

CONSTITUTION
of the
ARLINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH
ARLINGTON, V.A.

Preamble

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants to unite here, for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ; and

Whereas we, the members of Arlington, Baptist Church having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Spirit, have recognized the need to constitute ourselves to more closely conform to His will for the Church in this age and prepare ourselves for greater efforts in His name;

Now therefore we, the members of Arlington Baptist Church, do hereby organize ourselves in accord with the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in the Statement of Faith (1853) and Covenant of this church.

Article I – Name

This body shall be organized as a church known as "Arlington Baptist Church."

Article II – Purpose

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through:

Worshipping Him;
Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study;
Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture;
Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work; local, domestic, and international;
Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion;
Encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers;
Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ; and
Calling fellow churches to biblical faithfulness and purity through instruction and encouragement about the nature of the local church.

1
2 **Article III – Statement of Faith**
3

4 The church adopts the following as its statement of faith.
5

6 **1. Of the Scriptures**

7 We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a
8 perfect treasure of heavenly instruction;¹ that it has God for its author, salvation for its
9 end,² and truth without any mixture of error for its matter;³ that it reveals the principles by
10 which God will judge us;⁴ and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the
11 true center of Christian union,⁵ and the supreme standard by which all human conduct,
12 creeds, and opinions should be tried.⁶

13
14 **2. Of the True God**

15 We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite,
16 intelligent Spirit, whose name is JEHOVAH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven
17 and earth;⁷ inexpressibly glorious in holiness,⁸ and worthy of all possible honor,
18 confidence, and love;⁹ that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father,
19 the Son, and the Holy Ghost;¹⁰ equal in every divine perfection,¹¹ and executing distinct
20 but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.¹²

21
22 **3. Of the Fall of Man**

23 We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker,¹³ but by
24 voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state;¹⁴ in consequence of which all
25 mankind are now sinners,¹⁵ not by constraint, but choice;¹⁶ being by nature utterly void of
26 that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under
27 just condemnation to eternal ruin,¹⁷ without defense or excuse.¹⁸

¹ 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Sam. 23:2; Acts 1:16; 3:21; John 10:35; Luke 16:29-31; Psa. 119:11; Rom. 3:1-2

² 2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; Acts 11:14; Rom. 1:16; Mark 16:16; John 5:38-39

³ Prov. 30:5-6; John 17:17; Rev. 22:18-19; Rom. 3:4

⁴ Rom. 2:12; John 12:47-48; 1 Cor. 4:3-4; Luke 10:10-16; 12:47-48

⁵ Phil. 3:16; Eph. 4:3-6; Phil. 2:1-2; 1 Cor. 1:10; 1 Pet. 4:11

⁶ 1 John 4:1; Isa. 8:20; 1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Cor. 8:5; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:6; Jude 3:5; Eph. 6:17; Psa. 119:59-60; Phil. 1:9-11

⁷ John 4:24; Psa. 147:5; 83:18; Heb. 3:4; Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:10

⁸ Exod. 15:11; Isa. 6:3; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 4:6-8

⁹ Mark 12:30; Rev. 4:11; Matt. 10:37; Jer. 2:12-13

¹⁰ Matt. 28:19; John 15:26; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 1 John 5:7

¹¹ John 10:30; 5:17; 14:23; 17:5, 10; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; Phil. 2:5-6

¹² Eph. 2:18; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-5; comp. 2, 7

¹³ Gen. 1:27, 31; Eccl. 7:29; Acts 16:26; Gen. 2:16

¹⁴ Gen. 3:6-24; Rom. 5:12

¹⁵ Rom. 5:19; John 3:6; Psa. 51:5; Rom. 5:15-19; 8:7

¹⁶ Isa. 53:6; Gen. 6:12; Rom. 3:9-18

¹⁷ Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 1:18, 32; 2:1-16; Gal. 3:10; Matt. 20:15

