

SPENCERPORT BIBLE CHURCH

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Title: **CONSTITUTION**

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Purpose: To state the fourteen articles defining the beliefs and operation of
Spencerport Bible Church

Note: The Articles are as follows:

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Changes: 1. Added Article III.P. on Marriage, page 8.
2. Adjusted document Articles and format to accommodate the addition.

Owner: T. Clement, Elder, 261-0249

PREAMBLE

The rule and guide of the New Testament Church is the Holy Scriptures. The articles of this constitution are established so that the operation of the Church may be carried out decently and in order within the framework of the Scriptures.

We, the members of Spencerport Bible Church do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I – NAME

* The name of this assembly of believers shall be Spencerport Bible Church, Inc.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

A. The purpose of this church is to glorify God.

B. We will endeavor to do this through:

1. Promoting Godly worship
2. Instructing and edifying believers through the preaching and teaching of God's Word
3. Encouraging fellowship in order to strengthen, encourage, and exhort one another
4. Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to our immediate area and the uttermost parts of the world
5. Defending the truth until Christ returns

C. This church shall operate and maintain any institution or facet of ministry (e.g., Sunday School, Christian Day School, Children's Home, Radio or Television Broadcast, Christian Bookstore, Counseling Center, etc.) which will enable it to achieve this purpose.

ARTICLE III – ARTICLES OF FAITH

A. THE SCRIPTURES

1. We believe that the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, as originally written are holy, verbally and plenary inspired by God and the product of Spirit-filled men, and therefore are inerrant and infallible truth.
2. We believe that the canon is closed, and consists of these 66 books.
3. We believe that the Bible is our only authoritative rule of faith and practice and the supreme standard by which all human beliefs, conduct, and opinions are to be tried.
4. II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 22:18-19; Acts 1:16; Luke 24:44-45; John 17:17; John 12:48; Romans 15:4; Psalm 19:7-11; 1Thessalonians 2:13

B. THE TRUE GOD

1. We believe that there is only one living and true God, who is infinite in His being and perfection, an intelligent Spirit, immutable, eternal, almighty, righteous, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love.
2. In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons of one substance and power, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.
3. Exodus 20:2-3; 15:11; John 4:24; Psalm 90:2; Revelation 4:11; Mark 12:29-30; Matthew 28:19; 3:16-17

C. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

1. We believe in the absolute deity of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and that He is divine as no other man can be, being God in every respect, existing from all eternity, of one substance and co-equal with the Father and the Spirit; that He never ceased to be God.
2. John 1:1, 14, 18; 10:30; Philippians 2:6-10; Hebrews 1:8; 4:15; II Corinthians 13:14; I John 5:20
3. We believe that in the fullness of time, He took upon Himself man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof and yet without sin.
4. We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner and born of a virgin.

5. He is truly God and truly man, two whole, perfect, and distinct natures inseparably joined together in one person, the only mediator between God and man.
6. He is both the Son of God and God the Son.
7. Hebrews 2:14-17; 4:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:27, 34-35; John 1:14; Colossians 2:9; Romans 1:3-4; 9:5
8. We believe that Jesus Christ was crucified and buried yet saw no corruption.
9. He rose from the dead the third day according to the Scriptures – with the same body in which He suffered.
10. He ascended into heaven where He is seated at the right hand of the Father.
11. He alone is our merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God.
12. Matthew 28:6-7; Luke 24:39; Acts 1:9-11; 2:23-27; 13:37 Romans 6:9 Hebrews 1:3; 7:24-27; 8:1

D. THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature.
2. We believe He was active in Creation.
3. We believe that in His relation to the unbelieving world, He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled.
4. We believe that He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment and that He bears witness to the truth.
5. We believe that He is the agent of the new birth, that He baptizes, indwells, seals, endues, teaches, sanctifies, helps and bestows spiritual gifts upon each believer.
6. We believe that certain gifts, such as apostleship, speaking in tongues (unlearned languages), and the working of sign miracles were temporary, gradually ceasing as their purposes were fulfilled.
7. Acts 2; 5:1-3; Matthew 28:19; Genesis 1:1-3; II Thessalonians 2:7, 13; John 3:5, 6; 14:26; 15:26, 27; 16:8-13; Ephesians 1:13, 14; Luke 24:29; Romans 8:14, 16, 26, 27; I Corinthians 4:1-10; 12-14; I Peter 4; Hebrews 2:3, 4

