



PIONEER CHURCH CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE: OUR CALLING

Out of appreciation for God’s grace, mercy, and love shown to us, we have surrendered to His calling to be a church to serve Him in the region in and around Rockingham County, NC.

We believe that He has called us to be a bible-believing evangelical Church, and we have chosen to affiliate with the Southern Baptist convention, the Baptist State Convention of NC, and the Dan Valley Missionary Baptist Association.

We intend this Constitution to be a “guiding hand” to our leaders and to our congregation. It is not intended to prevent the creation of new processes and new ministries in order to fulfill the vision of the church. **Neither should this Constitution ever usurp the Word of God as the authority by which Pioneer Church gathers and operates.**

Only Division III of this Constitution (which outlines our structure and how we operate) is fully constitutional and binding. This is the only section of this Constitution which requires a congregational vote for amendments.

DIVISION I: OUR VISION STATEMENT

Our Vision and overriding purpose for the existence of Pioneer Church flows from the Gospel's power to save and transfer us from the Kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of God's beloved Son, Jesus. God's purpose for His people is to make us citizens of His Eternal Kingdom. Therefore, the Vision of Pioneer Church is best articulated in the following statement:

"To be a gathering of KINGDOM PEOPLE with KINGDOM PASSIONS who fulfill Jesus' KINGDOM PURPOSE"

DIVISION II: OUR THEOLOGICAL CONVICTIONS

Introduction: Many churches claim to believe in the Bible as God's Infallible Word. Of those that do, there are many differing doctrinal beliefs. This is often due to differing approaches to interpreting the same inerrant Bible. It is important to realize that evangelical, Bible-believing churches usually agree upon the essentials of Scripture.

At Pioneer Church, it is our desire to focus upon these essentials. We believe it to be wise to major upon the majors and to minor upon the minors. Thus, we hold to the ancient adage: --In essential beliefs: we must have UNITY—In non-essential beliefs: we must have LIBERTY—In all our beliefs: we must show CHARITY.

We have set forth our theological convictions concerning these essentials in the following statements:

A. Our Statement of Faith

1. About God: God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three personalities: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.
2. About Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless, human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return again someday to earth to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
3. About the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily.
4. About the Bible: The Bible is God's Word to us. It is inspired, inerrant, and infallible. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because the Bible is inspired by God, it is the truth without any mixture of error.

5. About Human Beings: People are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. People are the supreme objects of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called sin. This attitude separates people from God and causes many problems in life.

6. About Marriage: Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as outlined in Scripture, created and sanctioned by God. Marriage between one man and one woman uniquely reflects Christ's relationship with His Church. Marriage also serves as the foundational unit of a stable society.

7. About Salvation: Salvation is God's free gift to us, but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith, we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his/her life by faith.

8. About Eternity: People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

Note: For a more in-depth view of our theological convictions, we would refer you to the more detailed Statement of Faith of the Southern Baptist Convention which is attached in **Appendix B** as a non-constitutional appendix to this document.

B. Our Statement of Core Values:

If the *vision* of Pioneer Church is *what* we are trying to accomplish, the *values* of Pioneer Church are *why* we are striving to accomplish that vision. The following Core Values are the driving factors for accomplishing the purpose God has assigned to Pioneer Church.

1. THE BIBLE

- Its Authority (Joshua 1:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:20-21)
- Its Power (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12)
- Its Direction (Psalm 119:105)

2. GOSPEL TRANSFORMATION

- Everything covered with Gospel Hope and Influence (Romans 1:18; Philippians 2:5-11)
- Gospel Intentionality in every program/event/act of service (1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 1:20)

3. EXCELLENT WORSHIP

- God-focused, Christ Exalting, Spirit Initiated (Psalm 96:1; Philippians 2:9-11; John 4:23,24)
- Skillfully planned and carried out (Psalm 33:3)
- Appropriately Responsive (Psalm 107:1-2; Zephaniah 3:17)

- Collectively Inviting and Engaging (Ezra 3:11; Psalm 95:1-2,6-7; Ephesians 5:19; Revelation 5:9)

4. CHURCH HEALTH

- Biblical Structure and Polity (Titus 1:5; Ephesians 4:11-12)
- Qualified and Called Leaders (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9)
- Proactive and Beneficial Church Discipline and Accountability (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Titus 1:9, 2:15; Hebrews 13:17)
- Unity (Psalm 133:1; John 17:20-21; Ephesians 4:3; 1 Peter 3:8)

5. AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

- Restorative Transparency (Ephesians 4:15,25; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20)
- Genuine Affection (John 13:34; Romans 12:9,10; 1 John 3:16-18)
- Intentional, Kingdom-focused Discipleship (Matthew 4:17-23; Acts 2:42-47; Acts 20:24)

