

THE CONSTITUTION

**BIBLE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF
NORTH MENTOR
8600 Lake Shore Boulevard
Mentor, Ohio**

Approved January 31, 2016

PREAMBLE

Whereas, the large established denominations, generally speaking, are now in the deadly grip of “Modernism,” with its blighting and paralyzing influences; and since prevailing conditions have caused many to withdraw therefrom, and to seek elsewhere the faith and fellowship most satisfying to their spiritual needs in consequence of which, many independent local groups of earnest Christians have been formed to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints for all times; and

Whereas, it has always been both an encouragement, and a more effective means to prosecute the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, for such people to join in a common bond of fellowship, counsel and cooperation, so strengthening one another in the Lord's work;

We do therefore, on the 15th day of September, in the year of our Lord, 1952, form such a bond of fellowship and cooperation as set forth in the constitution which follows, into which we heartily invite any believer who shares with us the same faith and doctrine.

Article I, Name

This organization shall be known as BIBLE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF NORTH MENTOR, Mentor, Ohio.

Article II, Purpose

The purpose of this Church is to glorify our Creator through the following means until He comes:

- The public worship of God the Father and the praise of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit
- The promotion and defense of the “faith once delivered” (Jude 3) through the public reading, preaching and teaching of God’s Word
- Prayer
- Fellowship
- Observing the ordinances of the Lord’s Supper and baptism
- Proclaiming the gospel to fellow believers and to the unsaved
- Encourage a fervent love for Jesus Christ that is greater than love for self and sin
- Encouragement, correction and discipline of one another

Article III, Faith and Doctrine

The following are to be interpreted as expressed in and according to the natural and literal meaning of the respective passages of the Word of God referred to under each article.

Section 1: The Scriptures

- a. We believe the Scriptures consist of the 39 Old Testament (Genesis – Malachi) and the 27 New Testament (Matthew – Revelation) books.
- b. We believe “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” by which we understand that the whole of the book called the Bible is inspired in the sense that the Holy Spirit gave the identical words of the sacred writing to holy men of old, chosen by Him to be the channel of His revelation to men. (*II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21*)
- c. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments to be the verbally inspired (God-breathed)

Word of God, the final authority for faith, life and practice, inerrant and infallible in the original writings. (*Matthew 5:18, 24:35; John 16:12-13; Romans 10:17; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19; Psalm 119:9-11*)

Section 2: The Trinity of the Godhead

We believe there is one God Who eternally exists in a plurality, specifically in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, having the same attributes and perfections and worthy of precisely the same worship and honor, confidence and obedience. (*Genesis 1:1, 1:26, 2:17-18, 11:6-8; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19-20; Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; Acts 5:3-4; II Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6*)

Section 3: Creation

We believe God spoke creation into existence in six literal (24 hour) days as described in Genesis 1. Man was uniquely created from the dust of the ground directly in God's own image and after His own likeness. All of creation was made "very good" without the presence or effect of any sin. All life brings forth after its own kind according to God's command. (*Genesis 1:1-2:7; Exodus 20:11; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3*)

Section 4: Mankind

- a. We believe that man, originally created in the image and likeness of God, fell from his high and holy estate through disobedience, by eating of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and in consequence, the threatened penalty of death was then and there inflicted (*Genesis 1:26-27, 2:16-17, 3:1-24*). As a result of Adam's sin, all mankind inherited a sinful nature, so that he totally

lost all spiritual life, becoming dead in trespasses and sins and subject to the power of the Devil. (*Isaiah 64:6; John 5:40; 6:53,63; Romans 5:12-21; Ephesians 2:1-3; I John 3:8*)

- b. We believe that this spiritual death, or total depravity/corruption of human nature has been transmitted to the entire race of man, the man Christ Jesus alone excepted, and hence, that every child of Adam is born into the world with a sinful nature, utterly unable and unwilling to remedy his lost condition. (*Genesis 6:5; Psalm 14:1-3, 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; John 3:5-6, Romans 3:10-23, 5:12-19*)

Section 5: Regeneration by the Holy Spirit

We believe that, owing to this universal depravity and death in sin, no one can see or enter the kingdom of God unless born of the Spirit whereby he becomes a new creation. (*John 3:5-8; II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; I Peter 1:23; I John 5:1*)

