

FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST
CHURCH

Constitution, Covenant, Confession of Faith, and By-laws

Linton, Indiana 47441

June 14, 1987

Revised March 9, 1988

PREAMBLE

No distinction is to be made between the Church as a religious body and as a corporation. There is but one organization, and that is the Church, incorporated that it may acquire and hold property and manage its own affairs, and adopt such regulations and rules as it deems necessary for its government in harmony with the Indiana Statues, under which it was created a corporation.

THE CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, 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, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; 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 department; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drink as a beverage, and to be zealous in efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior. 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 Savior, to secure it without delay. We moreover engage that when we remove from his 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. And for failure to comply with this covenant shall be considered sufficient evidence for dismissal from church membership.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Paragraph I -- of the Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible as originally written was verbally inspired and the product of Spirit controlled men, and therefore has truth without admixture of error for its matter. We believe that it is the true center of Christian union and the only infallible rule for all human conduct, creeds and opinions, and Salvation for its end. II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:19-21.

Paragraph II -- of the True God

We believe that there is only one living and true God, infinite in every excellence; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three personal distinctions – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – one in substance and equal in every divine perfection. Exodus 20:2, 3; I Corinthians 8:6; I John 5:7.

We believe in the absolute Deity of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; that He was divine as no other man can be, being very God of very God, existing from all eternity co-equal with the Father and the Spirit; that he never ceased to be God for one instant and that His humiliation did not consist in laying aside His deity; that as a man He was miraculously begotten of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. John 1:1, 2; I John 5:20; Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:26-38.

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, equal with the Father and Son and of the same substance and nature; that He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment, bears witness to the truth, is the Agent of the New Birth and that He seals, endures, guides, teaches, witness to, sanctifies and helps the believer, indwelling every true Child of God. II Corinthians 13:14; John 14:16, 17; Romans 8:14-27.

Paragraph III -- of the Devil, or Satan

We believe in the distinct personality of Satan, that he is the god of this age, author of all the powers of darkness and sin, and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire. Matthew 4:1-3; II Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10.

Paragraph IV -- of the Creation

We believe that God created the heavens and the earth, including all life, 'each after its own kind', by direct act and not by the process of evolution. Genesis 1, 2; Colossians 1:16, 17; John 1:3.

Paragraph V -- of the Fall of Man

We believe that man, in the person of the first man Adam, was created in innocence but by voluntary transgression fell into sin thus plunging the whole race into condemnation and death, so that now all mankind is born in sin and shapen in iniquity and become sinners with the first expression of personal choice, not by constraint, but by choice and so are without excuse before God. Genesis 3; Romans 5:10-19.

Paragraph VI -- of the Atonement for Sin

We believe that the only escape from the condemnation of sin is through the atonement wrought by Jesus Christ, when He voluntary took upon Him a human body and nature, yet without sin, and by His suffering, death, and resurrection made full satisfaction to the justice of God for the sin of man; that the blessings of this salvation are given on the grounds of grace to all who believe and confess and this it is the immediate duty of all to improve these offers of mercy. John 1:1-3, 14; 3:1-7; Hebrews 10:4-14; Acts 6:30-33.

Paragraph VII -- of Salvation by Grace

We believe that faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation from sin and that this salvation is wholly by grace; that no works, however good, make that salvation more secure. Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2, 8, 9; Titus 3:5-7; Romans 10:9-13.

We believe that all that take Christ as their Savior are born from above and are eternally secure in Christ. John 10:28, 29; Romans 8:35-39; Philippians 1:6.

Paragraph VIII -- of the Church

We believe that the Church universal is a New Testament institution unknown to the Old Testament prophets; established by Jesus Christ Who is its sole Head; revealed through the holy Apostles; empowered and perpetuated by the Holy Spirit; composed of believers in Jesus Christ as Savior, both Jew and Gentile, called out from the world and indwelt by the Holy Spirit; His

'body' for service and His 'bride' for glory. It began with the New Testament saints and will be consummated at the coming of Christ in the Rapture. Matthew 16:16; Acts 1:8, 2:1-13; 4:1-47; 15:14; Romans 16:26; I Corinthians 12:12-28; Ephesians 1:21; 5:23-33; I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

We believe that the Church universal is manifest through the local Church which is a congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinance of Christ; governed by His laws; exercising the gifts, rights privileges invested in it by His word; that its officers are bishops or pastors and deacons; that it has the absolute right of self-government directed by the Holy Spirit and it is answerable only to Christ, and that in all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline and benevolence the will of the local church is final. Matthew 18:15-17; I Corinthians 1:2; 6:4, 5; 7:17; 11:16; I Timothy 3:1-15.