6. KINGDOM MENTALITY

- Eternally Focused in a Temporal World (2 Corinthians 4:18b)
- Servant Hearts both inside the church and the community (Matthew 5:16; Matthew 25:40; John 13:1-20)

7. CELEBRATING KINGDOM WINS

- When God shows up and shows off, we take notice and celebrate! (Psalm 26:6-8; Isaiah 12:5; Luke 17:11-19)

DIVISION III: OUR STRUCTURE FOR DOING MINISTRY **(OUR POLITY: OUR FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT)**

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Polity is an ecclesiastical term used to describe the system of leadership and governance of a particular church. We believe that the structure of our church (the leadership and governance system of our church) should not be determined by culture, business practices, or even denominational traditions. Rather, our structure here at Pioneer Church should arise out of the clear teachings of God's Word as it reflects upon the nature of the church being a fellowship, a family, a body, and a flock.

Further, we believe that the biblical words describing the pastor(s) of a church all describe the same person:

-*poimen* describes the shepherding function of the pastor: he is often called shepherd

-*presbuteros* describes the personal maturity of the pastor he is often called elder

-*episcopos* describes the management & leadership function of the pastor: he is often called overseer

Thus, the Lord has led us at Pioneer Church to establish a simple biblical structure for the leadership of our church family with shepherd leaders who have the primary responsibilities of leading the vision of the church flock, managing the ministries of the church body, and facilitating the shepherding of the church family. While our polity will include others in leadership (see broader list below), it is our conviction that the Word and the Spirit are leading us to prescribe that while Jesus Christ is the one true King and Head of our Church, our Lead Pastor and his Elders are the primary “leaders” of our flock, and we will trust them to serve the Lord as they lead us. We are convinced that this structure is the most biblical paradigm for creating clarity of vision, consistent implementation, and conflict-free leadership dynamics.

The broader list of leaders and officers of this church shall be Lead Pastor, Elders, Deacons, Ministry Team Leaders, Trustees, Clerk and Treasurer. The duties of all of these officers and leaders are prescribed in this Constitution as extrapolated from the Scriptures. This church shall have such other officers as wisdom and the Holy Spirit may direct to carry out the purpose of this church. The church may add officers as needed by amending this Constitution.

CHAPTER TWO: OUR LEAD PASTOR

A. Introduction:

We believe that the Lord has founded the role of the Lead Pastor to be one of biblical authority subject to the authority of Christ and the authority of the congregation of Pioneer Church. We believe the Lead Pastor to be the vision leader of our flock, the overseer of the ministries of Pioneer Church, and the primary teacher/preacher who brings us the Word of God. Our congregation holds the position of the Lead Pastor in high regard and will consequently delegate significant biblical authority to him in accordance with the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

B. The authorities and responsibilities of the Lead Pastor

As we have studied God’s Word and sought the direction of the Holy Spirit, we have been led to delegate to the Lead Pastor of Pioneer Church the following roles and responsibilities as our servant leader.

1. The Lead Pastor is the Vision leader of our church body. We trust him to lead us to follow the Lord in our calling as a church.
2. The Lead Pastor is the overseer/manager of all of the ministry arenas of our church family. He may choose to delegate and assign responsibilities to others via supervisory tiers, but ultimately, he is the human-being responsible for all that happens or fails to happen in the ministries of Pioneer Church.
3. The Lead Pastor is the overseer/manager of the Elders, Deacons, Ministry Team Leaders, the Administrative & Support Staff, and any part-time staff. Obviously, he can assign supervisory tiers to assist him. The staff serves at his pleasure.
4. The Lead Pastor is an ex-officio member of all boards, committees, and ministry teams of the church.
5. The Lead Pastor is responsible to identify and make initial suggestions for the offices of Elder and Deacon.

6. The Lead Pastor is called to be our primary teacher/preacher but is permitted to ask other qualified men to fill in for him as needed. No one may preach at Pioneer Church without the Lead Pastor's invitation and/or approval unless the Lead Pastor is incapacitated.
7. The Lead Pastor, by virtue of his office, has the duty to administer the church ordinances, to act as moderator for congregational meetings, and to perform various other duties incumbent to his office.
8. The Lead Pastor will identify and enlist, in conjunction with the elders, members of Pioneer Church to serve on the stewardship and personnel teams
9. The Lead Pastor will identify and recommend the hiring and/or termination of all staff positions in conjunction with the Elders and Personnel team of Pioneer Church