Section 6: Salvation by Grace through Faith

- a. We believe that sinners are saved by grace through faith alone, and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God, not of works. (*Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5*)
- b. We believe that salvation, as the gift of God brought to man, is received by repentance of sin and individual personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. (*Mark 1:15; John 1:12, 3:16-17; I Peter 1:18-19*)
- c. We believe that every saved person is justified (declared righteous) by faith apart from any obedience to the law. (*Acts 13:39; Romans 3:28, 5:1, Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 2:11-14*)

- d. We believe that at the moment of salvation an exchange is made or imputed to us wherein we receive Christ's righteousness before God because Christ took upon himself our sin and guilt which he bore upon the cross. (*Romans 3:21-22, 4:5-11, 22-25; Philippians 3:9; I Corinthians 1:30; II Corinthians 5:21; I Peter 2:24*)

Section 7: The Believer's Eternal Security and Assurance

- a. We believe that all who are born again by the Spirit, redeemed, once saved through faith in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, are a people that God the Father has given to His Son, Jesus Christ. This people- whom He foreknew, predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son Jesus, called, justified and ultimately will glorify- are secure in Christ due to God's saving and preserving work in them by which they will ultimately persevere until the end. (*Luke 10:20, 12:32; John 1:12-13, 6:37-40,47, 10:25-29, 17:1-2; Romans 8:29-39; II Corinthians 5:1-8; Philippians 1:6; II Timothy 1:12; I John 5:13*)
- b. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Spirit through His Word. (*Romans 8:16; I John 3:19-24, 4:13-15*) However, Scripture clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (*Romans 6:1-4, 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15*)
- c. We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. All claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural. (*Romans 6:13-14, 8:12-13; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:17-24; Colossians 3:1-10; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 3:5-9*)

Section 8: The Person and Work of Christ

- a. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. He lived a life of sinless perfection in fulfilling the law of God, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. (*John 1:12,14; Luke 1:30-35; Hebrews 4:15; I Peter 3:18*) We believe the healings and deliverances of Christ in connection with His earthly ministry are evidences and manifestations of His power to prove that He is indeed the Son of God and Servant of Jehovah, as well as illustrations and forecasts of the power that shall be manifest in His earthly kingdom, when He shall reign over restored Israel and the nations of the earth (*Isa. 11:1-9, 65:18-25; John 20:30-31*).
- b. We believe that our redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though without sin himself, He was made to be sin, was made a curse for us, bore God's wrath, dying in our place as a substitutionary sacrifice acceptable to God and effectual for every sinner who receives him. (*Leviticus 17:11; Matthew 26:28; John 1:12; Romans 5:6-9; II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 1:5-7; I Peter 1:18-19, 2:24*)
- c. We believe our justification is made sure by his literal and physical resurrection from the dead. In addition, we believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest and King, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor and Advocate. (*Acts 1:9-11; Romans 4:24-25, 8:34; Hebrews 9:24; I John 2:1*)

Section 9: The Unity of the True Church, the Body of Christ

- a. We believe that the Church is composed of all who are united to the crucified, risen and ascended Son of God by the Holy Spirit. By the same Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, thus being members one of another and knit together in love. (*Romans 6:3-5; 12:4-5; I Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:1-16; Colossians 2:19*)
- b. We believe that there are only two ordinances given in Scripture to be obeyed by believers following salvation which declare our unity in Christ. The first is Communion, or the Lord's Supper, to be done in remembrance of the atonement of Christ. The second is water baptism, an outward testimony of our identity with Christ. (*Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 22:19-20; I Corinthians 11:23-26*)

Section 10: The Personality, Deity and Present Mission of the Holy Spirit

- a. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity, equal to the Father and the Son. He is now, throughout this age of grace, here present in the true church as the Agent of the new birth, indwelling, renewing to holiness, and sealing believers for the day of redemption. He reveals and glorifies Christ Jesus to the members of the Church that they may be comforted, instructed and built up in their most holy faith. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. (*John 7:38-39, 14:16-17, 15:26, 16:7-15; Acts 1:8, 2:1-4; Jude 20-21*)
- b. We believe the Holy Spirit came upon the whole body of believers on the day of Pentecost in fulfillment of the promises of Christ to his own. At that time, the disciples were individually endued with power to witness concerning Christ, and collectively baptized into one body which was the formation of the Church. We also believe that the New Testament distinguishes between being

indwelt with the Spirit, which is true of all believers, and being filled with the Spirit, which is the believer's privilege and duty. There is one baptism with (in) the Spirit, and it is into the body of Christ at the time of conversion, but there are many fillings. Pentecost is an historical event and is not repeated. (*Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16, 24:46-49; John 1:33, 14:16,17,26, 15:26,27; Acts 2:1-4, 4:8,31; Ephesians 1:13-14, 5:18*)

