

Believers' Chapel Church Constitution And Bylaws

Official Edition
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Believers' Chapel
Murfreesboro, TN

Established February 14, 1979

Historical Synopsis

On February 14, 1979, a small group of some thirty-four believers met in the home of Dr. and Mrs. M. Alan Miller for prayer and Bible study. Desiring a place to worship that was Christ-centered and Bible oriented, the decision was made to establish a new local church in the Murfreesboro, Tennessee area. After numerous suggestions were made concerning a name for this new fellowship, it was agreed upon by all those present at that first meeting that the new body be known as Believers' Chapel. It was then decided that this new fellowship would be nondenominational. Ken L. Walker was called to be the Pastor/Teacher.

Believers' Chapel, after being formed, began to meet in the home of Mrs. Pat Compton. In April of 1979 the meeting place was relocated to 4th Avenue in a small Methodist Church building. Children's Church was held in an apartment next door to the church building. The fellowship continued meeting there until the end of 1979.

On January 6, 1980 Believers' Chapel started meeting at the Murfreesboro Funeral Chapel located at 1505 Bradyville Pike. In August of that same year the facilities of Murfreesboro Funeral Chapel were purchased by Believers' Chapel. It was during these transitional months that a group of men was selected to draft a church constitution. After many hours of prayer, research and hard work this church constitution and bylaws was submitted and adopted as the Church Constitution of Believers' Chapel. It is the prayer of this body that God will use this constitution as a tool in the lives of those who desire to band together in service to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to one another, to God's glory

On July 25, 2007, upon advice from legal counsel the church incorporated as Believers' Chapel, Inc. and was approved by the state of Tennessee. The Elders serve as the Board of Directors. The constitution and by-laws were amended and revised on December 15, 2017.

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Believers' Chapel

Church Constitution and Bylaws

Preamble

Believing that Jesus is Head of the Church (all believers) and that He communicates with the Church (His Body) through the Scriptures as illuminated by the Holy Spirit, we, who rest our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, desire to unite together around a common understanding of the nature and extent of the Scriptures and in agreement as to the method of interpretation (see Article I) that will reveal to us the mind of our Savior in order that we might be faithfully obedient.

The following constitution is presented as a communicative instrument to explain and teach the true nature of and purpose for union together in Christ to those God adds to this body. This constitution is intended to serve:

1. as a beginning point of agreement whereby variant views concerning the mind of Christ can be evaluated,
 2. as a basis for evaluation of our progress toward Biblical objectives,
 3. as a textbook for instruction in Bible study,
- and
4. as a protection against the encroachment of teaching contrary to the Scriptures.

This constitution is intended to represent the common understanding of all members of this local body, and therefore, will serve as a church commitment, statement of faith, and guide for orderly functioning.

This organization shall constitute a local church and be self governing and independent of all other denominational bodies, missionary organizations or branches thereof. This local church shall be know as Believers' Chapel and has been organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational and scientific purposes, within the meaning of the Internal Revenue Code.

More particularly, the purposes of this church shall be, and are hereby declared to be:

1. to bring glory to God both in the earthly and heavenly realms by each member ministering to one another as each is gifted and empowered by the Spirit of God so that each can advance to a point characterized as mature while attaining a unity in relationship to one another and to the Son of God, resulting in true worship unto the triune God and effective deployment for the proclamation of the gospel;
2. to edit and publish such texts, pamphlets and other literature as shall grow out of, or be in any manner connected with, its objectives and purposes and/or shall be of advantage or benefit thereto;
3. to establish and maintain a program of instruction up to and including college-level, and to grant degrees or certificates consistent with the student's academic achievement;

4. to receive and accept gifts, legacies, annuities, devises, bequests, endowments and conveyances of property, real, personal, or mixed; to charge and collect fees if deemed advisable, or generally to accept and receive any other funds from whatsoever source; any or all of the foregoing, however, to be accepted only if consistent with the spirit and purpose of this church and if approved by the Elders;
5. to buy and otherwise acquire and own, hold, use, improve, rent, lease, mortgage and/or otherwise encumber and sell, otherwise dispose of and deal in any and all kinds of, and interests in, such property, real personal and mixed as may be necessary, desirable or convenient to carry on any of the purposes of this church;
6. to do such other and further things in connection with, or appertaining to, the objectives and purposes about outlined as may be consistent therewith and/or as may be reasonably necessary or proper in furthering Christianity and spreading the gospel;

and

7. to be obedient to civil law, notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, and not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a church exempt from federal income tax under the Internal Revenue Code or (b) by a church, contributions to which are deductible under the Internal Revenue Code.

Article I – Authority

Statement

By faith we declare that God exists (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 14:1; Hebrews 11:6), that He has revealed Himself to man (John 1:18; John 17:3; Romans 1:18-21), and that man, created in the image of God, is capable of appropriating and apprehending divine truth (Genesis 1:27).