C. The qualifications of the Lead Pastor

1. He must meet the basic personal qualifications of an Elder/Pastor. Thus, he must be male.
 - a. General: He that fills this office should possess a competency of human learning and be blameless in life, sound in the faith and apt to teach. He should exhibit a sobriety and holiness of life becoming the Gospel. He should rule his own house well and should have a good report of them that are outside the church.
 - b. He should meet the scriptural qualifications of 1Timothy 3:1-7 (17 qualifications)
 - (1) Desire to serve as Elder (3:1) (2) Above reproach—without reproach (3:2) (3) Husband of one wife (3:2) (4) Temperate (takes life in moderation) (3:2) (5) Prudent or sensible (3:2) (6) Orderly or respectable (3:2) (7) Hospitable (warm, open, friendly) (3:2) (8) Apt/able to teach (3:2) (9) Not an excessive drinker (3:3) (10) Not pugnacious, i.e. not prone to violence or fighting (3:3) (11) Forbearing or gentle (3:3) (12) Uncontentious, i.e. not quarrelsome or belligerent (3:3) (13) Free from the love of money—avaricious (3:3) (14) Rules/manages his own household well (3:4) (15) Keeps his children under control with all dignity (3:4-5) (16) Not a new convert (3:6) (17) Good reputation/witness with those outside the church (3:7)
 - c. Other texts to study: Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 14:23; James 5:14; 1 Tim 5: 17, 19, 22; 2 Tim 2:24-25; Acts 20: 17, 28-32

D. The preferred transition from our outgoing Lead Pastor to our new incoming Lead Pastor

1. The preferred option for the transition from one Lead Pastor to our next Lead Pastor is called the "Transitioned Successor Plan". The imprint for this plan is roughly modeled after the biblical paradigm of Paul and Timothy. In this plan, it is our desire for our current Lead Pastor to serve the Lord here at Pioneer Church until he retires. If, in God's Sovereignty, he has sufficient time to do so, it is our desire to see him (in consultation with the Elders) search for and locate his prospective successor, place the successor nominee before the congregation for their approval, groom and disciple successor, and then slowly transition the reins of the Lead Pastor leadership to the successor over approximately a two year period.

2. Step #1: The Lead Pastor (in consultation with the Elders) decides to retire from the office of Lead Pastor at approximately two years out and notifies the congregation of his intention to begin the search for his successor.

3. Step #2: The Lead Pastor (in consultation with the Elders) searches for and locates his nominee to be his successor. Note: it is permissible for the Lead Pastor to search for and locate his successor from the existing Elders, support staff, or member of Pioneer.

4. Step #3: There shall be the appropriate examination of the successor nominee as prescribed earlier in this Constitution.

5. Step #4: The Lead Pastor calls for a congregational meeting to call his nominee successor as our "Lead Pastor Elect". The Lead Pastor shall put before the church only one name and no nomination shall be made from the floor. To be elected "Lead Pastor Elect", the individual nominated must receive TWO THIRDS of the votes cast and it is to be desired that the vote be unanimous. The vote must be taken by secret written ballot. Should the nominee fail to receive the necessary vote, the moderator shall declare the nominee not elected and shall refer the matter back to the Lead Pastor without debate.

6. Step #5: If the Lead Pastor Elect is properly elected, the outgoing Lead Pastor will begin a mentoring process for the Lead Pastor Elect which will last approximately two years. The process will involve an intentional and gradual transition of responsibilities as determined by the (outgoing) Lead Pastor.

7. Step #6: When the transition of responsibilities to the Lead Pastor Elect has been completed in an acceptable manner as determined by the (outgoing) Lead Pastor, the (outgoing) Lead Pastor will call a congregational meeting to notify the PIONEER CHURCH congregation that the transition is complete and that he is officially stepping down from his Lead Pastor office. The congregation should accept the Lead Pastor's retirement resignation with a supermajority 2/3 vote of those voting. Hopefully, the vote will be unanimous. The vote will be secret written ballot. There will not be a subsequent congregational vote to confirm the new Lead Pastor. The previous congregational election (see step #4 above) constitutes the official call for the new man to take on the mantle of the office of Lead Pastor.

8. Step #7: If the (outgoing) Lead Pastor so desires to be designated as "Pastor Emeritus", the congregation may vote to call him to be "Pastor Emeritus" by a simple majority vote (via a secret written ballot). This is an honorary advisory designation which recognizes that the wisdom and experience of the "Pastor Emeritus" might continue to be fruitful and helpful here at PIONEER CHURCH going forward. This position inherently entails no authority or responsibility. However, if the new Lead Pastor desires to do so, he may choose to use the Pastor Emeritus in any ministry role which they would both agree upon. The Pastor Emeritus' role may be either voluntary in nature, or he may be called by the new Lead Pastor to serve on his Elders. This subsequent calling to serve on the Elders would follow the process prescribed in this Constitution.