¹⁸ Ezek. 18:19-20; Rom. 1:20; 3:19; Gal. 3:22

1 **4. Of the Way of Salvation**

2 We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace,¹⁹ through the
3 mediatorial offices of the Son of God;²⁰ who by the appointment of the Father, freely took
4 upon him our nature, yet without sin;²¹ honored the divine law by his personal
5 obedience,²² and by his death made a full atonement for our sins;²³ that having risen from
6 the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven;²⁴ and uniting in his wonderful person the
7 tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is every way qualified to be a suitable, a
8 compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.²⁵

9

10 **5. Of Justification**

11 We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ²⁶ secures to such as believe
12 in him is Justification;²⁷ that Justification includes the pardon of sin,²⁸ and the promise of
13 eternal life on principles of righteousness;²⁹ that it is bestowed, not in consideration of
14 any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the
15 Redeemer's blood;³⁰ by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to
16 us of God;³¹ that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and
17 secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.³²

18

19 **6. Of the Freeness of Salvation**

20 We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel;³³ that
21 it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith,³⁴
22 and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent
23 depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel;³⁵ which rejection involves him in an
24 aggravated condemnation.³⁶

25

26 **7. Of Grace in Regeneration**

27 We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born
28 again;³⁷ that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind;³⁸ that it is

¹⁹ Eph. 2:5; Matt. 18:11; 1 John 4:10; 1 Cor. 3:5-7; Acts 15:11

²⁰ John 3:16; 1:1-14; Heb. 4:14; 12:24

²¹ Phil. 2:6-7; Heb. 2:9, 14; 2 Cor. 5:21

²² Isa. 42:21; Phil. 2:8; Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 3:21

²³ Isa. 53:4-5; Matt. 20:28; Rom. 4:25; 3:21-26; 1 John 4:10; 2:2; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; Heb. 9:13-15

²⁴ Heb. 1:8, 3; 8:1; Col. 3:1-4

²⁵ Heb. 7:25; Col. 2:9; Heb. 2:18; 7:26; Psa. 89:19; Psa. 14

²⁶ John 1:16; Eph. 3:8

²⁷ Acts 13:39; Isa. 3:11-12; Rom. 8:1

²⁸ Rom. 5:9; Zech. 13:1; Matt. 9:6; Acts 10:43

²⁹ Rom. 5:17; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Pet. 3:7; 1 John 2:25; Rom. 5:21

³⁰ Rom. 4:4-5; 5:21; 6:23; Phil. 3:7-9

³¹ Rom. 5:19; 3:24-26; 4:23-25; 1 John 2:12

³² Rom. 5:1-3, 11; 1 Cor. 1:30-31; Matt. 6:33; 1 Tim. 4:8

³³ Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17; Luke 14:17

³⁴ Rom. 16:26; Mark 1:15; Rom. 1:15-17

³⁵ John 5:40; Matt. 23:37; Rom. 9:32; Prov. 1:24; Acts 13:46

³⁶ John 3:19; Matt. 11:20; Luke 19:27; 2 Thess. 1:8

³⁷ John 3:3, 6-7; 1 Cor. 1:14; Rev. 8:7-9; 21:27

³⁸ 2 Cor. 5:17; Ezek. 36:26; Deut. 30:6; Rom. 2:28-29; 5:5; 1 John 4:7

1 effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in
2 connection with divine truth,³⁹ so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel;⁴⁰
3 and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and
4 newness of life.⁴¹

5 **8. Of Repentance and Faith**

6 We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable
7 graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God;⁴² whereby being deeply
8 convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ,⁴³
9 we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy;⁴⁴ at the
10 same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and
11 relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.⁴⁵

12 **9. Of God's Purpose of Grace**

13 We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he
14 graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners,⁴⁶ that being perfectly consistent with
15 the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end;⁴⁷ that it
16 is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy,
17 and unchangeable;⁴⁸ that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer,
18 praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy;⁴⁹ that it encourages the use of
19 means in the highest degree;⁵⁰ that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly
20 believe the gospel;⁵¹ that it is the foundation of Christian assurance;⁵² and that to
21 ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.⁵³

22 **10. Of Sanctification**

23 We believe that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of
24 God, we are made partakers of his holiness;⁵⁴ that it is a progressive work;⁵⁵ that it is
25 begun in regeneration;⁵⁶ and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence

³⁹ John 3:8; 1:13; James 1:16-18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 2:13

⁴⁰ 1 Pet. 1:22-25; 1 John 5:1; Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:9-11

⁴¹ Eph. 5:9; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 3:14-21; Matt. 3:8-10; 7:20; 1 John 5:4, 18

⁴² Mark 1:15; Acts 11:18; Eph. 2:8; 1 John 5:1

⁴³ John 16:8; Acts 2:37-38; 16:30-31

⁴⁴ Luke 18:13; 15:18-21; James 4:7-10; 2 Cor. 7:11; Rom. 10:12-13; Psa. 51

⁴⁵ Rom. 10:9-11; Acts 3:22-23; Heb. 4:14; Psa. 2:6; Heb. 1:8; 8:25; 2 Tim. 1:12

⁴⁶ 2 Tim. 1:8-9; Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Pet. 1:1-2; Rom. 11:5-6; John 15:15; 1 John 4:19; Hos. 12:9

⁴⁷ 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Acts 13:48; John 10:16; Matt. 20:16; Acts 15:14

⁴⁸ Exod. 33:18-19; Matt. 20:15; Eph. 1:11; Rom. 9:23-24; Jer. 31:3; Rom. 11:28-29; James 1:17-18; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 11:32-36

⁴⁹ 1 Cor. 4:7; 1:26-31; Rom. 3:27; 4:16; Col. 3:12; 1 Cor. 3:5-7; 15:10; 1 Pet. 5:10; Acts 1:24; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 2:9; Luke 18:7; John 15:16; Eph. 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:12

⁵⁰ 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Cor. 9:22; Rom. 8:28-30; John 6:37-40; 2 Pet. 1:10

⁵¹ 1 Thess. 1:4-10

⁵² Rom. 8:28-30; Isa. 42:16; Rom. 11:29

⁵³ 2 Pet. 1:10-11; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 6:11

⁵⁴ 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23; 2 Cor. 7:1; 13:9; Eph. 1:4

⁵⁵ Prov. 4:18; 2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 6:1; 2 Pet. 1:5-8; Phil. 3:12-16

⁵⁶ John 2:29; Rom. 8:5; John 3:6; Phil. 1:9-11; Eph. 1:13-14

1 and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the
2 appointed means – especially the word of God, self-examination, self-denial,
3 watchfulness, and prayer.⁵⁷

4

5 **11. Of the Perseverance of Saints**

6 We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end;⁵⁸ that their
7 persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from
8 superficial professors;⁵⁹ that a special Providence watches over their welfare;⁶⁰ and they
9 are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.⁶¹

10

11 **12. Of the Harmony of the Law and the Gospel**

12 We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral
13 government;⁶² that it is holy, just, and good;⁶³ and that the inability which the Scriptures
14 ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin;⁶⁴ to
15 deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience
16 to the holy Law, is one great end of the gospel, and of the means of grace connected with
17 the establishment of the visible church.⁶⁵

18

19 **13. Of a Gospel Church**

20 We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized
21 believers,⁶⁶ associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel;⁶⁷ observing
22 the ordinances of Christ;⁶⁸ governed by his laws,⁶⁹ and exercising the gifts, rights, and
23 privileges invested in them by his Word;⁷⁰ that its only scriptural officers are Bishops, or
24 Pastors, and Deacons,⁷¹ whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the
25 Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

26

27 **14. Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

28 We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer,⁷² into
29 the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost;⁷³ to show forth, in a solemn and

⁵⁷ Phil. 2:12-13; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 13:5; Luke 11:35; 9:23; Matt. 26:41; Eph. 6:18; 4:30

⁵⁸ John 8:31; 1 John 2:27-28; 3:9; 5:18

⁵⁹ 1 John 2:19; John 13:18; Matt. 13:20-21; John 6:66-69; Job 17:9

⁶⁰ Rom. 8:28; Matt. 6:30-33; Jer. 32:40; Psa. 121:3; 91:11-12

⁶¹ Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13; Jude 24-25; Heb. 1:14; 2 Kings 6:16; Heb. 13:5; 1 John 4:4

