

# CONSTITUTION OF THE MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Parkston, South Dakota

(Revised, July, 2014)

Placing our faith completely in the Lord: Jesus Christ for our salvation, believing in the teachings and practices of the Baptists and in those great distinctive principles for which they stood, namely:

1. The pre-eminence of Jesus Christ as our Savior, Lord and Master.
2. The inspired authority of the Bible as our only rule of faith and conduct.
3. Soul Liberty; the right of private interpretation and the competency of the individual soul in direct approach to God.
4. The absolute separation of church and state.
5. A regenerate church membership.
6. Believer's baptism by immersion.
7. The complete independence of the local church.
8. The congregational form of church government; the solemn obligation of the majority rule, guaranteeing equal rights to all and special privileges to none.
9. The spiritual unity of all Christian believers, for which our Lord so earnestly prayed.
10. The proclamation of the gospel throughout the world.

We, therefore, band ourselves together as a body of believers in Jesus Christ and adopt for our government, plan of worship and services, and the following articles:

## **ARTICLE I - NAME**

The name of this church shall be "The Memorial Baptist Church" of Parkston, South Dakota.

## **ARTICLE II - AFFILIATION**

This church shall maintain fraternal fellowship and cooperation with the North American Baptist Conference and the Great Plains Association.

## **ARTICLE III - PURPOSE**

The purpose of this church shall be the advancement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ through public worship of God, preaching of the Gospel, administration of the New Testament ordinances, which are the Lord's Supper and Believer's Baptism, consistent Christian living of its members, efforts of personal evangelism, missionary endeavor, and Christian education.

## **ARTICLE IV - CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, and on the profession of our faith having been baptized in the name of the

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit . . . We do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ. We do, therefore in His strength pledge:

-- General Loyalty -- That we will strive to promote the prosperity and spirituality of this church and sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine.

-- Faithful Attendance -- That we will assemble ourselves together for instruction, prayer, evangelism, business and worship.

-- Devotional Life -- That we will maintain family and private devotions, bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, seek for the salvation of our relatives, friends, and acquaintances.

-- Christian Personality -- That we will seek the fruit of the spirit which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance as opposed to pride; anger, envy, impurity, gluttony, slothfulness, avarice; in order to preserve the unity of the church and maintain its testimony before others, remembering that God has given us the spirit of love and of a sound mind.

-- Brotherly Love -- That we will watch over one another in brotherly love, remembering each other in prayer and aiding each other in sickness and distress; that we will be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation.

-- Careful Conduct -- That we will walk wisely before the world, and refrain from any of its habits that are foes of spiritual growth.

-- Obedient Stewardship -- That we will cheerfully and regularly according to our ability contribute of our means toward the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the needy, and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world.

-- Benediction -- "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." Hebrews 13:20-21

## **ARTICLE V - CONFESSIONS OF FAITH**

-- Scriptures -- We believe that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" and is the supreme and final authority in matters of faith and life.

-- God -- We believe in one God, holy, sovereign, eternal, existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

-- Jesus Christ -- We believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He was born of the virgin Mary, lived a loving and sinless life showing us the Father, suffered and died for the sin of the world, and rose again on the third day.

-- Man -- We believe that man was created in the image of God, but through voluntary disobedience now is also a creature of sin both by nature and action.

-- Salvation -- We believe that the salvation of sinners is completely by grace, received by faith in Jesus Christ who by His death made atonement for our sins.

-- Church -- we believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation or baptized believers who observe the ordinances of Christ, who worship together, and who seek to walk daily conscious of his loving presence and in obedience to the holy directives of His Word and Spirit.

-- Of Things To Come -- We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven to gather His own to Himself and to judge all mankind; that the ungodly will be released to eternal separation from God, while those in Christ will be welcomed into the perfect joy of God's presence forever.