E. The alternate plan to transition from our outgoing Lead Pastor to our new Lead Pastor.

1. The preferred way for us to transition to our next Lead Pastor is the "Transitioned Successor Plan" described above. However, it is conceivable that certain circumstances might arise which make it

impractical or impossible for the outgoing Lead Pastor to follow the preferred plan. A non-exhaustive list of such circumstances calling for this “alternate plan for transition” might be:

- a. The Lead Pastor decides to resign for his own reasons which do not allow for a two year transition period, e.g. he has a new call to a new ministry, he desires a retirement which needs to happen as soon as possible, he does not desire to search for and locate his successor, he is leaving the ministry, etc.)
- b. A majority of the Elders determines that it is necessary to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of dismissing the Lead Pastor.
- c. 1/4 of the congregation of the Pioneer Church requests a congregational meeting to be called for the purpose of dismissing the Lead Pastor and submits in writing the names of the members requesting such a meeting to one of the Elders .
- d. The unexpected death or incapacitation of the current Lead Pastor.

2. Step #1: Congregational meeting called to dissolve the relationship with the Lead Pastor.

a. The pastoral relationship shall continue until dissolved by the congregation of PIONEER CHURCH at a called meeting designated for this purpose. As described above, this congregational meeting may be called at the request of the Lead Pastor, the majority of the Elders, or 1/4 of the congregation of PIONEER CHURCH. Regardless of who calls this congregational meeting, at least two weeks’ notice shall be given of termination of this relationship, unless otherwise mutually agreed.

b. The conduct of the congregational meeting:

(1) Given the purpose of this meeting, the Lead Pastor (if he is able) will co- Moderate this congregational meeting with one of the other Pastors/Elders who will be elected by the congregation at the beginning of the congregational meeting.

(2) Strict and formal parliamentary procedure (according to Robert’s Rules of Order) will be followed in order to avoid potential heated personal dynamics from occurring.

(3) The vote to dismiss our Lead Pastor will require a supermajority (2/3) vote of the votes cast to dismiss. This vote will be taken by secret written ballot.

3. Step #2: Search for and locate an Interim Pastor when this “alternate plan” produces a vacancy in the Lead Pastorate (after the congregational meeting dissolving the relationship), the personnel team shall promptly nominate to the church (for congregational approval at a congregational meeting) an Interim Pastor Selection Committee of three (3) members who will search for and locate such Interim Pastor. In no case shall the Interim Pastor be eligible to be elected as Lead Pastor. No member of the Elders may fill the position of Interim Pastor. A congregational meeting is not required to call the Interim Pastor.

4. Step #3: Election of Pastor Search Committee

When this “alternate plan” produces a vacancy in the Lead Pastorate, the Elders shall promptly nominate to the church a Pastor Search Committee of nine (9) members, at least two (2) of whom shall be women. The Pastor Search Committee shall have representation from the church Elders and the church-at-large. This committee, when elected by the congregation of PIONEER CHURCH, shall elect a chairman and a secretary from its number and shall proceed with as little delay as possible to select

some male minister of the gospel whose character and qualifications fit him for the office of Lead Pastor of this church.

5. Step #4: Congregational meeting to consider Lead Pastor nominee.

When the Pastor Search Committee (after much prayerful consultation and deliberation of the man's biblical and constitutional qualifications) has agreed upon a nominee, it shall give at least two weeks' notice for the congregational meeting at which time it will submit its nominee for congregational approval. The committee shall put before the church only one name at any time and no nomination shall be made from the floor. To be elected Lead Pastor, the individual nominated by the committee must receive 2/3 of the votes cast and it is to be desired that the vote be unanimous. The vote must be taken by secret written ballot. Should the committee nominee fail to receive the necessary vote, the moderator shall declare the nominee not elected and shall refer the matter back to the committee without debate.

6. Step #5: Ordination/Installation of new Lead Pastor.

If properly elected, the new Lead Pastor will be ordained or installed (if previously ordained) at a special congregational worship service called for this purpose.

CHAPTER THREE: THE OFFICE OF ELDER

1. The Elders consists of those (other than the Lead Pastor) who are ordained and meet the same biblical qualifications as our Lead Pastor as reflected in 1 Timothy 3.

2. Elders shall be selected by the Lead Pastor and other Elders and presented to the church body for consideration and election. When the Lead Pastor and Elders have made a choice, they shall give at least two (2) weeks' notice for the congregational meeting at which they will submit the nominee. The Lead Pastor and Elders shall put before the church only one name at any time and no nomination shall be made from the floor.

3. To be elected to the Elders, the person nominated must receive two-thirds of the votes cast and it is desired that the vote be unanimous. The vote shall be taken by secret written ballot. Should the nominee fail to receive the necessary vote, the moderator shall declare the nominee not elected and shall refer the matter back to the Lead Pastor and Elders without debate.