Support and Explanation

1. God has revealed Himself to man in general revelation of nature (Psalms 19:1-4; Romans 1:18-20), in special revelation of the Word of God incarnate—Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2; John 1:18), and the Holy Scriptures (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12).
2. The Holy Scriptures consist of the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament (Luke 24:44; Matthew 24:35; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Revelation 22:18-19—the meaning of which may be extended to all Scripture).
3. The canon of Holy Scripture is closed, hence special revelation has ceased after the Holy Spirit guided the production of the book of Revelation. (This is supported largely by the doctrine of God’s providence and by stated purpose for the Scriptures found in 2 Timothy 3:17 and 2 Peter 1:2-4. See also Revelation 22:18-19—the meaning of which may be extended to all Scripture).
4. The Holy Scriptures are the result of dual authorship wherein the human writers, without losing their individual personalities and writing styles, were guided and superintended by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21; Isaiah 30:8; Jeremiah 30:2; Hebrews 2:2).
5. The Holy Scriptures are inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16) verbally (Exodus 20:1; John 6:63, 17:7; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13) and plenary—i.e., complete and absolute (2 Timothy 3:10-17; 1 Timothy 5:18; 2 Peter 3:15-16, 1:20-21) with the result that in the words of the original manuscripts they are free from error and incapable of teaching deception in whole or in part (John 17:17; Matthew 5:17-19; John 10:33-36; Matthew 24:35; Psalm 119:89).
6. The Holy Scriptures are alive and powerful (John 6:63; Hebrews 4:12) toward the unsaved (John 5:24; 1 Peter 1:23) and toward the saved (John 17:17-19; Ephesians 5:26).
7. The Holy Scriptures are capable of being understood by the believer (Psalm 19:7-8, 119:105, 130) through the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:12-16; 1 John 2:20, 27; John 16:12-15).
8. The Holy Scriptures need to be diligently studied by the believer to arrive at the proper meaning (2 Timothy 2:15; Proverbs 2:1-5; Acts 17:11; 2 Peter 3:16).
9. The Holy Scriptures are to be taught in the Church for the spiritual well-being of every believer (Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 3:2; Acts 20:20, 27-38, 32; Acts 6:2; 1 Timothy 4:13-16).

Principles

The Holy Scriptures are the only (sole) authority for faith (John 20:30-31; Jude 3) and life of the believer (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Acts 20:32; 1 John 2:5; Acts 5:17-32). To enable accurate and consistent interpretation of the Bible and, thus determination of the will of God, the following principles will form the basis for all interpretation. These were arrived at from a consideration of the nature of the Bible, a study of the laws of language, a study of the New Testament's interpretation of the Old Testament, and the regular rules of human communication, since God intended His revelation to be understood.

1. Principle

Spiritual truth requires spiritual receptivity.

Explanation

The natural man does not have spiritual receptivity; he can analyze and acquire knowledge, but he does not receive the truth. The man who has not received spiritual life from God lacks an essential qualification for understanding God's message.

2. Principle

The Holy Spirit illuminates the truth adequately to each individual.

Explanation

Saying that we can understand God's Word does not mean we can understand everything in it, solve all problems of interpretation, and get answers to all our questions. But we can understand enough to know God's will and to obey His commands when we have necessary qualifications:

- a. a **hungry** heart (1 Peter 2:2) - (Like precious ore in a mine, you find it if you are determined to get it),
- b. an **obedient** heart (Psalm 119:98-100) - God sees the heart and knows if it is responsive. New truth comes with obedience to that which we already know),
- c. a **disciplined** heart (Matthew 7:7) - (No one can compel another to study the Bible. There must be Spirit-produced self-discipline—Galatians 5:22-23),

and

- d. a **teachable** heart (Isaiah 50:4) - (A humble recognition that our knowledge of perfect truth is imperfect and incomplete will motivate us to learn from God and each other).

3. Principle

There is only one interpretation intended by God.

Explanation

There may be many applications and several principles which can be drawn from a given portion of Scripture, but there is only one interpretation. It is proper for a word to have various meanings and senses. But when a word is used in a given situation, it normally possesses but one intended meaning. If there were more than one meaning intended, then we would be hopelessly adrift without a basis for understanding God's message to us. All concepts of multiple meanings must be rejected.

4. **Principle**

The meaning of the Bible must be explained according to the normal and customary usage of its language which will be considered herein as the “literal interpretation.”

Explanation

To interpret is to discover what the author meant by what he said and explain it in language expression understandable in our day. The literal approach takes into account the fact that fulfilled prophecy has always been literally fulfilled. Literal interpretation is based upon the universal laws of human language which are timeless. These universal laws were not “made up” by man, but rather discovered by study of the communication process.

Every believer has the right to interpret the Bible for himself, but he has no “right” to make up his own private rules. To do this would destroy language as a way of communicating between persons. God intended to communicate and therefore we can expect Him to use language in a normal way.

It should be noted that “literal” as used here is **not** intended to mean non-figurative. Figurative language is commonplace and should be understood in the normal or customary manner and, in that sense, interpreted accordingly.

5. **Principle**

Scripture interprets Scripture.