## **ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1 - RECEPTION OF MEMBERS**

- (1) **BY BAPTISM.** Any person professing faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, giving evidence of regeneration and adopting the views of faith and practice held by this church, may, upon baptism by immersion, be received into its membership.
- (2) **BY LETTER.** Members of other Baptist churches of like faith and order may be received by their letter of transfer, certifying their faith in Christ and their baptism by immersion, duly granted by said churches.
- (3) **BY EXPERIENCE.** Persons who have been members of Baptist churches but for some peculiar circumstances are unable to obtain letters of transfer; also persons who are not members of a Baptist church but who have been immersed upon profession of their faith in Christ, and who accept the views of faith and practice of this church may be received into its membership.
- (4) **BY RESTORATION.** Excluded members may be restored on confession of their error before the Elder Board and giving evidence of repentance.
- (5) **MODE OF PROCEDURE.** All applicants for admission to membership shall appear before an examining committee consisting of the elder board and upon recommendation of said committee, the church shall vote to receive the applicant into its fellowship.

### **SECTION 2 - TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

- (1) **BY DEATH.**
- (2) **BY LETTER.**
  - a. To other Baptist churches. Any member if in good standing shall be granted, on request, a letter of dismissal to any other church of like faith and order.
  - b. To non-Baptist churches. When a member of this church wishes to unite with some other evangelical church, a certificate of Christian standing shall be issued.
- (3) **BY ERASURE.** Members not reporting to the church for a period of one year shall be erased from the membership list. These shall be notified 30 days before any action is taken. If there is no response, the pastor and elders shall judge the case on the basis of the response.
- (4) **BY EXCLUSION.** Any member who has been adjudged guilty of immoral acts or unchristian conduct or of gross disregard of covenant obligations may be excluded from membership in this church.
- (5) Any member uniting with any other church without letter of transfer or

certificate of Christian standing shall be dropped from the membership upon satisfactory proof thereof.

(6) **MODE OF PROCEDURE.** All terminations; with the exception of 1, 3, and 5 shall come about by recommendation of the Board of Elders and the vote of the church.

### **SECTION 3 - NON-RESIDENT MEMBERS**

- (1) Members removing to a community where there is a Baptist church of like faith and order shall be encouraged to transfer their membership to said church.
- (2) Members removing to a community where there is no Baptist church or other evangelical church shall write to the home church from time to time and continue to fulfill their financial obligations to the church as long as they are members.

## **ARTICLE VII - DISCIPLINE**

All cases of discipline, whether of a private or public nature, shall be conducted according to the teaching of the New Testament and the specific teaching of Christ as laid down in Matthew 18:15-17. No public or private complaint shall be acted upon until this course of action shall have been pursued. Charges when made shall be in writing and shall be submitted to the Board of Elders for such action as may be deemed necessary. In all cases of discipline, if practicable, the accused shall be given the opportunity to be heard in his own defense, and no member if absent, shall be censured or excluded at the same meeting in which the charge is preferred against him.

## **ARTICLE VIII - OFFICERS**

### **SECTION 1 - ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Church officers as listed below shall be members of the church and shall be elected or appointed as provided for in this Article.

- (1) Except as otherwise indicated, all officers shall be elected at the annual business meeting of the church, for a period of one year. No member shall serve on one board for more than two successive terms.
- (2) The minister shall be called for an indefinite period by the church membership. No consideration shall be given by the church to any candidate who is not first recommended by the pulpit committee. The minister may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the church at a properly called business meeting, at which time the clerk shall be instructed to give the minister three months formal written notice of his dismissal. The minister may resign at any time by giving the church two months formal, written notice of his intention to resign.

### **SECTION 2 - OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES**

(1) **MINISTER.** One of the members of the Board of Elders shall be the minister or preaching elder. For the qualifications of the minister see Article VIII, Section 2. The minister shall perform all duties of the office of Elder. In addition the minister shall be responsible for the public heralding of the Gospel and those duties incumbent on his position, such as officiating at weddings, funerals, etc. He shall, unless otherwise provided for by the church be the moderator of the church and of the Advisory Board. He is to receive a

stated, agreed and fixed salary. At associations, conventions, and conferences he is to represent the church in capacity of delegate, and his expenses shall be paid by the church. His annual vacation during his first two years will be two Sundays or three weeks. Thereafter his annual vacation will be three Sundays, which will be taken at two different times. The dates for vacation periods will be approved by the Board of Elders. He shall be granted one Sunday annually, if called upon, to render evangelistic services in another church.