- c. Gifts and Healings today – We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts; that the gifts of evangelists, pastors and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today; and that the working of sign gifts (prophecy, tongues, healing) gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established. (*I Corinthians 12:4-11; II Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12*)

We believe that sickness, together with every other disorder and evil in our world, is the outward effect of sin and the curse, and is not sin itself. Since, according to the clear teaching of the New Testament, Christ died for our sins and was made sin for us, we believe that divine healing is not provided in the atonement made by Christ in the same sense that salvation and the forgiveness of sins are. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith for the sick and afflicted in accord to His own will, but not because He is bound to do so due to what He has accomplished by Christ's death on the cross. (*I Corinthians 15:3; I Peter 2:24*)

Section 11: Sanctification

We believe that the sanctification of the believer is the divine, three-fold action of setting apart a believer from sin and unto God. (*John 17:17-19; II Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 3:1*)

Initial sanctification is an eternal act of God. At the moment of redemption through faith in Christ, the believer has the righteousness of Christ applied to him or her giving the

believer a standing of absolute holiness. (*I Corinthians 1:30; Hebrews 10:10-14*)

Progressive sanctification is the continuing process in the believer as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to his or her life, conforming the believer to the likeness of Christ. This always follows justification and involves both God's grace and man's obedient cooperation. (*II Corinthians 3:18; I Thessalonians 4:3-4, 5:23-24; Revelation 22:11*)

Final sanctification will take place at the Lord's return, at which time the believer shall be glorified. (*Ephesians 5:25-27; I John 3:2-3; Jude 24-25*)

Section 12: Future Events

We believe in the blessed hope, the imminent return of Jesus Christ, when He will gather living and dead saints to Himself to be with Him forever. The coming of Christ which will occur at a time only known to God, demands constant expectancy and motivates the believer to perseverance in Godly living. We believe in a period of time lasting seven years known as the Tribulation, in which the antichrist will be given authority in the world while in this same period the Lord will rain various judgments upon the earth. We believe in the bodily, pre-millennial return of Jesus Christ to this earth. We believe He will reign as the sovereign King of the world for a thousand years and eventually banish Satan, death and all unbelievers to the Lake of Fire for all eternity. He will then remake the heavens and the earth to be absent of any effect of the fall, in which believers will spend the rest of eternity dwelling with God.

With reference to the time of the believer's rapture we acknowledge that there are divergent views among born again believers. Our Christian maturity allows us to tolerate our differences so as not to make this a basis of fellowship and membership.

(*Matthew 24; John 14; Acts 1:11; I Corinthians 15; II Corinthians 5; I Thessalonians 1:10, 4:1-18, 5:1-11; 2*

Thessalonians 2:1-12; Titus 2:13; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 19-22)

Section 13: The Bodily Resurrection of Mankind

- a. We believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead in bodily form according to the Scriptures. At His future coming, He will raise up from among the dead those who have died in Christ, this being the first resurrection. After 1000 years, He will raise them that have died in unbelief from their graves to receive their eternal judgment. (*I Thessalonians 4:14; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; Romans 1:4, 8:23; I Corinthians 15; Revelation 20:4-6*)

- b. We believe that the souls of believers are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. We believe all believers will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive reward or suffer loss according to the works that they have done. (*Luke 23:43; I Corinthians 3:12-15; II Corinthians 5:8-10; Philippians 1:23, 3:20-21; I Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:4-6*)

- c. We believe that the souls of unbelievers are, at death, absent from the body and remain in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire to suffer everlasting conscious punishment. (*Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; II Thessalonians 1:6-11; Jude 6-7; Revelation 20:11-15*)