⁶² Rom. 3:31; Matt. 5:17; Luke 16:17; Rom. 3:20; 4:15

⁶³ Rom. 7:12, 7, 14, 22; Gal. 3:21; Psa. 119

⁶⁴ Rom. 8:7-8; Josh. 24:19; Jer. 13:23; John 6:44; 5:44

⁶⁵ Rom. 8:2, 4; 10:4; 1 Tim. 1:5; Heb. 8:10; Jude 20-21; Heb. 12:14; Matt. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 12:28

⁶⁶ 1 Cor. 1:1-13; Matt. 18:17; Acts 5:11; 8:1; 11:31; 1 Cor. 4:17; 14:23; 3 John 9; 1 Tim. 3:5

⁶⁷ Acts 2:41-42; 2 Cor. 8:5; Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 5:12-13

⁶⁸ 1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thess. 3:6; Rom. 16:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:23; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:6; 2 Cor. 2:7; 1 Cor. 4:17

⁶⁹ Matt. 28:20; John 14:15; 15:12; 1 John 4:21; John 14:21; 1 Thess. 4:2; 2 John 6; Gal. 6:2; all the Epistles

⁷⁰ Eph. 4:7; 1 Cor. 14:12; Phil. 1:27; 1 Cor. 12:14

⁷¹ Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23; 15:22; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1

⁷² Acts 8:36-39; Matt. 3:5-6; John 3:22-23; 4:1-2; Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12; 16:32-34; 18:8

1 beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our
2 death to sin and resurrection to a new life;⁷⁴ that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a
3 church relation; and to the Lord's Supper,⁷⁵ in which the members of the church, by the
4 sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ;⁷⁶
5 preceded always by solemn self-examination.⁷⁷

6

7 **15. Of the Christian Sabbath**

8 We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath;⁷⁸
9 and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes,⁷⁹ by the devout observance of all the means
10 of grace, both private⁸⁰ and public;⁸¹ by preparation for that rest that remaineth for the
11 people of God.⁸²

12

13 **16. Of Sexuality and Marriage**

14 We believe that God wonderfully creates each person as male or female and that
15 these two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God;⁸³
16 marriage was created and instituted by God for the good of his creatures and creation⁸⁴ in
17 order to display his gracious love⁸⁵ and to teach the world about how he would unite
18 himself to his redeemed people through Jesus Christ;⁸⁶ marriage is a single, exclusive,
19 covenant union, intended to be life-long, entered into by one man and one woman to
20 which God bears witness;⁸⁷ such a union is the sole context for sexual intimacy;⁸⁸ any
21 form of sexual expression outside of God's good design is immoral, sinful, and offensive
22 to God.⁸⁹

23

24 **17. Of Civil Government**

25 We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and
26 good order of human society;⁹⁰ and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously

⁷³ Matt. 28:19; Acts 10:47-48; Gal. 3:27-28

⁷⁴ Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:20-21; Acts 22:16

⁷⁵ Acts 2:41-42; Matt. 28:19-20

⁷⁶ 1 Cor. 11:26; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20

⁷⁷ 1 Cor. 11:28; 5:1, 8; 10:3-32; 11:17-32; John 6:26-71

⁷⁸ Acts 20:7; Gen. 2:3; Col. 2:16-17; Mark 2:27; John 20:19; 1 Cor. 16:1- 2

⁷⁹ Exod. 20:8; Rev. 1:10; Psa. 118:24

⁸⁰ Psa. 119:15

⁸¹ Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 11:26, 13:44; Lev. 19:30; Luke 4:16; Acts 17:2, 3; Psa. 26:8; 87:3

⁸² Heb. 4:3-11

⁸³ Gen. 1:26-28; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10.