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E. SATAN

1. We believe that Satan, an angel created by God, was once holy, and enjoyed heavenly honors.
2. Through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, he fell and drew after him a host of angels.
3. He is now the prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world.
4. We hold him to be man's great tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, the Chief power behind the present apostasy.
5. He is destined, however, to final defeat at the hand of God's own Son and to the judgment of an eternal justice in the Lake of Fire, a place prepared for him and his angels.
6. Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17; Matthew 4:1-11; II Corinthians 4:4; 11:13-15; Ephesians 2:2; Revelation 12:9, 19; 20:10

F. CREATION

1. We believe that the Genesis account of creation is the historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process, and that it is to be accepted literally, not allegorically or figuratively.
2. Genesis 1:1, 2; Colossians 1:16, 17; Acts 17:23-26

G. THE FALL OF MAN

1. We believe that man in the person of Adam was created in innocence under the sovereignty and law of his Maker.
2. We believe Adam, by voluntary transgression, fell from his sinless and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not only by birth but also by choice.
3. We believe all mankind is therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse.
4. Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 5:12, 15a; Romans 1:18-20 & 3:10-18

H. THE SACRIFICE FOR SIN

1. We believe there has been only one sacrifice for sin that satisfies the righteous demands of God – the Holy One – and that it is the shed blood of His own Son, Jesus Christ.

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2. We believe that His sacrifice of blood was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord bearing our sins in His own body on the tree.
3. We believe the value of His sacrifice (the price of redemption) is imputed as a gift to the account of anyone placing faith in His Person and work.
4. Hebrews 10:1-10; 1 John 2:2 & 4:10; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 2:24

I. JUSTIFICATION

1. We believe that justification is the judicial act of God whereby He, as a gift of grace, declares the believer to be righteous through faith in Jesus Christ.
2. Justification includes the expiation of our sin and the imputation of God's righteousness.
3. God bestows this righteousness on the basis of our faith in Christ's blood sacrifice, not on the basis of our works.
4. Romans 8:33b; 3:23-26; 4:1-8; 5:1-9; II Corinthians 5:21

J. FAITH & SALVATION: THE NEW BIRTH

1. We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation and that this faith will produce evidence in the life of the convert by a supernatural rebirth.
2. Acts 16:31; Galatians 3:6; John 1:12, 13; 3:3, 6, 7; II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:1; 5:9; I Peter 1:23

K. THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

1. We believe that all who receive Christ as their Savior are born from above and are eternally and unconditionally secure in Christ.
2. John 1:12; 10:28, 29; Romans 6:23; 8:35-39; Philippians 1:6; I John 5:11-13

L. THE CHURCH

1. We believe that the Church is a New Testament institution unknown to the Old Testament prophets; established by Jesus Christ, who is its sole head; revealed through the apostles.
2. We believe the church is empowered and perpetuated by the Holy Spirit.
3. We believe the church is Christ's "Body" for service and His "Bride" for glory.

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4. We believe the church began with the New Testament saints at Pentecost and will be consummated at the coming of Christ at the rapture.
5. Ephesians 1:22, 23; 3:1-12; 5:23-32; Acts 1:8; 2:1-13, 41-47; I Corinthians 12:4-28; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Peter 1:10-12
6. We believe that the Body of Christ is manifested through the local church.
7. The local church is a congregation of immersed believers observing:
 - a. The ordinances of Christ
 - b. Governed by His laws
 - c. Exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in it by His Word
8. The church's scripturally designated officers are Elders (Pastors, Bishops) and Deacons, whose qualifications and duties are clearly defined in the scriptures.
9. I Corinthians 1:2; 7:17; Acts 2:41-47; I Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 12:4-8; and Ephesians 4:11-13

M. THE ORDINANCES OF CHRIST

1. Water Baptism
2. The Lord's Table – Communion
3. Please refer to the Policy document, "THE ORDINANCES OF CHRIST", for additional information defining the individual ordinances.

N. THE RIGHTEOUS & THE WICKED

1. We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked.
2. We believe that only those who through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of God are truly righteous in His sight.
3. We believe all that 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.
4. We believe in the everlasting blessedness of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in the Lake of Fire.
5. John 3:18, 36; Romans 3:23-26; 6:23; Revelation 20:11-15

O. THE RETURN OF CHRIST

1. We believe in the imminent, personal, bodily, pre-tribulational, pre-millennial return of Christ for His Church.
2. At that moment, the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies.
3. Those believers living when He returns shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death and shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.
4. I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:51-54; Revelation 20:1-6

P. MARRIAGE

1. Marriage is the union of one man and one woman.
2. The man and woman must both be believers so there will be no marriage of unequally joined (*yoked*) souls.
3. Marriage is a life-long commitment.
4. The husband is to honor his wife and love her self-sacrificially – and to do it in an “understanding way.”
5. The wife is to honor and be submissive to her husband.
6. Marriage is not binding after death.
7. See: Matthew 22: 29-30, Mark 12: 24-25, 1 Corinthians 7 and 14: 34, Ephesians 5: 22-33, 1 Timothy 2: 11, and 1 Peter 3: 1-7.