Explanation

One passage of Scripture casts light on another. Plain statements help explain obscure ones. Plain statements illumine figurative ones. New Testament history and teachings unveil Old Testament prophecy. Doctrine must be taken from passages that are clear and not from those that are obscure.

Scripture interprets Scripture because there is a total teaching of truth of a unity of Scripture called “the analogy of faith.” The basic assumption here is that there is one system of truth contained in Scripture, and therefore, all doctrines must cohere or agree with each other.

6. **Principle**

Since God gave the revelation of Himself to specific people within particular periods of time with the purpose of communicating, the Bible must be interpreted in light of the historical, geographical, and cultural backgrounds as far as that can be known.

Explanation

Holy Scripture is the truth of God accommodated in form to the human finite mind. The Scriptures were written in a human or social environment and its examples are drawn from that environment. When we learn the content of that environment, we can know the meaning of the revealed example. This is accommodation of form, not content. For example, God’s almightiness or the content is not accommodated in any way, but the way it is expressed is accommodated to man. This is the anthropomorphic character of revelation.

Revelation is progressive in nature in that the complete revelation unfolded to man progressively and gradually. There is progression in content, not form. The New Testament is not more inspired than the Old Testament. The movement is from incompleteness to completeness (note John 16:12).

The question that must be asked is, “What would the historical recipients have understood by the statement?” The interpreter of Scripture must know where the recipient is in the history of God’s

revelation. We must guard against bringing the author to the present day and making him speak the language of the twentieth century.

7. **Principle**

Interpretation must be in light of the context.

Explanation

The Bible is no mere collection of good texts or verses put together without relation to one another. To interpret contrary to the context is to teach falsehood for truth. There are four contexts to be considered:

- a. the immediate context,
- b. the context of the book,
- c. the context of the Bible,
- and
- d. the cultural context.

A word in a context becomes a term with only one intended meaning. A term is part of a phrase; a phrase is part of a sentence; a sentence is part of a paragraph, and all are related and intended to communicate.

8. **Principle**

Interpretation must be according to the grammar of the sentence in the original language.

Explanation

Grammar takes in the form of words and the relationship between the words. This involves an understanding of the parts of speech: noun, verb, pronoun, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, interjection, their cases, moods, tense, and so forth.

9. **Principle**

Figures of speech denote some form which a word or sentence takes, different from its ordinary and natural form, always for the purpose of giving additional force, more life, intensified feeling, and/or greater emphasis. They are intended to express plain truth in a different way and should be interpreted in a normal way as the hearer in the historical setting would have taken them.

Explanation

We should always start with the plain interpretation. But if this results in a contradiction of known facts, then we assume it to be figurative, and we should look in the immediate context for the explanation.

Recognition of a figure is important. The words of Christ concerning the Lord's Supper are an example. "This is my body." The immediate context indicates that Jesus is using a figure of speech. His body was standing before them and they would not have understood Him to be saying that the bread **was His literal body**.

Article II – The Nature of the Church

1. The Church is one spiritual body (1 Peter 2:5) consisting of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 12:4-5). A **believer** is one who has repented from sin (Acts 17:30; 1 Thessalonians 1:9), and exercised faith in the promises of God in Christ (Romans 3:21-22. See Doctrine of Salvation - Article V). The Biblical means whereby these conditions are made known to the Church and the world is by demonstrated obedience and identification with Christ in water baptism by immersion (Acts 2:38, 41, 47, 16:30-34).
2. The Church began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 11:15-18; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Matthew 16:18); is God's primary agent upon the earth for this age (Matthew 16:18; Acts 1:6-8; Ephesians 3:2-13), and will be complete when Christ comes back (John 14:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).
3. The Church manifests itself in local assemblies (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; Philemon 2) in which believers are to take **active participation** (Hebrews 10:25).
4. Two ordinances have been committed to the local church. They are memorial in nature, commemorate something which has already been accomplished, and are to be observed faithfully until Jesus Christ returns:
 - a. Christian Baptism is the momentary, complete immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the triune God. It symbolizes the atoning death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and is a visible expression of the believer's union with Christ in faith (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41; 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:4-5).
 - b. The Lord's Supper (Communion) is a corporate ordinance also commemorating the atoning death of Christ and serving as a reminder of the New Covenant (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
5. Each member of the Body of Christ and of the local assemblies is a priest before God (1 Peter 2:5) and is therefore, both privileged and responsible in worshipping Him in prayer and with spiritual sacrifices. Each believer, being subject in conscience to God alone, is free from any doctrines or commandments of men which are contrary to the Word of God. Thus, Church and State should be maintained separately. Recognizing, however, the divine ordination of civil authorities, the believer should yield himself in subjection to all lawful commandments of civil government within the dictates of his God-controlled conscience (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-3, 7).

Article III – The Purpose of the Church

The Church is to bring glory to God both in the earthly and heavenly realms (1 Peter 2:9; Ephesians 3:10) resulting in true worship unto the triune God (John 4:24).

The primary purpose for the Church in relation to the world is the effective local and worldwide deployment for the proclamation of the gospel (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2; Acts 2:47) for the conversion of sinners and their addition to the body for growth and protection.