Section 14: The Existence of Satan

We believe that Satan is a created angelic being. Rebellious against God, he is the author of sin, the cause of the fall of

man, a liar and murderer from the beginning, the great deceiver of all the nations, the god of this world, father of unbelievers and accuser of the brethren. He is the open and declared enemy of God and man, yet can do no more than God permits. He has been overcome by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, yet he has continued dominion on the earth until he is cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years. He will ultimately be defeated and cast into the Lake of Fire with all his angels to be tormented forever and ever. (*Job 1:6-12, 2:5-6; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:1-11, 25:41; John 8:44; II Corinthians 11:13-15; Ephesians 6:12-16; Colossians 2:13-15; Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10*)

Section 15: Separation

We believe that Christians (personal) and churches (ecclesiastical) must contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints and that all believers should live in such a manner as to not bring a reproach upon their Savior and Lord. This includes the confrontation of biblical error and, when necessary, separation from that error. We believe that cooperation with and tolerance of error—even for the sake of evangelism dishonors God and disobeys His Word. By God’s grace, we are committed to determining our ministry relationships on the basis of biblical fidelity. Individual Christians are commanded to live a life that is distinct from the world and set apart to God, not to partner in spiritual endeavors with those who deny or dilute the faith, and not to fellowship with willfully disobedient brothers. (*Matthew 18; Romans 12:1-2, 16:17-19; II Corinthians 6-7; II Thessalonians 3; II Timothy 3:1-9; Titus 1:10-16; James 1:22-27; I John 2:15-17, 4:1-6; II John 9-11; Jude 1-25*)

Section 16: Missions

We believe it is the obligation and privilege of every believer to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all mankind

that they may be reconciled to God and become disciples of Jesus. (*Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; II Corinthians 5:17-20*)

Section 17: The Church

- a. We believe that the Church, which is the spiritual body and espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born again persons of this present age. Scripture describes the closeness of the relationship between Christ and His church as one body (Head and His body) and as one flesh (Husband and His bride). (*I Corinthians 12:12-14, 27; II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:25-33*)
- b. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. These local churches, when led in obedience to Scripture, demonstrate the context for the fulfillment of the Great Commission. (*Acts 2:41-47, 4:4, 5:14; 14:26-27, 20:17-21, 28-35; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11*)
- c. We believe that baptized believers should identify with and be faithful to a local church for the purpose of worship, discipleship, spiritual discipline, edification, accountability to spiritual authority, mutual care, service, giving, exercise of spiritual gifts, and the celebration of baptism and the Lord's Supper (*Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 12:4-7; 12:12-27; Hebrews 3:13, 10:24-25; Matthew 28:19-20; I Corinthians 11:17-34*)
- d. We believe that the Church is a distinct body separate from the nation of Israel, but made up of both Jews and Gentiles who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has addressed each with unique promises, obligations and privileges. (*Genesis 15:5, Ephesians 2:11-13; Deuteronomy 7:1-2, Matthew 5:44; Leviticus 17:8-9, Hebrews 10:19-25, I Peter 2:5*)

Section 18: Marriage and the Believer's Morality

We believe the following regarding human life:

- Morality is based on the unchanging standard of God's Word
- Life begins at conception
- Sexuality is lawful only when enjoyed by one man and one woman who are joined together in the covenant of marriage
- The gender of which one is born is an inviolable part of one's human identity and has been determined at conception by sovereign God
- Both male and female are created in God's image
- Men and women are absolutely equal in value, yet complimentary in their roles within the home and the church.

Therefore, we believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bi-sexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex or disagreement with one's biological sex is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role-model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church or who seek membership should abide by and agree to this statement of "marriage and believer's morality" and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing speech, behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture or the

doctrines of the church. Speaking the truth of God's Word in love on these subjects does not constitute hateful or harassing speech. (*Genesis 1:24-28; Psalm 127:3-5, 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:4-5; Matthew 19:3-9; Ephesians 5:22-33; Romans 1:24-28; I Corinthians 6:9-11,15-20; Hebrews 13:4*)

Article IV, Government

Section 1: Government

The government shall be vested in the body of believers constituting the membership of this church organization exercised at regular or special meetings. The Session, as the executive body of the Congregation, is charged with the government and spiritual nurture thereof.