Paragraph IX -- of the Ordinances

We believe that there are two church ordinances. Baptism and the Lord's Supper. BAPTISM is the immersion of a believer in water and is properly called 'Believer's Baptism.' It sets forth in a beautiful and solemn way our faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its effects in our lives of death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of church relation. THE LORD'S SUPPER is the commemoration of our Lord's death until He comes and our continual fellowship with Him, should be preceded by baptism and always by careful self-examination. Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-5; I Corinthians 11:23-32.

Paragraph X -- of the Righteous and Wicked

We believe that there is a racial and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of God, are truly righteous in God's esteem; while all such who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse; and that this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. Malachi 3:18; Romans 6:17-23; Matthew 25:34-41; Luke 6:25; John 8:21.

Paragraph XI -- of the Return of Christ

We believe in the bodily, personal, premillennial return of Jesus Christ; that He will come before the seven year tribulation period to catch away His church, coming only into the air, and that He will come with His church at the close of the tribulation to judge the living nations and to set up His Kingdom. I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 19:11-21.

Paragraph XII -- of the Resurrection

We believe in the resurrection of the bodies of the dead; that believers that sleep in Jesus will be raised at the coming of Christ for His church and caught up with transformed living saints to meet the Lord in the air, and that the wicked dead will be raised at the close of the Millennial Kingdom and stand in their bodies at the Great White Throne judgment to receive their final doom. John 5:21-30; I Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 7:9-17; 20:11-15.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I. Name and Purpose

The name of this organization shall be Fellowship Baptist Church.

ARTICLE II. Object

Its object shall be to promote the worship of God by the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ at home and abroad, trusting that as a result sinners shall be saved and believers edified.

ARTICLE III. Doctrine

Its doctrine shall be in conformity with those generally accepted by Baptist churches and expressed in our Confession of Faith.

ARTICLE IV. Associations

As a New Testament Church cannot “join” anything outside itself, but only affiliate therewith on grounds of fellowship, this church declares itself to be an Independent Baptist fellowship and cannot be changed, by any form, other than a three-fourths majority of the entire membership voting.

ARTICLE V. Membership

SECTION 1. Present Membership

All whose names appear upon the rolls of this church are members, only those upon the “Active” list are considered in good and regular standing. Those whose names appear upon the “Inactive” list have no right of franchise and may not be granted a letter of “good and regular standing”.

SECTION 2. Reception of Members

Paragraph A: Anyone professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior; giving evidence of a change of heart, and declaring himself (or herself) in accord with the principles, practices and doctrines of this church may become a candidate for church membership.

Paragraph B: Candidates may become members of the church in one of four ways: (1) By Baptism, (2) By letters, (3) By Christian experience, or (4) By restoration.

Paragraph C: Candidates for church membership shall appear personally before the pastor and deacons who shall pass upon their qualifications and prescribe any restrictions they may deem advisable for the best interests of the church. Having been recommended by the deacons the name shall then be submitted to the Church for acceptance or rejection, five dissenting votes constituting refusal of admission, but any member objecting may be required to present the

grounds of his objection before the deacons at their meeting. A two-third vote of the deacons shall overrule the objection and the name shall be submitted once more to the church.

SECTION 3. Dismissal of Members

Paragraph A: CHURCH LETTERS

- (1) Letters of dismissal may be granted any member in good and regular standing, such letters must be addressed to some particular church of the same faith and order as this and sent by the clerk to the pastor or clerk of the church to which the member is dismissed. Such letters shall be valid only for six months from date and the member so dismissed shall remain subject to the discipline of this church until notification has been received of the acceptance by the church addressed. (No letter shall be granted except to a designated church of like faith and order.)
- (2) Members not in good and regular standings or those desiring to unite with a church not of our faith and order may be given a Certificate of Standing to date but not a letter.

Paragraph B: DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

- (1) The matter of discipline of the membership shall be in the hands of the pastor and deacons assisted by the church. No member shall be expelled until every effort has been made, including, if physically possible, personal visits to reclaim him (or her) for Christ and the Church.
- (2) Members failing to support the church by their attendance within a period of 6 months, without legitimate excuse, (such “support” and “excuse” to be defined by the deacons) may be placed on the “Inactive” list and so lose their right of franchise. Names continuing upon the “Inactive” list for more than a year may be removed from church membership roll subject to (1) of this paragraph.

ARTICLE VI. Ordinances

SECTION 1. Baptism

Those professing saving faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior shall by the pastor be immersed in water in accordance with the Scriptural teaching. Immersion shall be prerequisite to church membership.

