

## CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

### *PREAMBLE*

We rest our faith entirely in the Lord Jesus Christ for our eternal salvation, believing wholly in the teaching of the Scriptures and thus in the local Church as a body of believers in a given local setting and bound together by the indwelling Holy Spirit. This local body is sovereign and autonomous in deciding matters of church policy and is composed only of persons who profess to have been born again in Christ Jesus. We, therefore, band ourselves together as a body of believers in Jesus Christ and adopt, ordain and establish the following declaration of faith, constitution, and by-laws.

**\*All scriptures referenced in the Constitution and By-laws are from the King James Version of the Bible based on the original 1611 publication.\***

### ARTICLE I – NAME

This organization shall be known as the Bethany Church of Lincoln County, Kansas.

### ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of the Church shall be to advance the cause of Jesus Christ through the winning of the lost to our Savior, and developing the saved in the spiritual life. It shall seek to attain this end through public worship, prayer, preaching the Gospel, personal evangelism, missionary endeavor, Christian education, consistent Christian living and giving to meet the financial needs of the church (Philippians 2:16).

### ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

1. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are verbally and plenary inspired by God, are inerrant in the original writings, are the Word of God, and final authority in faith and conduct. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).
2. We believe in one God, the Creator of man and all things, eternally existing in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19).
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, was fully God and fully man. (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; John 1:1, 14).
4. We believe that man was created in the image of God: That he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death which is separation from God; that the whole human race is born dead in sin through Adam. (Genesis 1:26, 27; Romans 5:12-21).
5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and all who trust Him in faith are freely justified before God and stand before Him accepted in the character and merit of Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17-21; Ephesians 1:7).
6. We believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, in His ascension into Heaven, and that He is the Head of the Church, the great High Priest and Advocate for all believers. (1 Corinthians 15:4; Acts 1:9; Acts 2:33; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 4:14).
7. We believe that all who by faith receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are born of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God and are made a “new creation” and a part of the Body of Christ on the Earth. (2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Corinthians 12:13).
8. We believe in baptism by immersion and we encourage all members to follow the Lord’s example and command to be baptized. (Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 3:16; Acts 8:36-39)
9. We believe in the personal, imminent, pre-tribulational, and pre-millennial Second Coming of Christ for His Church, and to reign on the Earth for 1000 years. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Acts 1:6; Acts 15:16).

10. We believe that God is the spiritual Father of only those who trust Jesus Christ as Savior, and that only those saved through faith in Christ are spiritual brothers. (Romans 8:29; John 5:23).

11. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust; in everlasting blessedness of the saved and the everlasting punishment of the unsaved. (John 5:29).

12. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Genesis 2:24; Genesis 19:5, 13; Genesis 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; I Corinthians 5:1; I Thessalonians 4: 1-8; Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 15: 18-20; I Corinthians 6: 9-10)

13. We believe that the only scriptural marriage is the joining of one man and one woman as the gender that God created them at conception. (Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; I Corinthians 7:10; Ephesians 5:22-23)

## **ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP**

### **Sec. 1. Qualifications:**

- a. Any person may be received into the membership of this Church upon their statement of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, their acceptance of our Statement of Beliefs and our Church Constitution, and by a vote of the Church.
- b. Elders will do a review of the membership list, and the contacts made to those members who are not attending, to determine members of good standing.
- c. If any member shall absent himself from the regular church services for a period of six months without giving a satisfactory reason for his absence to the pastor or Board of Elders he shall be considered an inactive member and shall not be allowed a voice or vote in the affairs of the church. If any member shall absent himself from the regular church services without giving a satisfactory reason for his absence to the pastor or Board of Elders for a period of one year, his name shall be dropped from the church membership roll. The name of anyone leaving this church to attend another church without giving a satisfactory reason for doing so shall be dropped from the membership roll.

### **Sec. 2. Transfer of Membership:**

- a) Members moving to another community are encouraged to seek fellowship in another church where their spiritual needs are met.
- b) Letters of transfer for the purpose of uniting with another Church shall be granted upon request.

## **ARTICLE V – OFFICERS AND BOARDS**

### **Sec. 1. Elected Offices:**

- a) Elected offices of the Church are: clerk, deacons, elders, treasurer, assistant treasurer, and Sunday School superintendent.
- b) The Boards of the Church shall be:
  1. A Board of Elders (2 or more recommended)
  2. A Board of Deacons (2 or more recommended )
  3. A Board of Finance including the church treasurer, assistant treasurer, and the Deacons.
  4. An Advisory Board including the Board of Elders, the Board of Deacons, church clerk, church treasurer, assistant treasurer, and the Sunday School superintendent.