Section 2: Meetings

- a. The fiscal year of the Church shall end on the thirty-first (31st) day of March in each year, and the Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held within thirty days thereafter, the date to be determined by the Session and announced to the Congregation, from the pulpit, on two Sundays preceding the meeting.
- b. At the Annual Congregational Meeting the minutes of the preceding Annual Meeting shall be read. The Church Treasurer shall present his financial report and reports shall be presented by the various organizations of the Church and Sunday School. Such other business as may be necessary shall be transacted.
- c. Called meetings of the Congregation may be held at the discretion of the Session or upon the written request of ten percent of the members of the Church. Notice shall be given as provided for in Article IV, Section 2, Paragraph a.

No business other than that announced in the notice shall be considered at such called meetings.

- d. A majority vote of the voting members present at any constitutionally called Congregational business meeting shall be required for the election of officers or to render final decisions in any manner under consideration, except the calling or removal of a Pastor, amendments to the Constitution, or election of officers as specified in Article IV, Section 4, letter a.
- e. All voting of the church membership regarding elections and issues shall be done by ballot.
- f. In the conduct of business meetings any parliamentary questions not covered by this Constitution shall be decided by the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Section 3: Duties of Pastor and Officers

- a. The officers of this Church shall be the following: Pastor, Assisting Pastor (if any), Elders, Deacons, Treasurer, Congregational Chairman, Congregational Clerk and Superintendent of the Sunday School.
- b. No person shall be eligible to hold office in this Church except he is a voting member.
- c. Except as hereinafter provided otherwise, the term of office for all officers, except the office of Pastorate, Elders, and Deacons shall be one year from date of election or appointment, or until the date of the Annual Meeting next following.
- d. **Pastor:** The Pastor shall have general oversight of the spiritual life, regular services, and administration of the sacraments of the Church, shall be an ex-officio member of all committee meetings connected with the Church or

any of its organizations; and shall act as Moderator in other meetings of the Session and Church unless otherwise directed by this Constitution or ordered by vote of the Congregation. If at any time his personal belief, teaching and preaching shall not be in full accord with the doctrinal statement of the Church, his services as Pastor shall be terminated as provided hereinafter. No person shall be eligible for the candidacy of the Pastorate of this Church unless he has conducted at least two regular Sunday services at this Church within ninety days from the date of his recommendation by the Elders to the Congregation.

The Elders, after having reached a majority agreement upon the qualifications and suitability of a Pastor, shall submit to the Congregation, at a duly constituted meeting thereof, a written recommendation that an invitation to accept the Pastorate of this Church be extended to said Pastor. Upon a vote in favor of this recommendation by not less than three fourths of the Elders, a resolution shall be drafted embodying this action of the Elders and incorporating therein the place, date and hour of the meeting of the Church membership at which this resolution shall be voted upon, and shall be read from the pulpit on each of two Sundays next preceding said meeting. A vote in favor of this resolution by a two-thirds majority of the eligible members present shall be required for its adoption.

A Pastor, chosen under the provisions herein before set forth, shall, before he can be installed as Pastor of this Church, be required to signify in writing over his signature, his acceptance of the faith and doctrine herein before in this Constitution set forth.

The Pastor may be removed by ballot at any meeting duly called for that purpose, upon a vote in favor of removal by not less than two thirds of the eligible members present. In the event of removal, the Pastor's services shall terminate not later than thirty days following notice to that effect by

the Elders.

Meetings for the express purpose of considering the removal of the Pastor shall be called by the Elders by means of a notice to that effect to be mailed to each eligible member at their last known mailing address, not later than fifteen days previous to the date of such meeting.

The call of any assisting Pastor shall be conducted in the same manner and be subject to the same conditions as the call of a Pastor. This would not apply to a summer intern.

- e. **Session:** The Session, composed of the Pastor, or Pastors, and the serving Elders, is charged with the government and spiritual nurture of the Congregation.

It belongs to the Session to judge the qualification of the Elders and Deacons nominated, and if elected, to ordain and install them in office; to decide upon the qualifications of applicants for membership in the Church, and to certify departing members to other congregations; to watch over the department of members of the Congregation; to counsel parents in training their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; to administer the ordinances of the Lord's house, and judicially enforce His laws governing the lives of His people; to devise and direct ways and means of leading the people to honor the Lord with their substance; to determine the uses to be made of the Church edifice of attached buildings; to supervise all other organizations and agencies in the Congregation; to direct the service of praise and other ordinances of worship; and to attend to all other matters which in its judgment pertain to the spiritual welfare of the Congregation. The members of the Session shall be expected to visit the members of the Congregation, giving special attention to the sick and sorrowing.