- (2) **CHURCH CLERK.** The church clerk shall keep a correct and permanent record of all the business meetings of the church, sign all letters of dismissal, take charge of all church records, maintain a register of members, and shall record the manner of dismissal of all members who shall leave the church. The clerk shall enter upon the records of the church current events in the life of the church that are likely to be of historical value, thus making the church records a continuous story of the church. He shall be secretary of the advisory Board.
- (3) **TREASURER.** The treasurer shall be custodian of all funds belonging to the church except such special funds, as the church shall direct. He shall receive all monies and he shall disburse the money as authorized by the Board of Trustees, strictly on the basis of the items within the budget adopted by the church and he shall deposit all money on hand in the proper bank account. The treasurer shall present to the church at its Semi and Annual business meetings or more often if so requested, an itemized report of receipts and disbursements showing the actual financial condition of the church. He shall present his books to be audited at the close of the fiscal year or more often if so desired by the church. He shall deliver to his successor all books and records pertaining to his office.
- (4) **FINANCIAL SECRETARY.** The financial secretary shall keep a complete and detailed record of all-individual contributions and/or pledges. He shall send financial statements at the end of the fiscal year to all members, showing their individual financial standing.
- (5) **MODERATOR.** The moderator shall preside at all business meetings of the church and of the Advisory Board. In the absence of the moderator the Chairman of the Board of Elders shall preside.
- (6) **SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT.** The Sunday School Superintendent shall be responsible for the direct supervision of the entire Sunday School. He/She shall report at the regular meetings of the Board of Christian Education & Missions as to the progress and needs of the Sunday School. The Sunday School Superintendent will be appointed by the Board of Christian Education & Missions.
- (7) **SUNDAY SCHOOL SECRETARY.** The Sunday School Secretary shall process the attendance records and offerings of the Sunday School and shall report observed needs to the Superintendent.
- (8) **HEAD USHER.** The head usher shall be directly responsible for the supervision of the Ushering Committee. The Head Usher shall be elected by the church. The Advisory Board shall appoint additional ushers. They shall supervise the seating and physical comfort of the congregation, the distribution of hymnbooks, and receiving of offerings. They shall abide by the rules of good ushering suggested by the church.
- (9) **PUBLICATIONS CHAIRPERSON.** The publication chairperson shall assist the pastor in reporting church activities to appropriate community newspapers and denominational publications; shall assist the membership in subscribing to denominational publications; and shall cooperate with the pastor in the development and maintenance of the church library.

#### ARTICLE IX - BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

## **SECTION 1 - ELECTION OF CHAIRMEN**

Unless otherwise provided, all boards and committees of this church shall elect their own chairmen, yearly.

## **SECTION 2 - ADVISORY BOARD**

There shall be an Advisory Board composed of the minister, the elected officers of the church, chairmen of all boards, the heads of the men's, women's, and young people's organizations, and the chairmen of all standing committees responsible to the Advisory Board, thus forming a group representative of the church program and activities. In the event an officer holds duplicate offices, he shall represent the first board or committee listed in this constitution; the other board or committee shall select another representative from among its members to serve here. Seven members of the Advisory Board shall be considered a quorum to transact business.

The Advisory Board shall be the general planning body of the church. It shall be constantly studying the needs of the church and the needs of its parish, and shall determine the ways and means by which the policies and programs of the church shall be carried forward. It shall seek to correlate the programs of all the departments and groups in the church.

The Advisory Board shall meet prior to the annual and semi-annual business meetings and at other times at the discretion of the moderator. The moderator shall arrange an agenda for each meeting. Special meetings may be called by the moderator or by the Chairman of the Board of Elders.

## **SECTION 3 - BOARD OF ELDERS**

There shall be a Board of Elders of sufficient number and qualification in order to shepherd the congregation. Elders shall be nominated by the existing Board of Elders and elected by a two-thirds congregational vote. Elders are evaluated biennially and are removed from office if they fail to meet the qualifications or upon request to end service. There is no limit to service on the Board of Elders.

