

CONSTITUTION  
AND  
BYLAWS  
ADOPTED MAY 17, 2020

FOR  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF PUXICO, INCORPORATED  
of

125 S. Turnbaugh Street  
Puxico, Missouri 63960

Note: This constitution and bylaws supersedes and takes the place of all governing policies and procedures established in the past and recorded in the minutes of the church.

# CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

## PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

## I. NAME

This body shall be known as First Baptist Church of Puxico, Incorporated.

## II. PURPOSE STATEMENT

We exist to display, magnify, and exalt the glory and excellencies of our God in Jesus Christ by the way we think, speak, and live.

## III. OBJECTIVES

To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to faithfully share Christ in our church, community, and throughout the world.

To be a worshiping fellowship, displaying an awareness of God, recognizing his person, and responding in obedience to His leadership.

To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship of God and man.

To be a church that ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and world in Jesus' name.

To be a church whose purpose is to be Christlike in our daily living by emphasizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the Lordship of Christ.

## IV. STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Holy Bible is the inspired word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of "The New Hampshire Baptist Confession of 1853." We band ourselves together as a Body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

In adherence to our Statement of Faith we believe that the term 'marriage' has only one meaning, and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between one man and one woman who are married to one another. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual 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 in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality 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.

## V. RELATIONSHIPS

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among like-minded churches.

## VI. CHURCH COVENANT

By God's divine grace, we having been brought to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.

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

We will walk together in brotherly love, which should characterize the members of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for each other as well as our own faith.

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

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

We will seek, by divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised

again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.

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

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

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

## BYLAWS

### I. MEMBERSHIP

#### Section 1. Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders (pastors) shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders (pastors) deem appropriate.

#### Section 2. Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be ordinarily, but not necessarily, recommended by the elders for admission and must be accepted by majority affirmation of the members at any regular church meeting, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches. They must be baptized either into membership or transfer by letter from a like-minded church or by statement from a like-minded church when no letter is obtainable.

### Section 3. Duties and Privileges of Membership

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

Under the Lord Jesus Christ this church is an elder led congregational church. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend business meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

### Section 4. On Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church and/or rendering doubtful a profession of faith, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 1 Timothy 5: 19–20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5).

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

For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33; Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5: 14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24–25);

For the purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5: 6–7; II Corinthians 13: 10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2);

For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28: 7; Matthew 5: 13–16; John 13: 35; Acts 5: 1–14; Ephesians 5: 11; I Timothy 3: 7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3: 10); and

Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5: 11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chronicles 19: 2; Ezra 6: 21; Nehemiah 9: 2; Isaiah 52: 11; Ezekiel 36: 20; Matthew 5: 16; John 15: 8; 18: 17, 25; Romans 2: 24; 15: 5–6; II Corinthians 6: 14–7: 1; Ephesians 1: 4; 5: 27; I Peter 2: 12).

## Section 5. Termination of Membership

The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death, and it shall also recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her self-professed apostasy as confirmed by pastoral team vote. Additionally, the church may recognize the termination of a person's membership after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, at the recommendation of the pastors, but not necessarily in the case of an elder being disciplined). With regards to discipline with the neglect of faithful attending the church, the pastors shall endeavor to restore a straying member to faithful fellowship. However, after many attempts the membership of the member who has not attended the fellowship of the church will be removed pending a majority vote amongst the elders with the deacons being informed of the action.

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

## II. CHURCH OFFICERS

### Section 1. Summary

The Biblical offices in the church are elders (pastors) and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of clerk, song leader, and treasurer. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

### Section 2. Elders (Pastors)

The elders (pastors) shall be comprised of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder (pastor) set forth in I Timothy 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 6–9. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

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

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to

His church and set apart as elders after a season of careful examination by the existing elders and church.

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

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. Further, the elders should seek to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, affirm our fundamental gospel convictions and do not teach our church anything contrary to the Statement of Faith.

The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of lead and associate pastor. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.

Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons and the budget committee shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a regular or specially-called budget meeting and called up for a vote at the following business meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders. Elders upon election are licensed into the ministry.

### Section 3. The Lead Pastor

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

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

The lead pastor shall have primary responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

In the absence or incapacity of the lead pastor the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

#### Section 4. Associate Pastor(s)

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

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

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

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

#### Section 5. Deacons

The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3: 8–13. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, these members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons.

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

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

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

In nominating deacons any member may present a name to the elders to interview concerning qualifications and willingness to serve before presenting to congregation for nomination. Deacon candidates must serve one year before being ordained.

There is no obligation to constitute as an active deacon a person who comes to the church from another church where he has served as a deacon. He must be a member of the church one year before becoming a deacon of the church.

#### Section 6. Moderator

The moderator shall be one of the pastor(s)/elders. If all pastors are absent the clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

#### Section 7. Clerk

The church shall elect a church clerk. The clerk shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the church, except otherwise herein provided. He/She is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. He/She shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such notice is necessary as indicated in these Bylaws. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records are church property and should be filed in the church office when an office is maintained.