4. The Elder's relationship shall continue until dissolved at a duly called congregational meeting at the request of either the Lead Pastor, the majority of the Elders, or 1/4 of the membership of the church. At least two weeks' termination notice shall be given unless otherwise mutually agreed. The Elders dissolution/dismissal vote only requires a majority approval.

5. The Elders are responsible to the Lead Pastor (or his designee) and the church for providing leadership to the entire church in their area of specialization.

6. The Elders will evaluate and affirm with the Lead Pastor members of the stewardship and personnel teams

7. The Elders will work with the stewardship team to evaluate budget recommendations by ministry team leaders, and establish an annual operating budget for Pioneer Church which is to be affirmed by majority vote by the congregation

8. The Elders will work with the personnel team in evaluating staff employment recommendations by the Lead Pastor

THE OFFICE OF DEACON

A. The Election of Deacons

1. To be eligible to be elected a deacon, one must be an active and serving male member of the church. They must meet the biblical qualifications of 1 Tim 3:8-13. Those elected shall serve for a term of four (4) years under a system of rotation in which approximately one-fourth (1/4) of the deacons are to be retired from the board each year. A deacon will not be eligible for re-election until one year after the expiration of his term. Notice of the congregational called meeting for the purpose of the election of deacons shall be made from the pulpit at least one (1) week prior to the meeting for election.

2. The Lead Pastor, the Elders, and the current deacons will actively seek suggestions for nominees to fill deacon vacancies. Prior to the election of deacons, those persons approved will be contacted by an acting deacon who will explain the duty and responsibility of a deacon as stated in I Timothy 3. The exact number of deacons to be elected will be recommended by the Lead Pastor to the church to be voted upon individually by the church. They must receive a simple majority of the vote. Any deacon filling a remainder term of one (1) year or less may be considered for re-election.

3. Following the election by majority vote, these men will be ordained/installed by the Lead Pastor at a subsequent service of worship.

B. Meetings of the Deacon Board

1. A representative of the Deacon Board may be chosen, as needed, to called meetings, and other diverse matters needing a deacon representative.

2. The deacon board may normally meet quarterly at such times as the board may agree upon (although not required if not necessary) and may meet in session at the call of either the majority of the deacons, or the Lead Pastor.

C. The Duties of Deacons

1. The deacons shall counsel with the Lead Pastor concerning the on-going spiritual interest of the church and they shall seek to discover and visit the sick and those in distress. They shall from time to time make recommendations to the Lead Pastor. These recommendations shall not be binding unless ratified by the church.

2. It is not the duty of the deacons to lead or to manage any ministries of Pioneer Church or to supervise any staff.

D. The Removal of a Deacon

1. Any deacon may request to be removed from his office for any cause.
2. Additionally, any deacon may be removed from his office for the following: biblical ecclesiastical discipline, failure to fulfill his responsibilities to the office, or other matters of character and good name which warrant such dismissal.
3. The authority to remove a deacon from office lies with the Lead Pastor of PIONEER CHURCH. Immediate notification will be given to the church congregation who elected such deacon.

THE OFFICE OF TRUSTEE

A. The Election of Trustees:

The church shall elect 3 of its male or female members to serve as trustees. The term of office will be for five (5) years. Elections will occur annually. The Trustees will be arranged in classes which rotate yielding approximately 1/3 of the trustees rotating off every year. The number of trustees to be elected and the actual persons to be nominated are to be determined by the Lead Pastor and the Elders. The election to the office of trustee requires a simple majority vote by the congregation. Vacancies may be filled at any congregational meeting on recommendation of the Lead Pastor, and Elders with the one elected serving the unexpired term of the one whose vacancy is being filled. Having served as a trustee during a previous term will not disqualify a member from re-election. Following their election, the trustees shall elect a chairperson and a vice-chairperson.

B. The Duties of Trustees:

The trustees shall, as provided by law and the action of the church, hold in trust the title to all property of the church and shall represent the church in all matters of legal responsibility regarding the purchase, improvement, and disposal of church property. They shall execute all such legal papers and open up all necessary financial accounts relating to the church and to the community as the church may direct. The trustees are authorized to sell donated real property and personal property without congregational approval. However, the Trustees shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any non-donated real property of the church without a specific vote of the church authorizing such action. The trustees shall ordinarily meet quarterly or at the call of the Lead Pastor and/or the Chairperson of the Trustees.

C. The Removal of a Trustee

1. Any trustee may request to be removed from his office for any cause.
2. Additionally, any trustee may be removed from his office for the following: biblical ecclesiastical discipline, failure to fulfill his responsibilities to the office, or other matters of character and good name which warrant such dismissal.
3. The authority to remove a trustee from office lies with the Lead Pastor of PIONEER CHURCH. Immediate notification will be given to the church congregation who elected such Trustee.