SECTION 2. Lord’s Supper

The Lord’s Supper (Communion) shall be served to the assembled church by the pastor or in his absence one of the deacons of the church and the deacons on the first Sunday morning of each month, and at the discretion of the deacons. Since it is the Lord’s Table none who are His shall be barred, but pastor shall frequently state the Scriptural order, which places baptism as a prerequisite to Communion, and shall explain the meaning of the ordinances.

ARTICLE VII. Officers and Boards

The officers of the church shall consist of pastor, deacons, trustees, treasurer, Secretary-Treasurer, and Clerk, all of whom, except the pastor shall have been a member of this church for a period of at least one year before being placed in nomination except charter members: and their terms of office shall begin on the first of the month following the Annual Meeting and retiring officers should hold office until their terms begins. Other minor officers may be created from time to time as may be deemed necessary. No person shall hold more than two major offices at one time.

SECTION 1. Pastor

Paragraph A: The pastor shall be called for an indefinite period. Notice of the proposed choice of pastor shall be given from the pulpit for two successive Sundays preceding the calling, voting shall be by ballot and two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast be required for calling.

Paragraph B: The pastor shall give the church a notice in writing not to exceed sixty (60) days and not less than thirty (30) days of his intention to discontinue as pastor. The church may by a two-thirds (2/3) vote at a regularly call meeting (see Art. XIII, Sec. 1) declare the pulpit vacant, provided a notice of not less than sixty (60) days before the time this action is taken, be given the pastor occupying the pulpit to vacate the same.

Paragraph C: The pastor shall be the Moderator of the church and a member ex-officio of the Diaconate, Board of Trustees and all committees.

SECTION 2. Deacons

Paragraph A: The church shall elect from its membership at its Annual Business Meeting not less than three or more than five men to serve as deacons. Their terms shall be one for term of one year, two for two years, two for three years. Retiring deacon or full term deacons cannot be re-elected for a period of one (1) year.

Paragraph B: The qualifications for deacon shall be such as are prescribed and set forth in the New Testament (Acts 6:3; Timothy 3:8-13).

Paragraph C: It shall be the duty of the deacons to (1) prepare the elements and table for the Lord's Supper and assist in serving the same, (2) assist the pastor in administering baptism and in the spiritual supervision of the church and school, (3) with the pastor to carefully examine all candidates for church membership, recommending such as they consider eligible to the church for membership, (4) have charge of all matters of discipline of members. Visit the sick.

SECTION 3. Trustees

Paragraph A: The church shall choose from its membership not less than five men at its Annual Business Meeting to serve as trustees. Their term of office shall be arranged to end alternately same as deacons, one for one year, two for two years and two for three years.

Paragraph B: Duties of the trustees: (1) The trustee shall elect from their number a Chairman and Secretary. The pastor shall preside at their meetings and have general oversight of their work. The latter shall keep a faithful record of any important work, acts or transactions performed by the body. Meetings shall be held at the call of the chairman, pastor, or two thirds of the full number of trustees. Two-thirds of the full number of trustees shall constitute a quorum. (2) The trustees shall make a full report of their activities to the church at each Meeting or as requested by the church, to hold, repair, invest and preserve the same, including hiring and supervising the Janitor; to superintend any improvements that are not entrusted to a special committee, and to perform such business concerns for the church as shall from time to time be assigned to them by the church. The trustees are at all times servants of the church and subject to its corporate action. (3) The trustees shall not have any authority to sell, lease, give away, or dispose of in any manner, church property to exceed five hundred (\$500.00) dollars in value; nor to mortgage or encumber the same with debt to exceed the above amount only as the church shall order the same by a corporate act.

SECTION 4. Treasurer

At each Annual Meeting the church shall elect from its membership a Treasurer. They shall receive all moneys of the church and apply the same as directed by the church; keep complete record of accounts and make a full report to the church at each regular meeting and when otherwise directed by the church.

SECTION 5. Clerk

The church shall elect from its membership at each Annual Meeting a Clerk for the ensuing year. They shall keep a fair and complete record of the proceedings of the church, have charge of all records, keep a register of all members of the church, write letters of dismissal, give notice of church business meeting, announce the offices to be filled at an (annual) meeting, and perform such other particular duties as may be prescribed by the church.

SECTION 6. Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall count all money and promptly deposit this money into the bank.

SECTION 7. Advisory Committee

The deacons, trustees, Bible School superintendent, treasurer and clerk, acting with the pastor shall constitute and form an Advisory Committee. It shall meet at times decided by itself, and be presided over by the pastor, or in his absence, one of the members whom it may designate. The clerk shall keep a record of its proceedings and shall include a report of the activities of this committee with his report to the church. Its duties shall be to pass upon all major matters of church business or policy and recommend to the church for its action such as it deems worthy. It shall also act as the Financial Committee of the church.