ARTICLE IV – COVENANT

- A.** Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most joyfully enter into covenant one with another, as one body in Christ.
- B.** We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to work together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in holiness, knowledge and comfort; to promote its spirituality and prosperity; to sustain its worship, ordinances and doctrines; to give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

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- C. We also engage to religiously educate our children to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our behavior; to avoid all gossiping, backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from all forms of activity which dishonor our Lord Jesus Christ or cause stumbling to a fellow believer; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.
- D. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feelings and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but be always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rule of our Savior, to secure it without delay.
- E. We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP

A. ELIGIBILITY

- 1. Membership in this church shall be open to all persons who:
 - a. Profess faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior
 - b. Have been baptized by immersion in water
 - c. Agree to abide by and support the church's Articles of Faith, Covenant, and Constitution
- 2. The Corporation shall have no members.
 - a. Any action which would otherwise require approval by a majority of all members shall only require approval of the Board of Elders (also known as the 'Board').
 - b. All rights which would otherwise vest in the members, shall vest in the Board of Elders.
 - c. Nothing contained in Section A. of Article V shall be construed to limit the right of the Corporation to refer to persons associated with the Corporation as "church members" even though such persons are not members of the Corporation, and no such reference in or outside of these Articles shall constitute anyone being a member within the meaning of the New York Nonprofit Corporation Law.
 - d. The Corporation may confer by amendment of its Articles, some or all of the rights of a member, as set forth in the New York Nonprofit Corporation Law, upon any person or persons who do not have the right to vote for the election of officers or on a disposition of substantially all of the assets of the Corporation or on a merger or on a dissolution or on changes to the Corporation's Articles, but no such person shall be a member within the meaning the New York Nonprofit Corporation Law.

B. RECEIVING MEMBERS

1. Any person who desires membership in this church shall make request to a Pastor, Elder, or Deacon.
2. Upon making such a request, the person shall be given:
 - a. An application for membership
 - b. A copy of the SBC Constitution
3. A meeting will be held with the Elders or some part thereof to establish eligibility
4. Each applicant shall:
 - a. Assent to the Statement of Faith
 - b. Subscribe to the SBC Constitution
 - c. Testify publicly at a regularly held meeting for prospective church members
5. Any questions about or disagreements with the Statement of Faith or SBC Constitution must be indicated on the Membership Application.
 - * A duly appointed committee of the Board will evaluate these questions or disagreements to determine whether the request for membership will be approved.
6. Upon approval by the Elders, the person shall:
 - a. Be received into membership
 - b. If possible, present himself/herself at a worship service designated by the Board and publicly affirm membership commitment
 - c. Be publicly acknowledged as church members

C. DENIAL OF MEMBERSHIP

1. If, upon review of an application for membership or after meeting with a prospective church member, the Board of Elders determines that the applicant:
 - a. Does not confess Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and Savior
 - b. Lacks the evidence of a godly lifestyle
 - c. Possesses serious constitutional disagreements (as evaluated by the Elder Board)
2. Then, membership shall be denied
3. The decision made by the Board shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any court from that decision.

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D. PURPOSE OF THE FELLOWSHIP

- * The congregation of Christian believers who have applied for church membership and have been duly accepted shall constitute a spiritual body, united for the spiritual purposes set forth in the SBC Constitution, Article II.

E. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

1. Church members shall seek to exercise their spiritual gifts for the mutual benefit of all the church body.
2. Church members shall submit to the loving rule of the Elders.
3. Church members shall exercise voting privileges

F. CLASSIFICATION OF MEMBERSHIP

1. REGULAR MEMBER

- a. All persons received into membership of the church except as specified below.
- b. Voting privileges are restricted to regular members in good standing who have passed their eighteenth (18th) birthday.
- c. Membership in SBC shall not vest in any church member any proprietary rights in the Corporation.
- d. Membership shall only entitle the church member to vote at a meeting of the church members on those matters that the Board of Elders chooses to submit to the church membership for affirmation.
- e. Membership shall not be assignable inter vivos by any church member nor shall that membership vest to any personal representative, heir, or devisee.
- f. The church membership does not constitute a legislative body, nor do they constitute members of the Corporation.
- g. The church membership cannot vote, pass resolutions binding upon the Corporation, nor shall they have any equity in the real property of the Corporation, or rights to vote on its disposal.
- h. Property of the Corporation is dedicated to religious and charitable purposes as outlined in the Articles of Incorporation.