The primary purpose for the Church in relation to itself is edification, which is to be accomplished by each member ministering to one another as each is gifted and empowered by the Spirit of God (Romans 12:1-21; 1 Peter 4:7-11), so that each can advance to a point characterized as mature (Ephesians 4:11, 16) while attaining a unity in relationship to one another and to the Son of God (1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 12:5; Ephesians 4:13, 16).

Article IV – Government

Leadership in the Church

1. The Head of the Church is Christ (Colossians 1:18). He is the true Source of all the Church is and does, and His glory is to be the objective of every act and function, and motive of the body, both individually and collectively.
2. Christ has provided His thoughts and His direction for the body in the Bible (2 Peter 1:3). It gives His commands, His counsel and His purposes for every believer (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The mind of Christ, therefore, is not determined by vote of the congregation, nor by edict from the leadership, but is discovered by careful study and accurate interpretation of the Bible as the Holy Spirit illuminates the truth therein contained (John 14:26, 16:13). The body is to conform to His Word thus carrying out His will, to His purpose, and to His glory. This is the body's whole reason for being.
3. The Biblically authorized officers of the local church who administer order, discipline, and worship are the elders [overseers] (Acts 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1). The Biblical pattern and teaching calls for a plurality of elders, shepherding and ruling the local church together under the headship of Christ.
 - a. The leadership responsibility of the elders is limited in scope to the local assembly, and there is no ecclesiastical appointment or calling that would position one elder over another. There may be the exercise of leadership for the purpose of orderly function, but this exercise of leadership is a matter of function and must be distinguished from positional authority. Various elders would provide leadership in the areas where they are gifted or where training and experience would enable them to function best (1 Corinthians 3:1-9).
 - b. Leadership in the local assembly is not priestly in nature. Since each believer is a priest unto God, there is no need for a priestly office within the church (1 Peter 2:9). The terms 'clergy' and 'laity' lead to doctrinal inaccuracies and should be avoided (1 Timothy 2:5).

- c. The appointment to leadership is by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28) as evidenced by a sincere desire to serve (1 Timothy 3:1) and identified by the assembly as revealed standards for qualification are met (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1).
 - d. The Biblical terms “elder, overseer, pastor” refer to the same person (Acts 20).
 - e. The function of leadership involves:
 - 1) ruling the church. This is to be done by example (1 Peter 5:2-3) and incorporates giving direction by means of meaningful structure (1 Timothy 3:4-5, 5:17),
 - 2) shepherding the church (1 Peter 5:2),
 - 3) teaching the church (2 Timothy 2:2),
 - and
 - 4) representing the church (Acts 20:17).
4. The elders will be assisted by deacons (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8; Acts 6:1-7). The basic idea of this position is service that will relieve the elders from business affairs that would interfere with their ministry of the Word and prayer.

Summary

In its government the local church is independent of outside earthly rulership, whether religious or secular. It is the sole and highest earthly authority, self-supporting and self-propagating. There are no offices in the New Testament that are given authority over more than one local church (Acts 15; Philippians 1:1).

Operation of the Church

The form of government is theocratic (God ruled) in nature. The will of God is expressed through the Word of God. Thus the local church is not a political democracy, but a theocracy. If there are divisions within the congregation, it means that some or all are not being led by the Holy Spirit. For example, the Scripture may be ignored, wrongly interpreted, or misapplied.

The first letter to the Corinthian church deals with many problems of church function and is addressed to the entire body and every member in it (I Corinthians 1: 1&2). With this in mind, responsibility for the proper function of the church and for ascertaining the will of the Lord rests upon the entire body whereas elders have primary responsibility for church leadership. (I Peter 5:1-5) Leadership for specific functions may be prayerfully delegated at the discretion of the Elders.

Believing that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and that His will is determined by prayer and careful, accurate interpretation of the Bible, which is the sole authority for faith and life, we purpose in all matters to ask, “What is the will of our Lord concerning this decision?”

Article V – Doctrine

The apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, said, “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the Word! Be ready in season, out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (2 Timothy 4:1-4). Desiring to hold to Biblical truth and applying true principles of interpretation we believe concerning:

The Holy Trinity (Theology proper)

1. God is numerically and essentially one (Deuteronomy 6:4; John 10:30; James 2:19).
2. God’s essence is indivisible (Isaiah 45:5-6; 46:9) and belonging fully to three divine Persons (Matthew 28:19; John 15:26; Matthew 3:16-17).
3. Each Person of the Holy Trinity is distinguishable from each other Person, and God the Father is the divine Source of all things (Romans 11:36); God the Son is the divine Agent of all things (John 1:3); God the Holy Spirit is the divine Completer or Applier of all things (Psalm 104:30; John 16:8; John 3:8).
4. Full and complete comprehension of the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity is impossible for finite human minds, but this in no way denies the truth of the Scriptural doctrine (Deuteronomy 29:29).