**Sec. 2. Office Requirements:**

- a) All officers shall be members of the church and be at least 18 years of age. They shall be elected by written ballot at an annual meeting.
- b) All officers assume responsibility at the conclusion of the Annual Business Meeting.
- c) All officers shall be informed of their duties. Unless otherwise provided by the constitution, each board elects its own chairman and sets the time of its regular meetings.
- d) The Chairmen of the Elders and Deacon Boards, the clerk, the Sunday School Superintendent and other committees shall each prepare and present a report at each Quarterly and Annual Business Meeting.

**Sec. 3. Term of Office:**

- a) All offices are for a one year term.
- b) No member shall hold more than one elected office.
- c) Resignations shall be made in writing to the Church and be effective on the date specified in the resignation.
- d) A vacancy of an elective office shall be filled by a recommendation of the Advisory Board and by a vote of the Church.

**ARTICLE VI – DUTIES OF PASTOR AND OFFICERS****Sec. 1. The Pastor:**

The Pastor must be a born-again man who holds to the same doctrinal beliefs of this Church. It is his responsibility to minister to the members of the body. He shall meet the scriptural requirements of Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3. He shall serve as moderator or delegate that responsibility to an Elder. He shall be ex-officio member of all committees and boards of this Church. (He is not a voting member of any committee or board.)

He shall appoint tellers for the Annual Business Meeting, such who are not candidates for office, to receive the ballots, to tabulate and report the results to the Church. He shall appoint an Auditing Committee to audit the treasurers' books prior to the Annual Meeting. They shall report their findings to the treasurers on the return of the books, and they shall report their findings at the Annual Business Meeting, after which they may be released. (Titus 1:7-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Romans 12:7-8; 1 Corinthians 1:17; Colossians 1:23; 1 Peter 4:10)

**Sec. 2. Elders:**

The Elders shall assist the Pastor in his work, will be responsible for all matters of Church membership, prepare for and administer the ordinances of the Church, and be responsible for matters of Church discipline. They shall be responsible to oversee any and all Christian education and missions programs in the Church and may, as the need may dictate, delegate such responsibility to other persons or committees. A member of the Elder Board shall serve as Vice Moderator in the absence of the Pastor, or as the Pastor may request. (Titus 1:5-6; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Acts 14:23; Acts 16:4-5; Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 5:17)

The Pastor-Church Relationship should be reviewed annually so that necessary changes can be made to better meet the needs of the Church, and the Church meet the needs of the community and pastor. This annual review should occur by the election anniversary date of the current pastor.

### **Sec. 3. Deacons:**

The Deacons shall hold in trust all property belonging to the Church and shall take all necessary measures for their protection and upkeep. Any expenditures, outside of the budget, must have the approval of the Deacons. They shall, with the cooperation of the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and the Pastor, prepare the annual budget for presentation to the Church at the Annual Business Meeting. It will be their responsibility to supervise all matters of finance and to keep the Church informed as to financial condition and need. (1 Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:3)

### **Sec. 4. Advisory Board:**

The Advisory Board shall act as a working Cabinet of the Pastor, advising him concerning the general policy, plans, and program of the Church. It shall consider prayerfully all matters presented to it and shall have knowledge of all items to be presented to the Church for its decision.

They shall assist in the promotion of the evangelistic program of the Church and shall make special effort to increase the missionary interest, zeal, and giving of the Church.

The Advisory Board shall act as a Nominating Committee and shall nominate candidates for the offices and boards of the Church. One week prior to the Annual Business Meeting, they will prepare and post a written list of nominees to be presented to the Church. Further nominations may be made from the floor at the time of the annual elections. They will prepare a written ballot to be used by voters at the Annual Business Meeting.

When a vacancy occurs in the office of pastor, it shall act as a Pulpit Committee and shall continue to function as such until a new pastor is on the field. It shall bring before the Church suitable candidates for the pastorate. It shall present to the Church at a business meeting the name of one candidate and shall vote upon the same. The chairman of the Elders shall be chairman of the Pulpit Committee and the Moderator of the Church while it is without a pastor.