⁸⁴ Gen. 1:26-28, 2:4-25, 9:1; Mal. 2:15

⁸⁵ Eph. 5:25, 32

⁸⁶ Eph. 5:31-32, Rev. 19:7-9

⁸⁷ Exo. 20:14; Deut. 5:18; Job 31:1; Mal. 2:14, Mat. 5:28, 5:31-32, 19:3-12, Mar. 10:2-12; Rom. 7:2-3, 1 Cor. 7:39

⁸⁸ Exo. 20:14; Deut. 5:18; Job 31:1; Prov. 5:8, 5:19-20; Mat. 5:28; 1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-9; Heb. 13:4

⁸⁹ Gen. 19:1-29, Lev. 18:1-30, 20:10-21; 1 Kgs. 15:21; 2 Kgs. 23:7 Prov. 2:16-20, 7:5, 10, 13, 21-22; Amos 2:7; Mat. 15:18-20; Mar. 6:18; Rom. 1:21-31, 1 Cor. 5:1, 6:9-10, 7:36-38; Eph. 5:3-4 Col 3:5; 1 Thess. 4:3-7; 1 Tim. 1:9-10; 2 Pet. 2:14; Jude 6-7

⁹⁰ Rom. 13:1-7; Deut. 16:18; 1 Sam. 23:3; Exod. 18:23; Jer. 30:21

1 honored and obeyed;⁹¹ except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus
2 Christ⁹² who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.⁹³

3

4 **18. Of the Righteous and the Wicked**

5 We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous
6 and the wicked,⁹⁴ that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord
7 Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in his esteem;⁹⁵ while all
8 such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the
9 curse,⁹⁶ and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.⁹⁷

10

11 **19. Of the World to Come**

12 We believe that the end of the world is approaching,⁹⁸ that at the last day Christ
13 will descend from heaven,⁹⁹ and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution;¹⁰⁰ that
14 a solemn separation will then take place;¹⁰¹ that the wicked will be adjudged to endless
15 punishment, and the righteous to endless joy;¹⁰² and that this judgment will fix forever the
16 final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.¹⁰³

17

18 Based on the New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith (1853).

19

20 **Article IV – Church Covenant**

21

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

26

27 We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.¹⁰⁴

28

⁹¹ Matt. 22:21; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13; 1 Tim. 2:1-8

⁹² Acts 5:29; Matt. 10:28; Dan. 3:15-18; 6:7-10; Acts 4:18-20

⁹³ Matt. 23:10; Rom. 14:4; Rev. 19:16; Psa. 72:11; Psa. 2; Rom. 14:9-13

⁹⁴ Mal. 3:18; Prov. 12:26; Isa. 5:20; Gen. 18:23; Jer. 15:19; Acts 10:34- 35; Rom. 6:16

⁹⁵ Rom. 1:17; 7:6; 1 John 2:29; 3:7; Rom. 6:18, 22; 1 Cor. 11:32; Prov. 11:31; 1 Pet. 4:17-18

⁹⁶ 1 John 5:19; Gal. 3:10; John 3:36; Isa. 57:21; Psa. 10:4; Isa 55:6-7

⁹⁷ Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:25; John 8:21-24; Prov. 10:24; Luke 12:4-5; 9:23- 26; John 12:25-26; Eccl. 3:17; Matt. 7:13-14

⁹⁸ 1 Pet. 4:7; 1 Cor. 7:29-31; Heb. 1:10-12; Matt. 24:35; 1 John 2:17; Matt. 28:20; 13:39-40; 2 Pet. 3:3-13

⁹⁹ Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Heb. 9:28; Acts 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-11

¹⁰⁰ Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:12-59; Luke 14:14; Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; 6:40; 11:25-26; 2 Tim. 1:10; Acts 10:42

¹⁰¹ Matt. 13:49, 37-43; 24:30-31; 25:31-33

¹⁰² Matt. 25:35-41; Rev. 22:11; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Mark 9:43-48; 2 Pet. 2:9; Jude 7; Phil. 3:19; Rom. 6:32; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; John 4:36; 2 Cor. 4:18

¹⁰³ Rom. 3:5-6; 2 Thess. 1:6-12; Heb. 6:1-2; 1 Cor. 4:5; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:2-16; Rev. 20:11-12; 1 John 2:28; 4:17