The Session shall with the assistance of the Deacons, oversee the care of the physical property and finances of

the Church. It belongs to the Session to conduct all the purely business affairs of the Congregation. The Session shall prepare an annual budget for submission to the Congregation at its Annual Meeting. The Congregational Chairman shall preside at all purely business meetings of the Congregation. The Congregational Clerk shall keep an accurate record of such meetings.

The Session shall hold regular monthly meetings at such place, and on such date and hour as shall be designated by its members as hereinafter provided. Special meetings may be called by the Chairman, or by any three members of the Session. No business shall be transacted at any meeting, except a quorum be present at the opening of the meeting. The first meeting of the Session following the Annual Meeting shall be called by the Clerk and shall be held not later than one month following the date of the Annual Meeting. In the absence of the Moderator, a Chairman shall be appointed to conduct the meeting. At this meeting the following business shall be conducted:

1. The place, date and hour of the regular monthly meeting shall be fixed.
2. The Church Treasurer and the depository for the Church funds shall be selected.
3. The Sunday School Superintendent shall be appointed.

The Session shall handle and consider suggestions, recommendations and grievances upon the part of any member or organization affiliated with the Church.

The Session shall perform such other duties as may be defined by this Constitution and shall at all times be subject to the majority vote of the Congregation.

- f. **Elders:** The Elders shall be not more than five (5) in number. They shall hold Church property in trust for the Church and shall be charged with the oversight and maintenance thereof.

Elders shall be elected in accordance with Article IV, Section 4. Terms of office for Elders shall be not less than three years and not more than four years. An Elder, upon completion of one full term in office, shall not be eligible for re-election to the office of Elder during the year immediately following the expiration of his term. Any vacancy may be filled by the vote of the Congregation, acting in accordance with Article IV, Section 2, Paragraph c.

- g. **Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall be responsible to receive, bank and disburse the funds of the Church and Sunday School, and shall submit to the membership at the Annual Meeting a statement thereof. He shall also submit a statement thereof to the Session at its regular monthly meetings. The Session shall see that the Church books are audited annually by a qualified person or committee.
- h. **Congregational Chairman:** The Congregational Chairman shall preside at all regular and special meetings of the Congregation. The Congregational Chairman shall be elected at each Annual Meeting.
- i. **Congregational Clerk:** The Clerk of Session shall also serve as Congregational Clerk and shall keep a proper record of all business meetings of the Church membership and Session and conduct the correspondence and keep the custody of all papers and documents of the Church.
- j. **Superintendent of Sunday School:** The Superintendent of the Sunday School shall have the supervision of this work in all its departments, subject to the jurisdiction of the Session.
- k. Within one month after each Annual Congregational Meeting the Pastor, Elders, and Deacons shall be required to affirm and sign the doctrinal statement of the Church,

and their signatures shall be filed with the Clerk of Session.

1. Deacons: Deacons shall be men who demonstrate that they are full of the Spirit, wise, and willing to serve, and in accord with the qualifications set forth in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The Deacons, under the oversight of the elders, shall serve directly or indirectly the physical and temporal needs of the members and regular attendees as outlined or exemplified in the New Testament and shall be charged with the oversight and maintenance of the buildings and properties of Bible Community Church. Deacons shall be elected in accordance with Article IV, Section 4. Terms of office for Deacons shall be not less than three years and not more than four years. A Deacon, upon completion of one full term in office, shall not be eligible for reelection to the office of Deacon during the year immediately following the expiration of his term. Any vacancy may be filled by the vote of the Congregation, acting in accordance with Article IV, Section 2, Paragraphs c and d.

Section 4: Election of Officers

- a. Members of the Session and Deacons shall be elected following a Sunday morning service of worship, during the month of March. No person shall be considered elected who fails to receive a majority of all votes cast. Nominations for Elders and Deacons must be made following the Sunday morning service of worship, preceding such election and shall be by a nominating committee appointed by the Session, with the opportunity for additional nominations by the Congregation. In those instances, in which the number of Elder or Deacon nominees is less than or equal to the number of positions to be filled, the nominee(s) must garner at least two thirds (2/3) of the vote to be accepted into the position(s).