2. ASSOCIATE MEMBER

- a. Associate membership shall be available to temporary residents of the area (e.g., students, military personnel) who desire to retain their membership in their home church.
- b. They must meet all membership requirements and shall have all privileges and responsibilities of regular members, except for holding a church office.

3. ABSENTEE MEMBER

- a. Members who are absent for extended periods of time for such reasons as education, military or missionary service who plan to return periodically or permanently to this area.
- b. Names may be placed on this list at the discretion of the Elders or upon request.
- c. Absentee members are not counted for quorum requirements, may not hold church office, or vote.

4. INACTIVE MEMBER

- a. Members (excluding those classified in Article V, Section F.3.) who evidence no participation in the church by attendance, communication, or contribution for six months or longer are classified as inactive members.
- b. Inactive members have neither voice nor vote in church affairs, may not hold office, and are not counted for quorum requirements.
- c. The names of inactive members shall be announced to the church.
- d. At least one Elder shall contact each inactive member, counsel him or her, and seek to restore them to active membership.
- e. After an additional six month period, if no interest in restoration is shown, the Elders shall remove them from the membership rolls.

G. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

* *THE PURPOSE:*

1. Purity of doctrine and conduct is the Lord's positive expectation of His Church, and the lack of it defiles and weakens any church and its testimony.
2. The threefold purpose of church discipline is:
 - a. To glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6)
 - b. To edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20)
 - c. To promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him/her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1)

* *THE PROCESS:*

1. Therefore, when a member of the church or all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church no longer adheres to the doctrinal basis of the church, persists in overt sinful behavior, or engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the Board of Elders, steps will be taken toward discipline according to the instruction of Matthew 18:15-17. Those steps (stages) shall be as follows:

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- a. **STAGE 1** - It shall be the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of the erring individual's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct such erring individual in **private**, seeking his/her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then . . .
 - b. **STAGE 2** - The warning church member shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his/her repentance, but **accompanied** by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent.
 - * **NOTE:** The first and second warnings may occur with no specified time interval. If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then . . .
 - c. **STAGE 3** - It shall be brought to the attention of the **Board** of Elders (or a duly appointed Committee of the Board, at the sole discretion of the Board).
 - * If the Board of Elders (or duly appointed Committee of the Board), after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture (including Matthew 18:15-18, 1 Corinthians 5, Titus 3:10, 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15, Galatians 6:1, Romans 16:17-18 and 1 Timothy 5:19-20) find there is corroborating evidence that the erring individual has sinned or is continuing in sin, that he/she has been appropriately confronted, and that he/she refused to repent, then . . .
 - d. **STAGE 4** - The Elders shall inform the church and the **congregation** thereof at a regularly scheduled worship service in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance.
 - 1) If the erring individual demonstrates repentance, (determined by the Elder Board), then notice to that effect may be given at a regularly scheduled worship service.
 - 2) If however, the erring individual does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then . . .
 - e. **STAGE 5** - He/she shall be publicly **dismissed** from the fellowship and/or membership of the church and the congregation thereof at a regularly scheduled worship service.
 - f. **STAGE 6** - If the erring individual, after such dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Board of Elders (or duly appointed Committee of the Board), then he/she shall be publicly **restored** to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of fellowship and/or membership.
2. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Elders in the exercise of their discretion may proceed directly to the fourth stage of church discipline (i.e. the informing of the church and congregation in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance) or to the fifth stage of church discipline (i.e. the dismissal from the fellowship and/or membership of the church) when one or more of the following have occurred:

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- a. Where the transgression and refusal to repent have been public (i.e. openly and to the offense of the whole church – 1 Corinthians 5:1-5)
 - b. Where the disciplined party has taught or otherwise disseminated doctrine deemed false or erroneous by the Elders, then chosen to disregard the direction and reproof of the Elders (Romans 16:17)
 - c. Where the disciplined party has been warned twice to cease from factious and divisive conduct and has chosen to disregard that warning (Titus 3:10-11)
3. If the erring member refuses to heed warning and correction, he or she will be removed from the church roll by the Elders, and his or her name will be announced to the church.
 4. All discipline shall be conducted in the spirit of Christian meekness and love, with a goal of restoration.
 5. It is understood that this process will continue to conclusion whether the erring member leaves the church or otherwise seeks to withdraw from membership to avoid the discipline process.
 6. The members of this church, and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the fourth or fifth stages of church discipline.
 7. Members of this church who are under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous paragraphs, forfeit and waive the right to resign from this church. Resignations from membership are possible only by church members who are good standing and who are not under any disciplinary action.
 8. Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the Elders (or a duly constituted subcommittee thereof), a church member, non-member regular attendee, or other individual may be notified that he/she is not to be present upon church premises for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of others on church premises. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with church discipline of that person.