¹⁰⁴ Psalms 133:1; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 2:2-3

1 We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian
2 church; exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully
3 admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.¹⁰⁵
4

5 We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for
6 ourselves and others.¹⁰⁶
7

8 We will endeavor to bring up such as may at any time be under our care, in the
9 nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the
10 salvation of our family and friends.¹⁰⁷
11

12 We will rejoice at each other's happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy
13 to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.¹⁰⁸
14

15 We will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and
16 worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and
17 raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a
18 new and holy life.¹⁰⁹
19

20 We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this
21 church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will
22 contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the
23 church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.¹¹⁰
24

25 We will, when we move from this place, unite with some other church as soon as
26 possible, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's
27 Word.¹¹¹
28

29 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the
30 Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.¹¹²
31

Article V – Membership

Section 1 – Qualifications

35 To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus
36 Christ and give evidence of regeneration, have been baptized, in obedience to Christ,
37 following his or her regeneration, and wholeheartedly believe in the Christian faith as
38 revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as

¹⁰⁵ Romans 12:10; 15:14

¹⁰⁶ Hebrews 10:24-25; Ephesians 6:18

¹⁰⁷ Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 1:28-29; Titus 2:7

¹⁰⁸ Romans 12:15; Galatians 6:2

¹⁰⁹ Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:4; Philippians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; Titus 2:11-12; 1 Peter 1:14-16

¹¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8:1-3; 9:6-7; Philippians 1:27; 1 Timothy 5:17-18

¹¹¹ Hebrews 10:25

¹¹² 2 Corinthians 13:14

1 expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed
2 in the Church Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's
3 qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's
4 profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

5

6 Section 2 – Admission of Members

7 To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the
8 elders for admission and accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special
9 meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other
10 churches.

11

12 Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership

13 In accordance with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member
14 shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of
15 the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources
16 each has received from God. Only members shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of
17 the church; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders.
18 Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and
19 professional consultation.

20 Under Christ, this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the
21 privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the
22 election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters
23 as may be submitted to a vote.

24

25 Section 4 – On Church Discipline

26 Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties as embodied in the
27 Church Covenant or Constitution or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord
28 Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be
29 subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the
30 instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and the example of scripture. Church
31 discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition
32 has failed.

33 Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation,
34 suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and
35 excommunication (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3: 14–15; 1 Timothy 5: 19–
36 20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5).

37 The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and
38 spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15: 5; 29: 15; I
39 Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; I Timothy 3: 4–5; Hebrews 12: 1–11;
40 Psalm 119: 115; 141: 5; Proverbs 17: 10; 25: 12; 27: 5; Ecclesiastes 7: 5;
41 Matthew 7: 26–27; 18: 15–17; Luke 17: 3; Acts 2: 40; I Corinthians 5: 5;
42 Galatians 6: 1–5; II Thessalonians 3: 6, 14–15; I Timothy 1: 20; Titus 1:
43 13–14; James 1: 22);

44 For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to
45 them (see Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33;

1 Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5: 14 [note this is written to the whole
2 church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24–
3 25);
4 For the purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5: 6–7; II Corinthians
5 13: 10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2);
6 For the good of our corporate witness to non–Christians (see Proverbs 28: 7;
7 Matthew 5: 13–16; John 13: 35; Acts 5: 1–14; Ephesians 5: 11; I Timothy
8 3: 7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3: 10); and
9 Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy
10 5: 11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chronicles 19: 2; Ezra 6: 21; Nehemiah 9: 2; Isaiah
11 52: 11; Ezekiel 36: 20; Matthew 5: 16; John 15: 8; 18: 17, 25; Romans 2:
12 24; 15: 5–6; II Corinthians 6: 14–7: 1; Ephesians 1: 4; 5: 27; I Peter 2: 12).
13

14 **Section 5 – Termination of Membership**

15 The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following
16 his or her death, and may do so after a person has voluntarily resigned or joined with
17 another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (as
18 defined in Section 4), at the recommendation of the elders and upon the vote of at least
19 two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members.