THE CLERK AND THE TREASURER

A. The Clerk

The clerk shall be a male or female member of Pioneer Church appointed by the Lead Pastor and Elders and confirmed annually by the congregation of Pioneer Church. It shall be the duty of the clerk to attend or be represented at all church congregational meetings, to keep an accurate record of all congregational meetings, to issue letters of dismissal as authorized by the Lead Pastor, and to preserve all papers and valuable letters and records that belong to the church.

The quarterly financial report shall be preserved by the church clerk as a part of the permanent records of the church. Upon rendition of the annual financial report by the treasurer and its acceptance by the church, it shall be given to the church clerk who shall keep the same as a record of the church.

B. The Treasurer

The treasurer shall be a male or female who does not have to be a member of Pioneer Church but who is appointed by the Lead Pastor and Elders and must be confirmed annually by the congregation of Pioneer Church. It shall be the responsibility of the treasurer, in coordination with the Lead Pastor and Elders, to oversee the duties related to receiving, preserving, and disbursing upon proper authority all money and things of value paid or given to the church, at all times keeping an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements.

It shall be the duty of the treasurer, in coordination with the Lead Pastor and Elders, to render an accurate and full report to the church at the quarterly Pioneer Church family meetings. The treasurer shall study the best method of keeping the financial records of the church and make such recommendations to the church. (monthly requests may be made should the Lead Pastor and Elders deem it necessary)

Prior to the rendition of the annual financial report, and upon its completion, the report will be presented to the stewardship team. Approval of the report by the stewardship team shall be evidenced at the completion of the report before it shall be accepted by the church.

All books, records, and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be considered the property of the church. The books shall be opened to inspection by any member of the church subject to the approval of the stewardship team.

C. Dismissal of either the Clerk or the Treasurer

1. Either the clerk or the treasurer may request to be removed from his/her office for any cause.
2. Additionally, any clerk or treasurer may be removed from his/her office for the following: biblical ecclesiastical discipline, failure to fulfill his responsibilities to the office, or other matters of character and good name which warrant such dismissal.
3. The authority to remove either the clerk and/or the treasurer from office lies with the Lead Pastor of Pioneer Church. Immediate notification will be given to the church congregation who elected such clerk or treasurer.

STEWARDSHIP AND PERSONNEL TEAMS

A. Stewardship Team

The Stewardship Team shall consist of 5 members of Pioneer Church who will serve for a term of two years with one (1) member being a lay elder of Pioneer Church. Members of the Stewardship Team will be appointed by the Lead Pastor and Elders.

It shall be the duties of the Stewardship Team to work in conjunction with the Elders and Ministry Team Leaders to establish an annual operating budget for Pioneer Church. This budget will be presented to the Congregation of Pioneer Church for Adoption at a regular called Family Meeting.

The stewardship team shall periodically conduct a review and audit of the treasurer's financial records to confirm proper accounting records are being carried out.

B. Dismissal of members of the Stewardship Team

1. Any member of the Stewardship Team may request to be removed from his/her office for any cause.
2. Additionally, any member of the Stewardship Team may be removed from his/her office for the following: biblical ecclesiastical discipline, failure to fulfill his/her responsibilities to the office, or other matters of character and good name which warrant such dismissal.
3. The authority to remove any member of the Stewardship Team from office lies with the Lead Pastor of Pioneer Church. Immediate notification will be given to the church congregation regarding such actions

C. Personnel Team

The Personnel Team shall consist of 5 members of Pioneer Church who will serve for a term of two years with one (1) member being a lay elder of Pioneer Church. Members of the Personnel Team will be appointed by the Lead Pastor and Elders.

It shall be the duties of the personnel team to work in conjunction with the Lead Pastor and Elders in the interviewing and hiring of all full-time or part-time pastoral staff of Pioneer Church.

The personnel team in conjunction with the lead pastor and Elders shall take the lead on executing the process of pastoral replacement as outlined in DIVISION III, CHAPTER 2, SECTION E. of this constitution in nominating an interim pastor.

The personnel team in conjunction with the stewardship team shall also study and determine salary and benefit packages of each paid staff member of Pioneer Church. This process shall include an interview of each staff member at the end of each fiscal church year to determine financial need and any changes that need to be addressed (for example: increase in family size, change in housing, increase in medical bills, etc.) Any recommendations made for salary/benefit adjustments shall be brought before the congregation by the stewardship team for final approval. The Lead Pastor and Elders shall provide necessary input in these recommendations.

D. Dismissal of members of the Personnel Team

1. Any member of the Personnel Team may request to be removed from his/her office for any cause.
2. Additionally, any member of the Personnel Team may be removed from his/her office for the following: biblical ecclesiastical discipline, failure to fulfill his/her responsibilities to the office, or other matters of character and good name which warrant such dismissal.
3. The authority to remove any member of the Personnel Team from office lies with the Lead Pastor of Pioneer Church. Immediate notification will be given to the church congregation regarding such actions.