H. RESTORATION OF MEMBERS

1. Disciplined members may be restored to the membership upon approval of the Elders after such members have given a satisfactory explanation and acceptable evidence of honest repentance and confession.
2. The names of restored members shall be announced to the church.

ARTICLE VI – GOVERNMENT

- A.** Please refer to the Polity document “THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH”.
- B.** The purpose of that document is to set in order the divinely demonstrated structure of a New Testament Church as seen in scripture.
- C.** The document also includes a general description of each level of church leadership and membership roles.
- D.** We believe in the autonomy of the local fellowship of believers..

ARTICLE VII – OFFICERS

A. SUMMARY STATEMENT

- 1. The scriptural officers of this church are Elders (at least one of which will serve as Pastor) and Deacons.
- 2. For the effective operation of the church, other officers or assistants may be appointed to assist as needed.
- 3. All activities and affairs of the Corporation shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Board of Elders, who are responsible for shepherding and having the oversight of the flock.

B. QUALIFICATIONS

1. ELDERS

- a. He must be a regular member of the church for at least six months.
- b. He must be at least 21 years old.
- c. He must possess the qualifications described in I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, I Peter 5:1-4 and Acts 20:28.

- 1) Blameless
- 2) Husband of one wife
- 3) Temperate, sober, vigilant
- 4) Sober-minded, prudent
- 5) Of good behavior, orderly, respectable
- 6) Given to hospitality
- 7) Apt to teach
- 8) Not given to wine
- 9) Not violent

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- 10) Patient, moderate, forbearing, gentle
- 11) Not a brawler, not contentious
- 12) Not covetous, not a lover of money, not greedy of base gain
- 13) Rules well his own house
- 14) Not a novice
- 15) Has a good report or reputation
- 16) Not self-willed
- 17) A lover of good men and things
- 18) Just, fair
- 19) Holy, devout
- 20) Self-controlled

2. DEACONS

- a. He must be a regular member of the church for at least six months.
- b. He must be at least 21 years old.
- c. He must possess the qualifications described in I Timothy 3:8-13

- 1) A man of dignity, grave
- 2) Not double-tongued
- 3) Not addicted to much wine
- 4) Not fond of sordid gain, greedy
- 5) Holds the mystery of faith with a clear conscience
- 6) First, tested – proven
- 7) Beyond reproach, blameless
- 8) Has a wife of dignity, grave
 - a) Not a gossip
 - b) Temperate & faithful
- 9) Husband of one wife
- 10) A good manager of his children & household

C. DUTIES

1. ELDERS

- a. Are responsible for ruling and shepherding the flock (I Peter 5:1-3, Acts 20:28).
- b. Are responsible for guarding the reputation and doctrinal integrity of the church.
- c. Are responsible for the following:

- 1) Providing spiritual direction and oversight of the church
- 2) Receiving and dismissing members
- 3) Overseeing, but not necessarily executing, the business affairs of the church
- 4) Overseeing, but not necessarily executing, all the programs of the church
- 5) Supervising pulpit supply as needed
- 6) Exercising church discipline
- 7) Assisting the Pastor(s) in the administration of the Ordinances

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- 8) Exercising shepherding care over the flock by visiting, counseling and comforting as the needs arise
- 9) Promoting and helping fulfill the objectives of the church
- 10) Supervising all congregational meetings with the Chairman of the Elders serving as the moderator of all congregational meetings
- 11) Supervising ordination examinations and services
- 12) Approving all appointed teachers, officers and committee members
- 13) Authorizing non-budgeted expenses which do not exceed \$750
- 14) He shall be considered an ex-officio member of all boards, committees and subsidiary organizations in the church.
- 15) Interpreting this Constitution
- 16) Pastors serve at the direction of the Elder Board.

2. PASTOR/ELDER

- a. The Pastor shall be an Elder and shall normally serve as chairman of the Elders.
- b. Must meet the qualifications of an Elder and shall carry out the duties thereof.
- c. He has the primary responsibility for the oversight and shepherding of the church.
- d. He shall preach the Word of God, administer the ordinances, moderate church business meetings and be responsible for all regular services.
- e. In the event the Pastor feels led by the Lord to resign, he shall submit his request to the Elders at least 3 months before his final service.