God the Father

1. God the Father is revealed in Holy Scripture as:

self-existent (John 5:26),
infinite in regard to His perfect Being (Matthew 5:48),
infinite in regard to His eternity (Psalm 90:2),
infinite in regard to His omnipresence (1 Kings 8:27),
immutable (James 1:17),
a personal Spirit (John 4:24),
all-knowing (1 John 3:20),
all-wise (Psalm 33:10-11),
truthful (Romans 3:4),
faithful (Lamentations 3:22-23),
benevolent (Psalm 145:9),
love (1 John 4:8, 16),
gracious (Ephesians 1:6-7),
merciful (2 Corinthians 1:3),
longsuffering (2 Peter 3:15),
holy (Isaiah 6:3),
righteous (John 17:25),
the sovereign Ruler of the universe (Psalm 135:6),
and
all-powerful (Revelation 1:8).

2. God the Father is known by His attributes, but His attributes as seen in revealed Scripture do not exhaust His essence (Romans 11:33-35).
3. God has freely decreed all things for His own glory (Romans 11:36; Revelation 4:11), but He was not and is not the efficient cause of sin (Ezekiel 28:15).

Jesus Christ (Christology)

1. Jesus Christ shares the exact same essence as God the Father, being God the Son (John 10:30) and while there is only one divine nature (Deuteronomy 6:4; James 2:19) there are three entities or Persons called the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; John 15:26; Ephesians 1:1-14) and they exist as a Trinity, three distinguishable divine Persons, that are indivisible in essence (Isaiah 45:5-6 versus Matthew 3:16-17).
2. Jesus Christ was eternally pre-existent (John 1:1) and He became fully man through the virgin birth (Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:27; Isaiah 7:14) and while being fully man, was and is fully God in one Person without confusion of attributes (Colossians 2:9; Philippians 2:5-8) and therefore, did not sin in fact (1 Peter 2:22; 2 Corinthians 5:21) was unable to sin (Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:2-3) and yet is fully able to come to the aid of sinful man (Hebrews 2:14-18, 4:14-16).
3. Jesus Christ, being fully God, did not give up any of His divine attributes, but voluntarily limited the manifestation of them (Philippians 2:5-8; John 1:14) and came to manifest (make visible) God (John 1:18), to redeem mankind (Titus 2:11-14), and will come to rule God's kingdom (Isaiah 9:6).
4. Jesus Christ, motivated by divine love and on the basis of God's holiness, satisfied divine justice concerning sin by His life (1 Peter 2:21-23; John 3:16), His ministry (Matthew 11:2-6; 12:28), and His substitutionary death (2 Corinthians 5:21; Mark 10:45; Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2).
5. Jesus Christ has baptized all believers in the Holy Spirit for the purpose of uniting them into one body (1 Corinthians 12:13) at the moment of their union with Christ in salvation (Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:9).
6. Jesus Christ was raised bodily from the grave (Matthew 28:5-6; Acts 2:30-32) which demonstrated His deity (Romans 1:3-4), revealed God's acceptance of His atonement for sin (Hebrews 1:3, 10:5-7), and guaranteed the future bodily resurrection of every believer to life everlasting (John 14:19; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

The Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)

1. The Holy Spirit shares the exact same essence as the Father and the Son (see above)
2. The Holy Spirit is a distinguishable Person (John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, 12:11; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 3:7) and divine (Acts 5:3-4).
3. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (John 15:26) which does not imply subordination, but perfect orderliness within the triune Godhead (Matthew 28:19; John 14:26; Acts 28:25-27).

4. The Holy Spirit executes the divine will in the world (Job 33:4; Isaiah 40:13-14), has executed sovereignty in relation to the incarnation (Luke 1:35), has inspired the written Word of God (2 Peter 1:21), and is actively involved in the salvation of man (2 Thessalonians 2:13; John 16:7-11; John 3:7-8; Titus 3:5) and the restraint of sin (Genesis 6:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7).
5. The Holy Spirit indwells every believer (1 Corinthians 6:19), is the Seal of eternal salvation (Ephesians 1:13, 4:30), and fills (or controls) every believer who yields (Ephesians 5:18).
6. The Holy Spirit manifests His power and presence through gifts of ministry within the body (1 Corinthians 12:7; Romans 1:11-12) and these gifts are to benefit the Church (1 Corinthians 14:12, 26) and bring glory to God (1 Peter 4:11).
7. The Holy Spirit empowers every believer to convey a witness for Christ in the world (Acts 1:8) and thrusts Christian workers into various parts of the world (Acts 13:2-4; Acts 8:39-40).