Elders ought to be men "above reproach" (Titus 1:7) both within and without the Church. The specific qualifications for the office of Elder are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-3. No Elder will be nominated without exhibiting the spiritual qualities specifically delineated in Scripture.

The Board of Elders shall maintain the doctrinal purity of the church, provide the spiritual instruction of the church membership, provide pastoral oversight of the church including visitation of the sick, rebuke and discipline of those members found in sin, and spiritual encouragement and care for the membership, advise applicants for church membership and recommend them for church fellowship, administer the Ordinance of Baptism, and administer the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper a minimum of eight times annually.

The Board of Elders shall be responsible for the pulpit supply when the minister is ill or on vacation. The Board of Elders shall review annually with the minister the annual compensation paid to the minister. The Board of Elders shall

have charge of the church fellowship fund, consisting of offering taken at the Communion Services of the church.

The Board of Elders shall meet monthly and shall report at regular business meetings of the Advisory Board.

Whenever by reason of age and faithful service a member is deemed worthy of special recognition, the church may elect such member an Honorary Elder.

#### **SECTION 4 - BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

There shall be a Board of Trustees consisting of six members. Their term of office shall be so arranged that there shall be two members elected each year to serve for a term of three years. The Board of Trustees shall hold in trust all property of the church and shall be responsible for its upkeep and management. They shall not buy, sell or encumber the real estate or other property of the church unless authorized to do so by the church. The trustees shall be responsible for the employees and the preparation of an annual audit of the books of the church. If cost of repairs or projects exceed \$200.00, the church shall be informed and the necessary action taken.

The Board of Trustees shall meet quarterly, or at the discretion of the Chairman of the Trustees, and shall report at regular business meetings of the Advisory Board.

#### **SECTION 5 - BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & MISSIONS**

There shall be a Board of Christian Education and Missions consisting of six members. Their term of office shall be so arranged that there shall be two members elected each year to serve for a term of three years.

Ex-officio members of the Board of Christian Education and Missions shall be the pastor and an Elder representative.

The Board of Christian Education and Missions shall be responsible for creating and maintaining missionary interest throughout the whole church.

The Board is responsible for the organization, administration, and supervision of the entire educational program of the church. The Board is responsible for studying the educational needs of the church and making decisions concerning: time schedule, educational use of housing and equipment, elimination or addition of classes or organizations. The Board is responsible for discovering, approving, enlisting, and training all the churches educational workers. Workers who will be involved in any teaching capacity will be approved only if they profess faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, give evidence of regeneration, adopt the views of faith and practice held by this church, and have been baptized by immersion. The Board shall evaluate, determine, and supervise the curriculum of the educational program. The Board shall prepare and administer the educational budget of the church, which refers specifically to Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, CBYF groups, and other educational organizations. The Board shall make plans for reaching the unchurched. The Board shall be responsible to appoint necessary committees to assist in carrying out the duties as the need arises.

The Board of Christian Education and Missions shall meet quarterly, or at the

discretion of the chairman of said committee, and shall report at regular business meetings of the Advisory. Board.

The Board will appoint the Sunday School Superintendent and Sunday School Secretary.

#### **SECTION 6 - PULPIT COMMITTEE**

The Pulpit Committee shall consist of the following church officers: Chairman of the Elder Board, Chairman of the Trustee Board, Sunday School Superintendent, Chairman of the Christian Education and Missions Board, and the President of the Women's Missionary Fellowship. In event an officer holds duplicate offices said organization shall elect a representative on this Committee. The Chairman of the Elder Board shall act as Chairman of the Pulpit Committee with the responsibility of calling the Committee together when the need arises. The Committee shall appoint its own Secretary.

#### **SECTION 7 - BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

There shall be a Budget and Finance Committee consisting of the Financial Secretary, the Treasurer, the Chairman of the Elders, and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

The Budget and Finance Committee shall recommend to the church at the annual business meeting a proposed budget of anticipated receipts and expenditures covering all the regular work of the church for the coming fiscal year.

The Budget and Finance Committee shall report at the Annual Church Business meeting and to the Advisory Board whenever necessary.