Paragraph A: The advisory committee shall, when a vacancy occurs in the office of pastor, act as a pulpit committee and shall continue to function as such until a new pastor is on the field. It shall bring before the church suitable candidates for the pastorate and care of the entertainment of these candidates while they are on the field. When it deems it wise it shall present to the church at a regularly called business meeting the name of one of these candidates and conduct the voting upon the same. At no time shall two names be placed before the church at one meeting.

LITERATURE

All literature for Bible school and church organizations, must be purchased from some fundamental publishing house, as approved by the advisory committee.

ARTICLE VIII. Finances

SECTION 1. The Fiscal year shall begin on January 1, and end on the following December 31.

SECTION 2. No moneys shall be raised by the church or an auxiliary organization except by free-will giving.

ARTICLE IX. Missions

SECTION 1. It shall be the policy of this church to support only missions engaged principally in evangelization. They shall be known to be in hearty agreement with our Confession of Faith, both in the doctrine and practice.

ARTICLE X. Auxiliary Organization

SECTION 1. Church Bible School. This organization shall be considered as the church studying the Bible; it shall be under the general supervision and control of the church.

SECTION 2. Other organizations. There shall be other organizations as the most efficient prosecution of our object shall demand. These organizations shall be self-governing but always amendable to the church through her regularly elected officers.

SECTION 3. All major officers of auxiliary organizations and all regular teachers in the Bible School must be members of the church in good and regular standing. Teachers for Cradle, Roll-Beginners, Primary, Juniors, Intermediate and Teens to be appointed by Bible School Superintendent and pastor.

ARTICLE XI. Committees

The church shall elect at its annual meeting, or at such other times as it may desire, the following committees and others as deemed necessary.

SECTION 1. Missionary Committee. A Missionary Committee shall consist of the pastor, who shall act as chairman, chairmen of the deacons and trustees, Bible School superintendent and three members elected from the membership of the church. These shall recommend the missionary projects for support of the church and auxiliary organizations and draft an annual missionary budget to be submitted to the Advisory Committee for its action at least three weeks before the Annual Meeting of the church.

SECTION 2. Nominating Committee. At least four weeks before the Annual Meeting, a Nominating Committee shall be formed as follows; the following groups shall elect or appoint one member each; deacons, trustees and Bible School. This committee shall place in nomination at the Annual Meeting members of the church which it deems qualified to fill for the ensuing term the offices that become vacant at that time. The names of such nominees shall be posted two weeks before the annual meeting in a conspicuous place in the church building. It is understood that these nominations do not prohibit nominations from the floor or the annual meetings, or place in an unfavorable light members making such nominations.

SECTION 3. Auditing Committee. An Auditing Committee elected at the Annual Meeting consisting of two members shall carefully examine records, receipts and vouchers of the treasurer of the church for the past year and report their findings to the church at the next regular business meeting.

ARTICLE XII. Business Meetings

SECTION 1. Annual Meeting. There shall be an Annual Meeting of the church on the first Wednesday night after the first Sunday in January to elect boards, officers and standing committees and transact any other business. In case of any omission in holding the election as above, the meeting shall be called and held upon the earliest available date thereafter.

SECTION 2. Special Business Meetings may be called at any time, provided public notice be given of the same on the Lord's Day preceding to be announce in both morning and evening services, except that those for calling or dismissing a pastor shall be given public announcement for two (2) preceding Sundays. At such a meeting, fifty-five (55) percent of the active members shall constitute a quorum. However, routine business may be done, when necessary, at any stated meeting of the church without regard to the above requirement.

SECTION 3. Monthly Business Meeting. There shall be held a monthly business meeting on the first Wednesday night following the first Sunday of each month at which time the clerk's minutes shall be read and approved. A Financial Statement shall be made by the treasurer. At this meeting, recommendations of the Boards and committee shall be presented, and such business as is necessary may be conducted. These meetings may not be postponed or changed except at a regular, or legally called business meeting of the Church, and then by vote of the church. In all business meetings twenty-five members shall constitute a quorum.

SECTION 4. Order of Meetings. In the conduct of business rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all cases to which they apply. In exceptions a majority vote shall establish the rule. A suggested Order of Business for the Annual Meeting follows:

1. Reading and approval of minutes of regular previous meeting, including the clerks report.
2. Treasurer's report.
3. Report of Deacons.
4. Report of Trustees.
5. Report of Advisory Committee.
6. Report of Standing Committees.
7. Reports of Departments of Church.
8. Unfinished business.
9. New business.
10. Adjournment.

ARTICLE XIII. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at any annual business meeting, or at a called or regular business meeting, providing that notice of proposed amendment shall have been given from the pulpit for the two Sundays prior to the meeting at which action is desired.