- b. The Nominating Committee shall thoroughly investigate the qualifications of every man nominated for office of Elder or Deacon. The proposed candidates shall be examined by the Session as to their agreement with the doctrinal statement and the standards that may be established by the Church or the Session. No candidate shall be considered for the office of Elder or Deacon who cannot answer in the affirmative the following questions:
1. Have you publicly confessed Christ as personal Saviour and experienced the new birth set forth in John 3:3-5?
 2. Are you in hearty agreement with the doctrinal statement of the Church and with its Constitution?
 3. Are you living a dedicated, prayerful Christian life, especially as regards loyal observance of the moral precepts taught in the Word of God for believers, including:
 - a. Separation from the world in the spirit of I John 2:15-17, James 4:4 and Titus 2:11-15;
 - b. Freedom from membership in oath-bound religious or secret social organizations or other entangling alliances with unbelievers;
 - c. Willingness to put out of your life any sin which the Holy Spirit may reveal to you?

Article V, Membership

Section 1: Membership

Persons desiring to unite with the Church upon profession of their faith shall be examined by the Session as to their Christian experience and the basis of their salvation. Applicants whose examination is satisfactory will be received into fellowship, but membership shall not be granted until at least ninety days after application. Thereafter, at such time as

may be determined by the Session, the applicant shall be granted membership.

All persons uniting by confession of faith shall be required to sign the Profession of Faith, Confession of Guilt and Covenant with God as contained in the form at the end of this Constitution and to confess their faith publicly.

Section 2: Baptism and the Lord's Supper

- a. We believe that every believer ought to be baptized. The mode of baptism practiced by the Church shall be immersion. Since baptism is not essential to salvation, the Church will accept into membership those who have been clearly born again, but have not yet been baptized or those who have been baptized by other modes.
- b. We believe that every believer should partake of the Lord's Supper regularly as provided by the Church.

Section 3: Roll of Membership

A record of the members, to be known as Roll of Membership, shall be kept by the Clerk. This Roll shall be revised annually by the Session in the following manner. Not less than sixty days prior to the Annual Meeting next following, the Session shall instruct the Clerk to mail to each member who, without having given a satisfactory reason therefore, has been absent from the regular services for a period of twelve months, or who has not in any manner manifested his interest in the work, a formal notice to the effect that unless the Clerk is otherwise informed in writing within thirty days from the date of such notice, in a manner satisfactory to the Session, it will be assumed that such member no longer desires to retain his membership in the Church and his name shall be removed from the Roll of Membership.

Article VI, Discipline

Section 1: The Membership is governed by the following Scripture in the disciplining of offending members

- a. Self-discipline (*Matt. 5:23-26; I Cor. 11:31*)
- b. Trespass against a brother (*Matt. 18:15-16*)
- c. Disorderly persons (*II Thess. 3:6-7,11-14*)
- d. Factious persons and heretics (*Rom 16:17-18; Titus 3:10-11*)
- e. Pertaining to divorce (*Matt. 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12*)
- f. Wicked Persons (*I Cor. 5:9-13*)
- g. One overtaken in a fault (*I Tim. 5:19-20*)
- h. Offending Elders (*I Tim. 5:19-20*)
- i. Oaths and secret oath-bound societies (*Matt. 5:33-37; James 5:12*)

Section 2: The discipline of the Membership shall be exercised by the Session according to the following principles

- a. In any case of offense not calling for instant excommunication, the offender will be summoned before the Pastor and Elders and dealt with according to the Word of God, and if, after full inquiry and prayer and counsel together, the offender does not repent and do works meet for repentance, the Session may suspend from the privileges of membership, including the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper for such time as they shall be led to fix.
- b. If the offense be such as calls for removal from the Roll of Membership, or if the offender refuses to comply with the provisions of the Word of God in such case, the Session by a two-thirds vote shall have power to strike the offender's name from the Membership Roll.

Article VII, Finance

The one and only resource of this Congregation is the voluntary offering of its members through tithes and offerings as God has prospered them. No other methods of raising money will be permitted. The current expenses, such as salaries, caretaking, interests, fuel, light, repairs, etc., are met by weekly offerings of the members. Envelopes will be provided for those who wish to use them for this purpose.