THE MEMBERSHIP OF PIONEER CHURCH

A. Membership

1. Membership Defined: The membership of this church shall be composed of persons who have given evidence of regeneration, have made a public profession of faith, have been baptized by immersion, have completed **Pioneer Pathways: Step 1** (the only exclusion to this step will be the founding members of Pioneer Church who adopt and affirm this constitution), and have subscribed to and signed the church covenant (**SEE APPENDIX A**).
2. Duties of Membership: In considering the duties involved, members are expected to be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life, to attend regularly the services of the church, to give regularly and systematically to its support and kingdom causes, and to share in its organized work.
3. Termination of membership: Membership shall be considered terminated in one of the following ways:
 - (a) Upon death of a member
 - (b) By letter of recommendation to another church. Letters shall not be granted to individuals but will be sent to another church upon request of that church.
 - (c) Termination of membership may take place without a transfer if said member joins another church which is not of the same faith

(d) By withdrawal. When a member of this church makes written request to the church that their name be withdrawn from membership.

(e) Failure to recommit to and sign the Pioneer Church Covenant for two consecutive calendar years (see number 4 below)

A member may be terminated as a result of biblical ecclesiastical discipline (Mt. 5:23-24; Mt. 18: 15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13).

4. Membership Rolls: The Lead Pastor and Elders shall annually examine the membership roll to determine which members have been inactive for a period of two (2) years. Those members who are considered inactive will be contacted by letter and asked if they desire to remain a member of Pioneer Church. Those individuals who fail to respond positively within 6 weeks will be removed from the membership of the church. Their names will be placed on an inactive list. Exceptions to this inactivity rule may be made but should be limited to unique situations such as college attendance, military service, physical or mental disability, shut-ins, mission field service, etc. **Inactive members will no longer have the right to vote.**

The Role of the Congregation of Pioneer Church

1. Authority retained by the congregation for herself

a. In relationship to the Lead Pastor

(1) the call and ordination of the Lead Pastor at a congregational meeting (supermajority vote required: 2/3 majority)

(2) the dismissal of the Lead Pastor at a congregational meeting (supermajority vote required: 2/3 majority)

(3) the constitutional determination of the authority and the powers to be delegated to the Lead Pastor.

b. In relationship to Non-Donated Real Property.

The congregation of Pioneer Church retains the authority to approve (at a congregational meeting) all matters relating to the rental, the purchase, the lease, the building of, the indebtedness related to, and any other dynamics connected to non-donated real property. A supermajority vote of 2/3 majority is required to approve such matters. This does not include the routine matters of upkeep, repair, and maintenance of real property. Nor does it include the disposition of donated real property and personal property which falls under the purview of the trustees.

c. In relationship to the Constitution.

The right to approve and to amend the “fully constitutional language” (Division III) of the Constitution of Pioneer Church is held exclusively by the congregation of Pioneer Church to be exercised at a duly called congregational meeting. Approval and amendment of the Division III of the Constitution of Pioneer Church requires a supermajority vote of a 2/3 majority.

d. In relationship to Corporate Documents

The congregation may adopt a set of Corporate Bylaws and/or Articles of Incorporation and/or other legal documents which will govern the functions of Pioneer Church as a legal entity.

e. In relationship to Default Authority

The congregation exercises her authority based upon the Scriptures and the leading of the Spirit by specifically delegating authority to the Lead Pastor and other leaders here at PIONEER CHURCH. Once these authorities have been delegated by the congregation, it is expected that all of the members of PIONEER CHURCH will live in submission to those leadership authorities as unto the Lord.

It is critical to note that these delegated authorities are specific and explicit. The Lead Pastor and other leaders may not take upon themselves authorities and powers not specifically delegated (or derived from reasonable inference) to them by the congregation. By default, all authorities and powers not delegated (or reasonably deduced from such delegations) to others in this Constitution belong exclusively to the congregation of the Pioneer Church.

2. Congregational Meetings

There shall be at minimum quarterly stated congregational business meetings per calendar year. The Lead Pastor and other ministry leaders of Pioneer Church will determine the agenda of these stated meetings after inviting input from the congregation.

At a minimum, the stated quarterly congregational meetings will include a financial report concerning the previous financial quarter.

Special-called congregational meetings may be called by either the Lead Pastor, the Elders , or by 1/4 of the communing membership (note: the 1/4 of the membership will need to submit a list of the names calling for the meeting to the Lead Pastor). At these called meetings, the only business which may be transacted at that meeting is the business which is specifically written in the formal notice of the meeting.

Both stated and called meetings must always have at least one-week public notice before the meeting can be convened.