20 The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or
21 transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a
22 process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.
23

24 **Article VI – Worship Services and Meetings**

25 **Section 1 – Worship Meetings**

26 Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held at other times as
27 the elders recommend and the church determines.
28

29 **Section 2 – Members' Meetings**

30 In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust,
31 openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord
32 Jesus Christ.
33

34 There shall be a regular members' meeting at least every other month, at some
35 time apart from a public worship service agreed upon by the membership.
36

37 An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members'
38 meetings of the church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are
39 regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible
40 members.

41 Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum
42 shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based
43 on the number of votes cast by members present.
44

45 A budget shall be approved by the membership at the November members'
46 meeting prior to the start of the fiscal year on January 1. Prior to this approval a budget
47

1 for the next fiscal year shall be presented to the membership for review at the September
2 members' meeting.

3 At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions
4 filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

5 Special members' meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the
6 written request, submitted to the elders, of five percent of the voting membership. The
7 date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of
8 the church within two weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request
9 from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of
10 their receipt of the request.

11

12 Article VII – Officers

13

14 Section 1 – Summary

15 The Biblical offices in the church are elders (also referred to as pastors or bishops)
16 and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this
17 constitution of clerk and treasurer. All officers must be members of this church prior to
18 assuming their responsibilities.

19 Section 2 – Elders

20 The elders shall be comprised of not less than three men who satisfy the
21 qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 6–9. A
22 majority of the active eldership shall be composed of church members who do not receive
23 their primary remuneration from the church, and no elder shall hold the office of deacon
24 during his tenure.

25 Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and
26 resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6: 1–6 and I Peter
27 5: 1–4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching
28 and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.

29 The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in
30 accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received
31 as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. This recognition shall be
32 reaffirmed by the church triennially. After an elder, other than the senior or associate
33 pastor(s), has served two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be elected to the
34 office of elder after at least one year.

35 An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any
36 two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express
37 such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be
38 done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and I Timothy
39 5: 17–21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any
40 members' meeting of the church.

41 The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective
42 members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions,
43 oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct
44 worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the

1 membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice,
2 admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and
3 promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. The
4 elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including
5 outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

6 The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in
7 fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff
8 positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of senior and
9 associate pastor. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall
10 reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.

11 The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and
12 evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be
13 delegated to another staff member. At least three (3) elders shall be chosen to also serve
14 as directors in accordance with Article VIII, Section 2 and Article XI,

15 Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons, the deaconesses, and the
16 membership, shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be
17 presented for discussion at a specially-called budget meeting and called up for a vote at
18 the following members' meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the
19 church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.

20 The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of
21 their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings.

23 Section 3 – The Senior Pastor

24 The senior pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder
25 described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted
26 and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

27 His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation
28 set out in Article VII, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article VIII,
29 Section 3.

30 He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and
31 communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth
32 in the constitution.

33 In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor the elders shall assume
34 responsibility for his duties, any of which may be delegated.

36 Section 4 – Associate Pastors

37 The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is
38 that of associate.

39 An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder
40 described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted
41 and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

42 His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation
43 set out in Article VII, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article VIII,
44 Section 4.

1 He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall
2 perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the
3 constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation.

4 In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such
5 as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his
6 duties under the oversight of the elders.

7

8 Section 5 – Deacons & Deaconesses

9 The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3: 8–13 and Acts 6: 1–7. The
10 church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men
11 and women who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess
12 particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His
13 church and set apart as deacons and deaconesses. They shall be elected to one term
14 lasting for a maximum of three years and may only be elected to another term after one
15 year.

16 Deacons and deaconesses shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to
17 the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help
18 others and those with gifts of administration.

19 The deacons and deaconesses shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for
20 benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church
21 its total receipts and total disbursements only.

22 The deacons and deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish
23 unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling
24 their responsibilities in the church.

25

26 Section 6 – Clerk

27 It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special
28 members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to
29 render reports as requested by the pastor, the elders, the deacons, or the church.

30 The clerk shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to
31 serve a term of one year.

32 In the absence or incapacity of the clerk the elders shall appoint a member to
33 perform the duties of the church clerk.