#### **SECTION 8 - NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of five members appointed at the Semi-Annual business meeting including one Elder, one Trustee, one C.E.M. member and two others from the congregation.

The Nominating Committee shall prepare ballots and nominate candidates, who shall consent to the placing of their names on the ballot, for all offices to be filled at the annual business meeting. This provision shall not be construed to prevent nominations being made from the floor except in the case of the elders. (Article IX, Section 3).

This committee shall also nominate candidates at any business meeting of the church to fill vacancies. The chairman of any board knowing of a vacancy in any church office shall notify this committee of such a fact.

#### **SECTION 9 - USHERING COMMITTEE**

The Ushering Committee shall consist of the Head Usher, an elected office, and his assistants who shall be appointed by the Advisory Board.

Duties: They shall cooperate in securing the orderly and courteous seating of the congregation and the greeting of visitors, and shall be responsible for the



lighting and ventilation of the building. They shall endeavor to secure and maintain at all services a state of good order conducive to worship. It shall be the duty of the Head Usher to arrange for a sufficient number of ushers to be on duty before the hour of opening services. The usher shall receive offerings of the church and deliver same to the church treasurer.

**SECTION 10 - MUSIC COMMITTEE**

The Music Committee shall consist of those who lead or accompany music during worship service. Their duties shall be to provide music for church services and to seek out talent for such services.

**SECTION 11 - FLORAL COMMITTEE**

The Floral/Decorating Committee shall be appointed by the Advisory Board and shall consist of three members to serve for a period of one year. This committee shall place flowers, plants, and banners to enhance the general appearance of the facility.

**SECTION 12 - COMMITTEE OF THE BOARDS**

The Advisory Board or any board may appoint such standing or temporary committees as it may deem necessary to carry out its duties. Each standing or temporary committee shall be responsible to the board creating it and shall work under its direction.

**ARTICLE X - RULES OF ORDER**

**SECTION 1 - FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the church shall begin on January 1 and close on December 31 of each year.

**SECTION 2 - MEETINGS**

- (1) Regular Business Meetings shall be held as follows:
  - a. On the second Sunday of January of each year. At this meeting the election of officers shall take place, a budget for the year shall be adopted, annual reports of all phases of the church program and activities shall be made in writing, and such business transacted as deemed necessary. Officers elected shall assume office upon election.
  - b. The Semi-Annual Business Meeting shall be held on the second Sunday of July.
- (2) SPECIAL MEETINGS. Special meetings may be called by the minister, moderator, or the chairman of the Board of Elders. The date and purpose of the special meeting shall be announced at least two Sundays preceding such meeting.

**SECTION 3 - VOTING**

- (1) Anyone who is a member of the church and at least sixteen years of age shall be eligible to vote. Twenty per cent of the church members shall be considered a quorum for the transaction of business. If the call or dismissal of a minister is to be voted upon, notice of such proposed action must be given to the members

at least two weeks preceding such meeting. A two-thirds affirmative vote of all members present and voting shall be required for the dismissal and calling of a minister.

- (2) Concerning the purchase, sale or encumbering of property. Notice of such action must be given to the members at least two weeks preceding such a meeting. In the selling and purchasing of property, the legality of all state laws must be met.

All questions of order shall be settled by the customary rules governing deliberative bodies as given in "Robert's Rules of Order."

#### **ARTICLE XI - METHOD OF FINANCE**

The church shall operate on the basis of a unified budget. It shall be proposed by the Budget and Finance Committee and accepted in turn by the Advisory Board and Church. Proportion of funds (example: --% debt retirement, --% current expenses) shall be recommended for the acceptance of the Advisory Board and the church. The quota for all contributions to the North American Baptist Conference, established by the budget, shall be considered current expense and shall be paid quarterly.

#### **ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be revised or amended at any regular business meeting of the church. Two Sunday's notice of such proposed revision or amendment shall be given. A two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting is necessary to carry an amendment.

#### **ARTICLE XIII**

This constitution shall take effect immediately upon its approval. All trustees, elders and other officers and employees whose terms have not expired when this constitution is approved shall continue in office under the terms of this constitution if it provides for such office.

#### **END OF CONSTITUTION**