Angels (Angelology)

1. Angels are created beings (Psalm 148:2-5; Colossians 1:16); some of which serve God (Matthew 26:53; Hebrews 1:14) and others of which have sinned (2 Peter 2:4), are called demons (James 2:19), and serve Satan (Mark 3:22; Revelation 12:7)—who himself is a fallen angel (Ezekiel 28:14-15; Isaiah 14:13-15).
2. Satan has been and is actively engaged in seeking the overthrow of God's kingdom (Isaiah 14:12-13). He is now the ruler of this world system, seeking to keep unbelievers from coming to know Christ (2 Corinthians 4:3-4), trying to dissuade believers from trusting God (Genesis 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:8-9), and endeavoring to establish counterfeit religion (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).
3. Satan acts as the accuser of believers before God's throne (Job 1:6, 9; Zechariah 3:1-2; Revelation 12:10).
4. God provides the believer with divine protection from Satan and his demons (Ephesians 6:10-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:3).
5. Satan has been judged at the Cross (John 12:31, 16:11; Hebrews 2:14) and will suffer the torments of eternal fire forever after the millennium (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

Man (Anthropology)

1. God created man immediately from the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7) and in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27).
2. Man was created a rational being (Genesis 1:28, 2:15,20) and morally responsible to obey God (Genesis 2:16-17), but he willfully sinned (Genesis 3:1-7) and brought spiritual and physical death upon the whole human race (Genesis 2:17, 3:19, 22-24; Romans 5:12).

3. Man has been assigned the guilt and penalty of Adam's sin (Romans 5:12), has an inherited sin nature [humanity] (Psalm 51:5), and is totally depraved (Romans 3:10-18; Ephesians 2:1-3); but he still reflects the image of God (James 3:9; 1 Corinthians 11:7; Colossians 3:10).
4. Man is hopelessly lost apart from salvation in Christ (Acts 4:12) and is subject to God's wrath (John 3:36).
5. Saved man is still subject to personal sin because of his sin nature [humanity] (Romans 6:12, 7:17-21), the present world system (1 John 2:15-16), and the devil (Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Peter 5:8-9).
6. The sinful believer reaps divine chastisement (Hebrews 12:4-13; 1 Corinthians 3:15, 11:30), but he can receive forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32; 1 John 1:9), and can never suffer loss of eternal salvation (1 Corinthians 3:15; John 6:37-40, 10:27-29).

Marriage and Family

- 1 We believe that marriage was ordained by God at creation as the sacred union of one man and one woman. All sexual relations must therefore be reserved for that union. Christian marriage is a further representation of Christ's relationship to His church. (Genesis 1:26-28 & 2:24; Matthew 19:1-10; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:22-23; Hebrews 13:4)
- 2 We also believe that children are a blessing from the Lord. Thus all human life is sacred and worthy of protection from the moment of conception. (Psalm 127 & 128; Psalm 139:13-16)

Salvation (Soteriology)

1. All Salvation is by God's grace which is His free and sovereign gift of unmerited favor (Ephesians 2:8-9) to men through the agency of the Holy Spirit at the point of belief in the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:13), and is only possible in the Person and work of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5; John 14:6).
2. Christ died for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2; Hebrews 2:9; John 1:29) and whosoever will accept Christ as personal Savior will be saved (John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10; John 1:12; Acts 16:31).
3. Salvation is a work of God the Father wherein He chose the believer (Ephesians 1:3-6; Acts 13:48), the Son has provided divine satisfaction for sin (1 John 4:10; Ephesians 1:7-12), and the Holy Spirit is the Seal which guarantees eternal salvation (Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).
4. Salvation occurs when man, confronted with God's Word (Romans 10:17; 1 Peter 1:23), repents of his personal sin (Acts 17:30; 1 Thessalonians 1:9) and receives God's grace through faith in the Person and work of Christ (Romans 3:21-22).
5. Upon salvation man is regenerated or born anew from above by the Holy Spirit (John 3:5; Titus 3:5-6), forgiven his sins (Ephesians 1:7), made a new spiritual creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), declared righteous by God (1 Corinthians 1:3) based upon the imputation of Christ's righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21) bringing reconciliation to God (Romans 5:10-11).
6. Justification is that judicial act of God in which He, on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ in satisfying all the claims of the Law, declares and treats the believing sinner as righteous (Romans 5:1; Galatians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:24-26; Isaiah 53:10-12).

7. The saved individual is adopted as a son of God and declared to be His child with all the privileges of an heir (Romans 8:16-17; Galatians 4:4-5), is brought into an eternal, indwelling union with Christ (Ephesians 1:4; Galatians 2:20; John 5:24; 1 John 5:12-13; 1 Corinthians 6:19), and is responsible for participating with the Holy Spirit in sanctification which is God's gracious and continuous operation by which He delivers from the pollution of sin, renews the whole nature in the image of God, and enables and empowers the believer to perform good works (2 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 12:1-2; Philippians 2:13; Colossians 3:10; John 15:4-5).
8. God secures the final salvation of all believers (Philippians 1:6; John 6:39; Jude 1), keeps the believer from that continued and open practice of sin or apostasy that would end in eternal damnation (2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Corinthians 11:32), and, as to the future, will bring all believers to that ultimate salvation which is entrance into the eternal of blessedness (John 10:27-28; Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 2:7).