3. DEACONS

- a. Under the auspices of the Elders, the Deacons oversee the work of the church.
- b. This is not to say that Deacons are inferior to the Elders in any way.
 - 1) One office is just as important as the other.
 - 2) They merely operate in different spheres.
 - 3) The subordination is necessary for successful operation.
- c. Are responsible for the following:
 - 1) The collection, disbursement and accounting for gifts and offerings received by the church
 - 2) Ushering
 - 3) Maintenance, repair and operation of the church buildings, grounds, equipment and other assets
 - 4) Assisting in the general visitation ministry of the church (hospital, jail, widows, etc.)
 - 5) Assisting the Elders in the shepherding ministry of the church
 - 6) Administrating the Deacon's Fund
 - 7) Assisting in the administration of other ministries as requested by the Elders
 - 8) Serving as Trustees of the Corporation
 - 9) The Deacons shall keep a permanent record of their proceedings and shall forward a copy of their minutes to the Elders.

CONSTITUTION

- 10) Deacons shall also maintain accurate accounting records of receipts and disbursements of all funds, and monthly financial reports shall be submitted to the Elders and made public to the church.
- 11) The Deacons shall elect from among their number a chairman as well as the following officers (*Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Church Clerk*) for a term of one year; these officers may succeed themselves.

* In the absence of any of these officers, a Deacon or an Elder may substitute.

4. TREASURER

- a. The treasurer shall be responsible for handling, disbursing and accounting for funds of the church in accordance with proper authority.
- b. The treasurer shall present periodic financial statements to the congregation.
- c. It shall be the joint responsibility of the treasurer and financial secretary to receive, count and deposit all offerings taken into the treasury of the church.

5. FINANCIAL SECRETARY

- a. The financial secretary shall be responsible for keeping a complete record of the individual contributions to the church.
- b. Upon request, the Financial Secretary will prepare an annual statement of an individual's contributions to the church.
- c. It shall be the joint responsibility of the financial secretary and the treasurer to receive, count and deposit all offerings taken into the treasury of the church.

6. CHURCH CLERK

- a. The church clerk shall be responsible for all correspondence pertaining to:
 - 1) Church membership
 - 2) Maintaining a correct membership roll
 - 3) Preparation of baptismal certificates
- b. It shall also be the duty of the church clerk to record minutes of all business meetings.

* To keep on file the reports of officers, departments and committees that are presented at business meetings

7. OTHER OFFICERS

- a. Other officers or assistants may be appointed as is deemed appropriate.
- b. These appointments must be approved by the Elders and are for one year.
- c. These appointments may succeed themselves if re-appointed.

8. A CHAIRMAN

D. ELECTIONS

1. PASTOR

- a. In the event of a vacancy of the pulpit of Spencerport Bible Church, a pulpit committee will be formed to locate a Pastor.
- b. The pulpit committee will meet until the man they have nominated for Pastor has been confirmed by the regular voting members of the church, at which time the committee shall be dissolved.
- c. Public notice of all congregational meetings pertaining to the pulpit committee and pastoral candidates shall be made one week prior to each meeting.
- d. The pulpit committee shall investigate and present to the church those candidates whom the committee judges eligible for the office of Pastor.
- e. Each candidate must agree whole-heartedly, without reservation, to the Articles of Faith and Constitution of SBC.
- f. Only one candidate at a time will be recommended with the pulpit committee exercising authority to call for a congregational confirmation on such candidate.
- g. Examination and confirmation will be completed before another man is asked to be a candidate.
- h. The congregational confirmation on a candidate for Pastor shall be taken by secret ballot, requiring a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote for confirmation.
- i. After confirmation and upon acceptance of the position, the approved candidate will automatically obtain membership in Spencerport Bible Church.

2. ELDERS & DEACONS

- a. These officers are raised up by God, recognized and recommended by the Elders, and are confirmed by the congregation.
- b. Elders and Deacons are confirmed for a period of three (3) years.
- c. Each Elder and Deacon must be re-nominated for subsequent terms.
- d. Confirmation shall take place at the annual church meeting.
- e. Vacancies or additions may be filled any time during the year at a congregational meeting called by the Elders for that purpose.
- f. Candidates will be examined by the Elders to determine:
 - 1) His qualifications to serve
 - 2) His view of the ministry and overall understanding of the local church, its objective and leadership responsibilities
 - 3) His doctrinal beliefs
 - 4) His commitment to this church, his willingness to attend services, promote its ministries and support the church's program and activities
- g. The Elders will post nominations for consideration by the church six (6) weeks prior to the annual congregational meeting.
- h. If the church congregation desires to submit additional names for consideration, the names must be submitted four (4) weeks prior to the meeting.

CONSTITUTION

- i. The official list of nominees shall be posted two (2) weeks prior to the annual meeting.
- j. No names shall be considered from the floor at the annual meeting.
- k. Elders and Deacons shall be elected by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast.
- l. All officers may succeed themselves.