Article VIII, Definitions

Whenever used in this Constitution, or in any document appertaining thereunto, the terms hereinafter in this Article defined, shall, unless the context shall otherwise clearly indicate, have the respective meanings hereinafter in the Article set forth:

1. *Absolute majority*: the smallest number which is the greater than half of a given number.
2. *Member*: a person who has been duly received into membership according to the procedure specified in this Constitution and whose name appears on the current Roll of Membership.
3. *Eligible member*: a member who has attained the age of sixteen years and is eligible to vote.
4. *Quorum*: such a number of any body as is, when duly assembled, legally competent, to transact business, but never less than an absolute majority of it.

Article IX, Ordination

When, in the judgment of the Session, a man in this membership is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of the Session to call and conduct a council for ordination, provided such authority is granted by vote of the church. The ordaining council shall thoroughly examine all applicants for ordination as to their call to the Christian ministry, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal beliefs, and demonstrated efficiency in Christian service. The following shall not be ordained to the ministry: those who have not served six months as Pastor, Assistant Pastor, or in definite Christian work in such manner as to convey reasonable evidence of God's call to the ministry; those who are addicted to the use of intoxicating liquors, drugs or tobacco in any form; or those who belong to secret societies, or who bring disrepute upon their ministry through worldly practices and associations. (*Rom. 12:1-2; II Cor. 6:14-18; James 4:4; I John 2:15*)

It shall be within the providence of the Session to discipline, even to revoke the ordination credentials of any minister ordained under this Constitution, if the said minister is found guilty of any of the above practices after an impartial trial conducted in the spirit of I Corinthians 13. The minister under trial shall have the privilege of appealing his case to the Congregation within 30 days after the decision of the Session.

Article X, Amendments

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at any regular or called Congregational Meeting, provided the proposed amendment has been printed and distributed to the Congregation at each regular Church service for two Sundays preceding said meeting.

My Profession of Faith

1. I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the very Word of God, written by chosen and consecrated men as they were moved or inspired by the Holy Spirit; that they are infallible and the only rule of faith and practice.
2. I believe in one living and true God who is a boundless spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, and that this boundless spirit consists of three persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit; and that these three are one God, in the same in substance, equal in power and glory.
3. I believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, without sin or a sinful nature, and that they were granted the freedom of their own will.
4. I believe that sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the revealed will of the most holy God.
5. I believe that the penalty of sin is death; first, spiritual death which is separation from God, and second, physical death.
6. I believe that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; and that there is no remedy for the guilt and penalty of sin, save in the vicarious sacrificial death of the eternal Son of God, who, in due time, having been conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin became flesh to dwell among us in the person of Jesus Christ.
7. I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ freely offered up His own sinless body on the Cross of Calvary for the remission of sins, and that whosoever believes in Him,

as the eternal Son of God incarnate, and in the value of His atoning death, shall not perish, but, being redeemed, have everlasting life.

8. I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, having accomplished my redemption through His death on the Cross, arose from the dead with the same body in which He suffered and that He ascended into Heaven, and there, sitting at the right hand of the Father, makes intercession on my behalf as a redeemed individual.
9. I believe that each redeemed individual is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and that by a creative act of the Holy Spirit they are born again (a spiritual birth) and made new creatures in Christ Jesus; that they thus become children of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

My Confession of Guilt

With this knowledge and belief—I confess my guilt and helplessness as a sinner against God.

My Covenant with God

I take Jesus Christ as my Savior as He is offered in the Scriptures.

I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and dedicate myself to His service.

I covenant with Him that I will endeavor to forsake all sin and conform my life to His revealed will.

In obedience to God's Command, I yield my life to be filled with the Holy Spirit, that being sanctified, my spirit, soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I promise, in order to attain such a life of holy obedience, that I will be faithful in studying my Bible, faithful in prayer and in all means of grace, diligent in attendance at the services of the church, and faithful in my financial support of the church, as God has prospered me, faithful in the performance of all duties as they may be made known to me.

I promise that I will give the Lord Jesus supreme loyalty, and that I will separate myself from all associations that I find to be a hindrance to Godliness and the performance of my Christian duties.

I make this profession of my faith and purpose in the presence of God, in humble reliance upon His grace, as I desire to give in my account with joy at the Great Day.

Having made this profession of my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is my desire that I be received into the membership in BIBLE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF NORTH MENTOR.

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____