Last Things (Eschatology)

1. Upon death a believer passes into Christ's presence immediately (2 Corinthians 5:8), and a non believer passes into Hades and suffers torment (Luke 16:22-23) as he awaits the resurrection of the lost (John 5:28-29).
2. There will be a bodily resurrection for both the saved and the lost (John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:4-6, 13).
3. At the end of the Church age, Christ will descend to take up (rapture) His Church (John 14:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17) and judge each believer according to his deeds (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
4. Some time after the consummation of the Church age, the tribulation period of God's dealings with the nation Israel and the unbelieving world will begin. (Daniel 9:27; Jeremiah 30:7; Matthew 24:3-31; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 6-19).
5. The end of the tribulation period will usher in the return of Christ to the earth with His saints (Revelation 19:11-16) to judge the living (Matthew 25:31-46) and to establish a universal 1000 year reign of righteousness on the earth (Revelation 20:6; Isaiah 11).
6. At the end of the millennial reign of Christ will be the Great White Throne Judgment when the unsaved will be raised, judged according to their works, and committed to a literal hell called the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15).
7. At the end of the millennial reign of Christ and the Great White Throne Judgment the heavens and earth will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10), the new heaven and earth with the new Jerusalem will be established (Revelation 21:1-2), the saints of God will enter eternal bliss in the presence of God (Revelation 21:3-5), and God will reign eternally over all spheres (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

**Church Bylaws
of
Believers' Chapel
Murfreesboro, Tennessee**

Article I – Membership

Section 1 – Qualifications

All those who have exercised faith in the promises of God in Christ, having been born anew from above are eligible for membership in this local church.

Section 2– Reception of Members

The Bible teaches that all believers are united at the moment of spiritual birth by baptism in the Spirit into the body of Christ, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). This universal body is manifested in the world by local assemblies where believers are characterized as “members one of another” (Romans 12:5), and where each is growing spiritually until all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God (Ephesians 4:13; 1 Corinthians 1:10).

In order for this development to occur, a knowledgeable commitment to one another is necessary. This commitment begins with acceptance of the Bible as our common basis of authority for life (Constitution, Article I). It requires agreement as to the nature, purpose and government of a local New Testament church to the extent they are understood (Constitution, Articles II, III, IV).

Those who are believers, as outlined in Section 1, and have experienced a relationship with this body on the basis of the above commitment, after final approval by the Elders, will be recognized at the appropriate time. Instructions will be provided for those interested in becoming part of this local church.

This local church’s current understanding of the major teachings of the Scripture is given in Article V of the Constitution. All members are expected to have read and be in agreement with the doctrine and practice represented in the Church Constitution and Bylaws. This document will be distributed to new members, made available at the Connection Center and available by contacting the church office. These are deeply held beliefs by which we mean to live and operate.

Section 3 – Duties and Responsibilities

Each member is responsible to assist in determining the will of God for this body. This will involve feedback concerning needs and giving Biblical insight in areas where one member may by virtue of special study, experience, or gifting, have clear understanding of God’s direction for this local church.

Each member is called upon to walk in a manner worthy of his/her calling as outlined in Ephesians 4, 5 and 6. From this it is clear that the members’ proper role is that of building each other in love.

Section 4 – Termination

Members who move away may request to be placed upon the extended ministries mailing list, but will be removed from the listing of active members of this local assembly. Membership may also be terminated upon request, death, or as a result of disciplinary action (see Section 5).

Section 5 – Discipline

Members, whose conduct or belief is contrary to Biblical principles and/or to the Constitution of this local church and to the name of Christ, shall be dealt with according to Scriptural principles of discipline for the sake of restoration (Matthew 18:15-17); private offenses (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17); public offenses (1 Corinthians 5:3-5, 11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6).

It is the intention of this local church not to give up trying to restore any member who has been caught in a trespass. If attempts at restoration are unsuccessful, then appropriate discipline will be administered by the elders as outlined in the Bylaws.

Article II – Elders

By accepting appointment, the Elder is agreeing to uphold and abide by the Church Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 1 – Responsibilities and Decision Making

The responsibility for management of the affairs of this local church shall rest upon the Elders. Administrative tasks have been delegated to men who are appointed by God to teach and shepherd the flock of God (Acts 20:22-28; Ephesians 4; 1 Peter 5:1-5). All functional decisions will be made by the Elders after taking all possible steps to ascertain the will of God. This will include communication with the church, since individual members are expected to share needs and insights with the Elders who in turn are responsible to consider this input. The President and/or Secretary are authorized to sign any and all necessary documents for business which has been approved by the Elders. In addition the Elders will establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the purpose of managing the operations of the church. The SOP will be reviewed and revised by the Elders as needed.