E. DISMISSAL

1. PASTOR

- a. The removal of a Pastor is a serious occasion.
- b. The term of office is indefinite, or until he shall retire, resign, or be removed for immorality, apostasy, or any other reason considered valid by the Elders.
- c. If he is found to be mentally incapacitated or spiritually unqualified by a thorough, corroborating investigation by the Elders, in accordance with pertinent Scripture, the elders shall proceed with his removal.
- d. The Elders shall present their recommendations at a specially called business meeting:
 - * Prior notice of such a meeting shall be given on two (2) successive Sundays.
- e. The congregational confirmation of the Elders recommendation shall be taken by secret ballot, requiring a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote for confirmation.
- f. When a Pastor is removed because of sin that is deemed sufficient to disqualify him from shepherding, and if he refuses to repent from that sin, the removal shall be accompanied by a public rebuke (1 Timothy 5:20).
- g. The Elders will call a congregational meeting within two (2) weeks to commence the formation of a pulpit committee.

2. ELDERS & DEACONS

- a. The removal of an Elder or Deacon is a serious occasion.
- b. However, if at any time an Elder or Deacon deliberately teaches or counsels anyone in disagreement with the Articles of Faith or Constitution of SBC, or conducts himself in a manner that is in clear contradiction to scripture, he shall be subject to dismissal from office.
- c. The Elders shall conduct a thorough, corroborating investigation.
- d. Recommendation for dismissal will occur if the Elders agree the officer has violated his office.
- e. The congregation approves the dismissal by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes cast.
- f. Motion for removal of an Elder or Deacon from the office shall be handled in the same manner as the motion to remove a Pastor.
- g. When an Elder is removed because of sin that is deemed sufficient to disqualify him from shepherding, and if he refuses to repent from that sin, the removal shall be accompanied by a public rebuke (1 Timothy 5:20).

- h. No individual who is subject to church discipline shall be able to serve as Elder or Deacon during his disciplinary period.

3. OTHER OFFICERS

- a. If any other officer or assistant conducts himself in a manner such as described in Section VII.D. above, the Elders shall conduct a thorough, corroborating investigation.
- b. If the Elders agree the officer or assistant has violated his office, they shall remove their approval (see Section VII.D.) and dismiss him.
- c. No individual who is subject to church discipline shall be able to serve as an officer or assistant during his disciplinary period.

ARTICLE VIII – ADDITIONAL STAFF

A. PASTORAL STAFF

1. The church may take on additional staff to fulfill the needs of the body.
2. Associate or Assistant Pastors may be added to assist the Senior Pastor in the performance of his duties.
 - a. He shall be gifted and called to the ministry.
 - b. He shall be recognized as possessing the qualities & qualifications of a teaching Elder.
3. The Pastor and Elders will carefully examine each candidate and will present any recommended candidate to the congregation for their confirmation.
4. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote is necessary for confirmation.
5. Only one candidate will be recommended at a time.
6. The approved candidate will automatically obtain membership in SBC.
7. This person may or may not be chosen as an Elder.
8. All pastoral staff members fall under the supervision of the Senior Pastor.

B. NON-PASTORAL STAFF

1. Other positions, such as secretarial, maintenance or janitorial, while very important to the ministry, are not positions of leadership.
2. As such, the Elders are free to fill any of these positions.

ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES

A. SUMMARY STATEMENTS

1. As the Lord gifts people and puts it upon their heart to serve in various areas, the leaders of the church will work to enable them to serve the Lord in those ways.
2. Through music, worship, fellowship and other areas of opportunity, people individually and in concert will serve the Lord.
3. As the church grows and as its functional needs change, supervisory, auxiliary committees functioning under the auspices of the Elders may become necessary.
4. Within the framework of either “standing” or “temporary” committees, and as the Elders find it necessary, they shall create such committees, elect members to them, designate their chairmen, and indicate the duration of their existence and the scope of their activity.

B. DESCRIPTION OF COMMITTEES

1. PULPIT COMMITTEE

- * The Elders shall constitute the pulpit committee plus any other men, as they deem necessary.

2. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- a. The Elders and Deacons (or a subcommittee thereof) shall serve as the nominating committee.
- b. The committee is responsible for gathering nominations from the congregation for the various offices.
- c. However, the Elders shall screen the prospective candidates and prepare the list of qualified candidates to be presented to the congregation.

3. AUDIT

- a. The Elders shall provide for a periodical examination of the financial records of the church.
- b. The results of the audit shall be made public.

CONSTITUTION

4. OTHER

* Other committees and their respective chairmen may be appointed by the Elders as is deemed necessary, such as:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) Building | 2) Missions |
| 3) Music | 4) Social |
| 5) Ushers | 6) Flower |
| 7) Evangelism | 8) Women's Ministry |
| 9) Christian Education | 10) Christian Day School |

ARTICLE X – CHURCH MEETINGS

A. WORSHIP MEETINGS

1. Unless providentially hindered, the church shall meet each Sunday for worship.
2. The church shall also conduct and promote other meetings for prayer, fellowship, and instruction.
3. The Lord's Supper shall be observed regularly as designated by the Elders.
4. Additional meetings may be held at any time upon approval of the Elders.