34 The church clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this
35 constitution shall be available for all church members.

36

37 Section 7 – Treasurer

38 The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder, deacon, or paid church staff
39 member, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in
40 such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also
41 be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and
42 expenses of the church at each members' meeting. The responsibility may be delegated
43 with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate
44 accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and
45 that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church

1 are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer
2 shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all
3 transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

4 The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to
5 serve a term of one year.

7 **Article VIII – Elections**

8

9 Section 1 – Principles

10 The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the
11 following principles:

- 12 Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of
13 the election process;
- 14 Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;
- 15 All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and
16 honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;
- 17 The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving
18 consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

20 Section 2 – Selection of Officers

21 The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church.

22 Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, clerk, or treasurer shall be presented by
23 the elders at the previous members' meeting (provided that previous meeting occurred at
24 least eight weeks prior) and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

25 The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general
26 membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a
27 nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the
28 elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their
29 objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members'
30 meeting.

31 For the office of elder, the moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a
32 three-fourths majority vote of the members present. For all other offices, the moderator
33 shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority vote of the members present
34 and voting; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

35 The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless
36 another date has been specifically designated.

38 Section 3 – Calling of the Senior Pastor

39 In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an
40 elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate
41 opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential senior pastor and, before being
42 asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having
43 interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the
44 Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be
45 elected to membership and called as senior pastor (which shall include, if necessary,

1 election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning
2 services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

3

4 **Section 4 – Calling of Associate Pastor**

5 In the calling of any man to the position of associate pastor, the same basic
6 process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be
7 given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential associate pastor
8 and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders
9 that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted
10 assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a
11 man to be called as associate pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to
12 membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning
13 services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

14

15 **Article IX – Dispute Resolution**

16

17 Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to
18 resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g.,
19 Matthew 18: 15–20, I Corinthians 6: 1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve
20 conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on
21 the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage
22 the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside
23 the church, whether or not Christian, and whether individuals or corporate entities.

24

25 **Article X – Indemnification**

26

27 **Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification**

28 If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is
29 or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide
30 indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the
31 elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily
32 prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c)
33 in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the
34 person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

35

36 **Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification**

37 At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who
38 acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's
39 best interest and not unlawful.

40

41 **Section 3 – Procedure**

42 If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination
43 because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may
44 be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

Article XI - Church Corporation

For purposes of the corporation laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia:

Section 1 – Directors

The elders shall serve as the directors of the church corporation, and the corporate powers of the church corporation shall be exercised by or under their authority. No salary or compensation shall be paid to any director in his capacity as a director, but nothing herein shall be construed to preclude any director from serving the church in any other permitted capacity and receiving reasonable compensation therefor. Moreover, directors may receive reasonable reimbursement for church-related travel and other approved expenses upon request and submission of proper written documentation

Section 2 – Officers

The officers of the church corporation shall be president, treasurer, and secretary, and may include one or more vice presidents as the directors may from time to time determine. The officers must be members of the church, and the president must also be an elder of the church. Unless otherwise determined by the directors, the senior pastor shall serve as the president, the church clerk shall serve as the secretary, and the church treasurer shall serve as the treasurer of the church corporation. In the event of a vacancy in the office of secretary or treasurer because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other reason, the directors may appoint a member of the church to serve in such office on an interim basis until such time as a successor has been nominated and elected by the church.

Section 3 – Annual Meeting of the Directors

The annual meeting of the board of directors shall be held contemporaneously with the first elders' meeting of the fiscal year. Notice of such elders' meeting given in accordance with the procedures established by the elders shall constitute proper notice of the annual meeting of the board of directors.

Section 4 – Annual Meeting of the Members

The annual meeting of the members shall be held contemporaneously with the first members' meeting of the fiscal year. Notice of such members' meeting given in accordance with the Constitution shall constitute proper notice of the annual meeting of the members.

Article XII – Amendments

This constitution (including the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant) may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

1 The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church
2 members by the church clerk.
3