Decision Making

- 1 While seeking agreement on issues/decisions it is not necessary that the Elders are unanimous on any given decision. There should be a majority ruling, with any Elder in disagreement choosing deference to the team and their fellow Elders. A majority ruling is defined as no more than one Elder being in disagreement. For example, in the instance of five Elders, four must be in agreement to make a final decision. Deference is not halfhearted or begrudging; it is a willing turn toward the will of the Elder team away from one's own will when necessary. If there is disagreement it should give cause for thought/prayer and consideration among the other Elders.
- 2 Minor decisions can be made even if all Elders are not present
 - a Major decisions should wait for all Elders to be present if possible. If an Elder is unable to attend the discussions, the decision can be made with the elders who are present. However, an attempt must be made to get decision from an absent Elder via text/phone/email, prior to making a major decision.
 - b If the Elders have to debate whether it is minor or major then it is probably major.
- 3 Team decisions are usually preferable to decisions made by a single Elder.
- 4 Individual Elders may be empowered to make decisions but these must be specified and agreed upon by the Elder team.
- 5 Any decision that impacts the entire body should be made by the Elder team.
- 6 If two Elders disagree on a decision for which they are empowered, the decision should come before the Elder team.
- 7 Elders should display a united front once a decision is made, regardless of disagreement or deference, seeing the decisions of the team as more important than any one Elder's particular perspective.
- 8 Elders will strive to respond to inter-Elder email requests within 24 hours; texts within 12 hours.
- 9 Decision making will be an open process in that, when appropriate the Elders will receive relevant input from the body. Decisions by the Elders will be final unless such decisions can be demonstrated to be contrary to the revealed will of God. In all matters the needs of each part of the body will be given prayerful consideration.

Section 2 – Qualification

Elders shall be male members of this local church who have demonstrated their faith in Christ as Savior as outlined in the **Church Constitution** in Article II - The Nature of the Church. An Elder is to maintain a lifestyle which is characterized as being irreproachable (that is, one against whom no charge can be brought concerning the habit of his life).

The potential Elder's lifestyle will be evaluated according to the qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

Section 3 – Selection

The Elders have the responsibility to seek a man (men) to meet any deficiency of spiritual gifts among the Elders. He (they) may be secured from within or outside the local assembly.

When such a need arises, each member of the body will be asked to recommend those men who seem qualified and submit a signed evaluation sheet (which will be provided) to the Elders for each person recommended. Those whose names have been submitted will be considered by the Elders.

The purpose is not to elect men to leadership, but to identify those men whom God would appoint. The men who are made known will be evaluated by the Elders on the basis of the evaluation sheets and personal interviews.

The Elders will then announce to the church those being considered for induction and there will be two weeks allowed for anyone to present to the Elders any reason(s) why a particular candidate(s) is not qualified.

Section 4 – Term of Service

The Elders shall be appointed for an indefinite term, subject to annual review. Termination for any reason other than morals or doctrine will be by mutual agreement concerning the will of God. Any Elder may be disciplined according to Biblical principles (1 Timothy 5:19-22).

Any Elder may request temporary or permanent relief from duties if for any reason he feels he is unable to serve.

Article III – Deacons

By accepting induction, the Deacon is agreeing to uphold and abide by the Church Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 1 – Duties

The deacons will serve under to direction of and are directly responsible to the Elders.

Section 2 – Selection

The difference between the deacon and the Elder is related to gifting and appointment by God at a given time in the life of an individual. Deacons shall be male members of this local church who have demonstrated their faith in Christ as Savior as outlined in the **Church Constitution** in Article II Section I. The potential deacon will be evaluated as to his lifestyle according to the qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3.

Section 3 – Term of Service

The deacons shall be appointed for an indefinite term, subject to annual review by the Elders. Termination for any reason other than morals or doctrine will be by mutual agreement concerning the will of God. Any deacon may be disciplined according to Biblical principles (Matthew 18:15-17).

A deacon may request temporary or permanent relief from duties if for any reason he feels he is unable to serve.

Article IV – Meetings

Section 1 – The Church

The church will gather to celebrate Christ's resurrection on the first day of each week and at other times as deemed appropriate for prayer, fellowship, study, etc.

The church will gather annually during the first quarter of the calendar year to report the previous year's progress, outline plans for the coming year, and ratify the previous year's report. Special business meetings may be called by the Elders as needed.

Article V – Amendments

Section 1 – Procedure

This Constitution and Bylaws may be repealed, amended, or added to at the annual or any other business meeting of the church called for that purpose. Proposed changes must be unanimously agreed upon by all Elders in writing and will be made available to each local member thirty (30) days before the appropriate business meeting. During that period any person with concerns or evidence that the change is not God's will should make that known to the elders before the meeting.

In the event that a change is determined not to be appropriate, the necessary corrections will be made and the scheduled meeting will be canceled or held for information purposes only. A new meeting will be scheduled to allow another thirty (30) days for all to interact with evidence demonstrating the change to be contrary to the will of God.

Article VI – Financial Stewardship

Section 1 – Consideration for Staff

The compensation of any church staff member shall be fixed by mutual agreement and reviewed annually, with changes to become effective January 1.

Section 2 – Disbursement of Finances

Accountability and transparency are vital to the stewardship of the Lord's money.

A church budget will be presented to the church annually and a financial report will be submitted quarterly.

In the event expenses in any given month exceed \$2,500.00 over the budget (based on the annual budget) the elders shall inform the deacons with a copy of the report and an explanation of the expense. This also will be reflected on the quarterly report sent to members with the explanation.

Dissolution of assets:

In the event of dissolution, the residual assets will be turned over to one or more organizations with like purposes of this corporation which itself is an exempt organization described in sections 501(C)(3) and 170(C)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or corresponding sections of any prior or future Internal Revenue Code. This process would be the responsibility of the Elders.

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