B. BUSINESS MEETINGS

1. FISCAL YEAR

* The fiscal year of the church shall run from January 1st to December 31st.

2. ANNUAL MEETING

* The annual meeting will be held in the second week of December.

3. BUSINESS MEETINGS

a. Regular church business meetings shall be held at least quarterly.

- 1) The quarterly meeting will be a time to reflect on how the Lord has worked in the last quarter and to discuss what will be happening in the quarter ahead.
- 2) The Pastor will normally preside, but should he desire, or in his absence, the Elders may choose a substitute.

b. All such meetings shall be announced two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.

- c. Special congregational meetings may be called at any time at the discretion of the Elders.
- d. All church business meetings shall be conducted using Robert's Rules of Order as a guide.
- e. A quorum shall consist of at least 25% of the regular voting members or 30 people, whichever is smaller.

4. CONGREGATIONAL APPROVAL

- * Unless otherwise specified in this Constitution, items requiring congregational approval shall require an official vote of a simple majority of regular voting members present.

ARTICLE XI – ORDINATIONS

A. A CALL

- * When a male member of SBC feels that God has called him to the Christian Ministry, he may make written application for ordination.
 - a. His request shall be presented to the Board of Elders.
 - b. Prayer by the Board shall be followed by a review and evaluation of the applicant and his application.

B. AN EXAM

- * If the Board confirms the applicant exemplifies the scriptural qualifications for ordination, they shall call a council in order to examine the following:
 - a. His Conversion
 - b. His Call to the ministry
 - c. His Doctrinal beliefs

C. A DECISION

- * The Board will make the final decision to ordain or reject the application.
 - a. If the decision is to reject the application:
 - 1) The process will go no further
 - 2) The applicant notified and informed as to the reason/s
 - b. If the decision is to ordain:
 - 1) The applicant will be officially notified by the Board.

CONSTITUTION

- 2) The Elder Board will publicly recommend the Ordination, presenting him to the church at a regular or special Business Meeting.
- 3) A confirmation vote of two-thirds of those present and voting is required.

D. A CAVEAT

- * The Elder Board reserves the right to withdraw its ordination if, in its judgment, such action is warranted. (The church would also be notified of such action.)

ARTICLE XII – LICENSE TO PREACH

A. A RECOGNITION

1. The church may grant a “License to Preach” to a man of its membership whose service includes preaching opportunities but who doesn’t seek regular ordination.
2. Such a license shows the church’s endorsement of his ministry.

B. A REQUEST

1. He must make written application for such license, including:
 - a. Statement of conversion, his call to preach, and his doctrinal position
 - b. The written application will be filed with the church clerk.
2. His application shall be presented to the Board of Elders.
3. Prayer by the Board shall be followed by a review and evaluation of the applicant and his application.

C. AN EXAM

- * The Board shall meet with the applicant in order to review and examine the content of his written application.

D. A DECISION

- * The Board will make the final decision to license him or reject the application.
 - a. If the decision is to reject the application:
 - 1) The process will go no further
 - 2) The applicant will be notified and informed as to the reason/s for rejection

b. If the decision is to license:

- 1) The applicant will be officially notified by the Board.
- 2) The Elder Board will publicly recommend the License, presenting him to the church at a regular or special Business Meeting.

E. A CAVEAT

- * The Elder Board reserves the right to withdraw its License if, in its judgment, such action is warranted. (The church would also be notified of such action.)

ARTICLE XIII - AMENDMENTS

1. This Constitution may be amended at a regular business meeting by a two-thirds majority vote.
2. Notice of the proposed amendment shall have been registered with the church clerk in writing.
3. The amendment proposal must be announced from the pulpit by at least the three previous Sundays, or in a letter sent to members.
4. The text of the proposed amendment must be posted for at least the three previous Sundays, or in a letter sent to members.

ARTICLE XIV - DISSOLUTION

1. No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall ever be used to benefit any donor, member, director, or officer of the Corporation or any private individual.
2. No donor, member, director, or officer of the Corporation or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the dissolution of any of the corporate assets.

3. Upon dissolution, any assets of the Corporation must be distributed to one or more organizations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as one organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purpose.

- * Such corporation must agree with the letter and spirit of this Constitution.

4. If guidance is necessary on appropriate choices, we recommend the church consider those listed on the missionary roll of the church, in proportion to the support normally provided by the church to those institutions or individuals.

