keep the custody of all papers and documents of the congregation. He/she shall keep an accurate register of all members of the church, which shall include the date of actual recognition.
- g. **The Lead Pastor** (see Articles 11a, 12(1) and 13a)
- h. **Board of Management Member:**

12. **SELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- 1 Elders of the Church will be nominated by the current elders. Elders, aside from the ordained staff, are to be affirmed annually by the congregation at the annual meeting of the membership. The affirmation process shall be as follows:
 - a A list of the nominations shall be posted in three conspicuous places in and about the place of worship at least two Sundays before the annual meeting.

- b The ballot shall be prepared in such a manner that each nominee is listed and can be voted upon individually.
 - c A vote of at least two-thirds of the members in attendance and voting at the annual meeting is required to be an elder.
- 2 Deacons of the Church shall be affirmed annually at the annual meeting of the membership, having been first nominated, in the manner following:
- a The Nominating Committee shall consist of three or four members, one of whom will be an elder (excluding the pastor). The elder shall be selected by the elders and the remaining members shall volunteer from the membership at the congregational meeting immediately preceding the annual meeting, or after a regular church service not less than one month before the annual meeting.
 - b A list of the nominations made by this committee shall be posted in three conspicuous places in and about the place of worship at least two Sundays before the annual meeting.
 - c After the list is posted, further nominations may be made in writing. Each such nomination must be signed by three members in good standing and left with the Chairman of the Committee not later than seven days prior to the annual meeting. If the persons so nominated are found to be eligible, their names shall be added by the Nominating Committee to the nominations already posted.
 - d The ballot shall be prepared in such a manner that each nominee is listed and can be voted upon individually.
 - e A vote of at least two-thirds of the members in attendance and voting at the annual meeting is required to be an elder or deacon.
- 3 The Board of Management, Treasurer, Clerk, and Trustees shall be appointed by the Elders and Deacons after their election and before the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Management.

13. BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

- a. The Board of Management of the Church shall be made up of the following officers: The Lead Pastor, a minimum of 2 other Elders, a minimum of 3 Deacons, and the Clerk; with the maximum number on the Board determined by the Elders³. They will elect a chairman at their first meeting of the year from amongst the elders sitting on the Board (excluding the Lead Pastor or other paid staff).

Members of the pastoral staff, committee chairs, treasurer, elders, deacons, and Board invited guests who are not Board members may be asked to attend the Board's meetings ex officio (that is without official vote).

- b. The maximum term a person (excluding the lead pastor and clerk and treasurer) can serve on the Board is 3 consecutive years; with a minimum 1-year leave.

- c. The Board of Management shall exercise executive authority and supervision over the entire work of the congregation on both its spiritual and business side. Committees may be created by the Board and will receive direction from and be accountable to the Board.
- d. Only Elders and Deacons will have a vote on the Board.⁴
- e. Meetings of the Board of Management shall be held at regular monthly or quarterly intervals and special meetings at the call of the lead pastor or board chairman.
- f. Quorum is a majority of the members of the board

14. ORDINANCES OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that our Lord and Savior clearly prescribed for His believing disciples the ordinances of Baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper. The one as a symbol and proclamation of the sinner's death to sin and his newness of life in Christ Jesus; the other as a memorial of the Lord's death to be kept by His disciples until He comes again, according to His promise and the Father's revealed plan.

15. DISCIPLINE

Disciplining of offending members is for the well-being of the body of Christ, and is governed by the Scriptures (Matthew 18:15-17).

The discipline of a member shall be exercised by the Board of Management according to the following principles (and as further elaborated upon in the Policies and Procedures Manual):

- a. In any case of offence not calling for removal from membership, the offender will be summoned before the pastor and elders and dealt with according to the Word of God, and if, after full enquiry, prayer and counsel together, the offender does not admit his/her sin and change their ways, the pastor and elders may suspend him from the privileges of membership including the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper for such time as they shall be led to fix.
- b. If the offence calls for removal from the membership (e.g. heresy, immorality, divisiveness), or if the offender refuses to comply with the provisions of the Word of God in such a case, the matter may be brought by the pastor and elders before the Board of Management. The said Board, by a two-thirds vote, shall recommend to the membership that the offender's name be removed from the roll of active members.

16. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year end of the Church will be December 31.

17. FINANCE

The Church shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its members and any profits or other accretions to the organization shall be used in promoting its objects. In this connection the tithing system is recommended as a basis of proportionate giving on the part of each member of the congregation.

The church financial records shall be looked at by a third party every year.

18. AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments to this Constitution must originate with the Board of Management or be submitted through the Board of Management of the Church. At least two weeks notice must be given to the membership of any meeting at which proposed amendments will be considered, and the details of the amendments must be clearly stated. At least a two-thirds affirmative vote of the membership present at a meeting duly called for this purpose will be required before any such amendments can be adopted.

19. ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER

Where not specifically covered elsewhere in the constitution, Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of meetings.

20. DISSOLUTION

Should at any time the church be dissolved, it should be done by a two-thirds affirmative vote of its membership. The building and property are to be sold and all debts paid. None of its assets or holding shall be divided among the members, but shall be irrevocably dedicated by the trustees to such non-profit religious corporations as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of this constitution's Statement of Faith and Doctrine.

Notes:

1. Quorum made up of those present at a business meeting of the church membership instead of a certain percentage of the membership (i.e.51%) was chosen since only items identified in the Notification of Meeting can be voted upon by the membership at a business meeting. Important items requiring a vote (i.e. a new pastor) will garner greater turnout and therefore ensure representation by a larger percentage of the membership. Smaller items that require a vote (i.e. change the church logo) will therefore not be hampered by smaller membership turnout.
2. This item only covers credentialed pastors who may or may not be paid employees of the church. Other paid uncredentialed employees are not addressed by this item.

3. The elders are to determine the maximum number of elders and deacons that sit on the Board in order to make the Board functional. Too many Board members would make decision making difficult. The Board size should be determined prior to the annual election to facilitate selection of the Board after the annual meeting.
4. Clerk may or may not be an elder or deacon and therefore not have been elected by the congregation.