#### Section 8. Treasurer

The church shall elect a church treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money, or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to render to the church at each regular business meeting an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. The treasurer's report shall be reviewed annually by the budget committee or public accountant.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year, and its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the church.

#### Section 9. Trustees

Three or more trustees elected by the church will hold in trust the church property. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of trustees are required. Trustees shall serve on a rotating basis, with one new trustee being elected every three years.

### III. ELECTIONS

#### Section 1. Principles

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

Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process;

Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;

All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;

The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### Section 2. Selection of Officers

The election of officers shall be held at a business meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, clerk, treasurer, etc. shall be presented by the elders at the previous business meeting and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

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

The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a two-thirds majority of all votes cast for the office of elder at a regularly scheduled business meeting. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

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

### Section 3. Calling of the Lead Pastor

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

### Section 4. Calling of Associate Pastor

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

## IV. COMMITTEES AND COORDINATING GROUPS

### Section 1. General

All church committee members shall be recommended by the elders and pastors. No committee shall consist of less than three or more than five.

### Section 2. Personnel Committee

The personnel committee assists the church in matters related to employed personnel administration. Its work includes such areas as determining staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, and personnel services.

### Section 3. Building Committee

The Building Committee assists the church in matters related to properties administration. Its work includes such area as maintaining all church properties for ready use, recommending policies regarding use of properties, recommending employment of maintenance personnel, and assigning responsibility to appropriate personnel for supervision.

### Section 4. Budget Committee

The Budget Committee will meet yearly to examine the church finances and work with the elders and deacons to put forth a budget to be approved by the church. Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons and the budget committee shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a regular or specially-called budget meeting and called up for a vote at the following business meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.

Note: All of the committees listed above may not be functioning at any one time.

## V. PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

### Section 1. General

All organizations of the church shall be overseen by the elders of the church and affirmed by the church; all officers being elected by the church.

## VI. ORDINANCES

### Section 1. Baptism

A person who received Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith; who professes him publicly at any worship service; and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received by baptism.

1. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
2. Baptism shall be administered by the pastor or an elder of the church. The deacons and their wives shall assist in the preparation for and observance of baptism.
3. Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship only during a church sanctioned worship service.

## Section 2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church in good standing, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate his second coming.

- The Lord's Supper shall be observed in the morning or evening worship services as scheduled.
- The pastors and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.

## VII. CHURCH MEETINGS

### Section 1. Regulative Worship Service

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening for preaching, instruction and for the worship of Almighty God. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the Lead Pastor and Elders.

### Section 2. Special Services

Special services, conferences, and any other church meetings which will be essential in the promotion of the objectives of the church shall be placed on the church calendar after the approval of the elders.

### Section 3. Regular Business Meeting

The bi-monthly business meeting of the church shall be held the second Sunday evening of every other month except when such falls on a special day such as Mother's Day when the meeting may be moved forward or backward one week.

### Section 4. Special Business Meeting

A specially called business meeting may be held to consider special matters of significant nature. A one-week notice of the subject, date, time, and location must be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical.

### Section 5. Annual Business Meeting

The annual business meeting of the church shall be held on the second Sunday evening of August, at which time the annual reports shall be presented, and such other business transacted as may be specified in the call or authorized in the bylaws.

## Section 6. Quorum

The quorum consists of those who attend the business meetings provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

## Section 7. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church.

# VIII. CHURCH FINANCES

## Section 1. Budget

The Budget committee, in consultation with the elders and deacons, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and worldwide expenses.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts.

## Section 2. Accounting Procedures

All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer, or financial secretary, and be properly recorded on the books of the church.

## Section 3. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall begin on January first (1st) and end on December thirty-first (31st).

# IX. AMENDMENTS

Changes in this constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church, provided each amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment be furnished to each member present. Amendments to the constitution and bylaws shall be by two thirds vote of all members of the church present and voting.

## New Hampshire Confession of Faith from 1853

### I. The Scriptures

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

### II. Of The True God

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

### III. Of The Fall Of Man

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

### IV. Of The Way Of Salvation

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

### V. Of Justification

We believe that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

### VI. Of The Freeness Of Salvation

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

## VII. Of Grace In Regeneration

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.

## VIII. Of Repentance And Faith

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

## IX. Of God's Purpose Of Grace

We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

## X. Of Sanctification

We believe that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means, – especially, the word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness and prayer.

## XI. Of The Perseverance Of Saints

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

## XII. Of The Harmony Of The Law And The Gospel

We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts, arises entirely from their love of sin: to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the Means of Grace connected with the establishment of the visible church.

### XIII. Of A Gospel Church

We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word; that its only scriptural officers are Bishops or Pastors, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

### XIV. Of Baptism And The Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

### XV. Of The Christian Sabbath

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

### XVI. Of Civil Government

We believe that Civil Government is of Divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

### XVII. Of The Righteous And The Wicked

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

### XVIII. Of The World To Come

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