Ordinarily, the quorum needed to constitute a proper congregational meeting is 1/10 of the communing membership of Pioneer Church. However, in matters relating to the dismissal of the Lead Pastor, Elders, or Director-Level Staff, the quorum of such a congregational meeting must rise to the threshold of 1/4 or 25% of the communing membership in order to constitute a quorum. No business may be conducted at any congregational meeting (either stated or called) unless the requirements of the quorum are met.

By virtue of his office, the Lead Pastor will always function as the Moderator of the congregational meeting unless he willingly steps aside. If the Lead Pastor should be providentially hindered from attending a congregational meeting, the congregation will elect one of the other Pastors/Elders to serve as temporary moderator of the meeting.

Congregational meetings are open to all members; friends and visitors are invited as well. However, only active Pioneer Church members will have a voice and a vote. On occasion, prompted by either the

Moderator or a church member, the majority of the congregation may determine that it is wise to go into Executive Session whereby all will be asked to leave the room except the membership.

Election of officers, teams, Elders and Deacons will typically be held at the annual meeting or at another time agreed upon by the congregation.

Parliamentary Guidelines: The rules contained in the Modern Edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall guide church congregational meetings in all cases where they are not inconsistent with this Constitution or any special rules of order the church may adopt

PROCESS TO AMEND THIS CONSTITUTION

The portions of this Constitution entitled Divisions I & II are “para-constitutional” in nature and are not subject to amendment by the congregation. They may be amended and changed by the leadership of Pioneer Church without congregational approval.

However, Division III of this Constitution (the polity or structure for the leadership and governance of the Pioneer Church) is fully constitutional language and cannot be changed or altered except by formal vote of the Pioneer Church congregation at a duly called meeting. Any proposed Division III amendments and/or alterations to this Constitution must be presented in writing for review by both the Lead Pastor and Elders. After consideration and approval by both the Lead Pastor and Elders, the specific language of the proposed amendment(s) may be presented to the church at least two weeks prior to the next congregational meeting and voted upon two-weeks later at that said meeting.

Any amendment or alteration must have two-thirds majority of the votes cast to be considered as adopted.

APPENDIX A



PIONEER CHURCH COVENANT

Having received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, been baptized by immersion, being in agreement with Pioneer Church's statements, strategy, and structure, and being convinced that Pioneer Church is a true local body in God's Kingdom; I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite my life with the Pioneer Church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and my church family to consistently and earnestly practice these 7 expectations of an active, participating, and healthy member of Pioneer Church, and I willingly bring myself under the accountability of my church family and the Pastoral leadership of Pioneer Church. Therefore, I gladly covenant to be:

1. **ETERNALLY HIS:**

A Commitment to **SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH IN THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS CHRIST ALONE**, followed by obedience in baptism by immersion (John 3:16; Acts 15:11; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 2:11)

2. **ENGAGING:**

A Commitment to **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION** in the Life of the Church and its mission—evidenced by authentic and affectionate **WORSHIP**, enthusiastic and devoted **SERVICE**, faithful and sacrificial **GIVING**, and on-going and fruitful **DISCIPLESHIP** (Acts 2:42; Rom. 12:4-8; 2 Cor. 9:7-8; Heb. 10:25)

3. **ENCOURAGING:**

A Commitment to an attitude and demonstration of **UNITY**, **GRACE** and **JOY** while actively opposing apathy, slander, gossip, discord (Prov. 6:16-19; 2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 3:10; Eph. 4:1-3,29; Phil. 4:4,8-9; Col. 4:6)

4. **EMPATHETIC:**

A Commitment to cultivating relationships of **GENUINE BIBLICAL FELLOWSHIP** with my brothers and sisters (Acts 2:42; Gal. 6:2; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12)

5. **EXCELLENCE:**

A Commitment to a **STANDARD OF LIVING** worthy of King Jesus: in **my worship**, **my serving**, **my ministry responsibilities**, and **my personal conduct** (Prov. 22:29; Col. 3:23-24; 2 Pet. 1:5)

6. **EQUIPPED:**

A Commitment to **PERSONAL GROWTH** in sanctification and ministry through Biblical teaching and Leadership of the Church (Eph. 4:12; Col. 2:6-7; 2 Timothy 3:17)

7. **EVANGELIZING:**

A Commitment to **SHARE** and **SHOW** the Gospel in my everyday life (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 20:24)

APPENDIX B

The Southern Baptist Faith and Message THE 2000 BAPTIST FAITH & MESSAGE

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

II. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified

body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 53:1-12; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12,8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts,

and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39–12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation, each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and . While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

X. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

X. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth

opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education, there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.

XIII. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.

XIV. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.

XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.

XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.

XVIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 34

Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.