### **Sec. 5. Church Clerk:**

The Church Clerk shall keep accurate minutes of the business proceedings of the Church, including the reception and transfer of members; keep a complete roll of members of the Church; issue letters of transfer; conduct all official correspondence; preserve and file all letters, reports, and other documents pertaining to the office, and prepare the business meeting agenda. The Clerk shall deliver immediately to their successor all books, files, records, and other documents in their possession.

The Church Clerk shall serve as secretary of the Advisory Board.

### **Sec. 6. Treasurer:**

The Treasurer shall be the custodian of all monies contributed to the general expenses of the Church and for missionary and other benevolent purposes. All approved disbursements shall be authorized by the Board of Deacons. The Treasurer shall give reports to the Church at the Quarterly Business Meetings, and a detailed report at the Annual Business Meeting. The Church Treasurer shall present the books to be audited at the close of the fiscal year, or more often if requested by the Church. The Church Treasurer shall deliver immediately to his successor all books and records pertaining to the office.

### **Sec. 7. Assistant Treasurer:**

The Assistant Treasurer shall count and keep a record of all monies given to the Church and deliver them to the Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer should become familiar with the financial system of the Church and be able to fulfill Treasurer duties if the Treasurer is unable to serve. The Assistant Treasurer shall present the books to be audited at the close of the fiscal year, or more often if requested by the Church. The Assistant Treasurer shall deliver immediately to his successor all books and records pertaining to the office.

**Sec. 8. Sunday School Superintendent:**

The Sunday School Superintendent shall administrate, unify and promote the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Christmas Program and any other educational interests of the church as requested and approved by the Board of Elders and Pastor.

He/She shall direct the grouping of the Sunday School's classes; choose and obtain curriculum to be used that is doctrinally sound and evangelistic in nature; provide appropriate classrooms and equipment; arrange for Sunday School teachers and their substitutes; lead in planning Vacation Bible School and arrange for VBS teachers and helpers; and organize the Christmas Program. He/She shall receive approval of the Board of Elders and Pastor for all materials and teachers.

The Sunday School Superintendent shall also direct the teachers to encourage regular attendance of pupils, follow up absentees, make newcomers feel welcome and recommend ways and means of building up the Sunday School. He/She shall meet regularly with the Sunday School staff.

**ARTICLE VII – CALLING OR DISMISSAL OF PASTOR**

**Sec. 1. Calling a Pastor:**

The pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period of time. Notice of the proposed choice of pastor shall be given from the pulpit for two (2) successive Sundays preceding the election. Voting shall be by ballot and two-thirds (2/3) of the membership in good standing shall be required for election.

**Sec. 2. Termination of Pastor:**

Prior to termination proceedings written notification will be given to the Pastor. Termination on the part of the Church shall be voted on at a business meeting; notice of such a meeting and its purpose having been given on the previous two Sundays. A vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the membership in good standing shall make a valid termination. The pastor shall vacate church property thirty (30) days following written notification.

## **ARTICLE VIII – MEETINGS**

### **Sec. 1. Devotional Meetings:**

- a) The Church shall meet regularly each Lord's Day for worship; for the preaching of the Gospel; for Christian instruction through the Sunday School and other organized and planned study groups.
- b) The Church shall meet for the observance of the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of the month, or at such other times as the Church, upon the recommendation of the Board of Elders, shall decide.

### **Sec. 2. Business Meetings:**

- a) The fiscal year of the Church is from April first (1<sup>st</sup>) to March thirty-first (31<sup>st</sup>).
- b) The Annual Business Meeting of the Church shall be held before April 30 for the purpose of receiving annual reports of the individual officers and boards; the adopting of the budget; the election of Church officers; and the transaction of such other business to come before the meeting.
- c) There shall be Quarterly Business Meetings in the months of July, October, and January with dates set by the Elder board
- d) A quorum for transacting business at any regular or special business meeting shall be 50% of members in good standing plus one member in good standing, unless otherwise provided by this constitution.
- e) A church vote shall be a majority vote of those members present, providing there is a quorum, and all members are entitled to vote beginning at age 16.
- f) A 2/3 majority vote of those members in good standing is required on matters pertaining to the purchase, sale, or mortgaging of Church property. Members must be 18 years old or older to vote on these matters. A written absentee ballot will be provided for those who are unable to attend upon request.
- g) Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all business meetings of the Church, in which the spirit of Christ shall prevail.

## **ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended at any regular business meeting of the Church by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting, providing a quorum is present, and providing that the proposed change has been given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays, or been presented at a previous Regular Business Meeting.

## ARTICLE X – SERVICES RENDERED POLICY

### Sec. 1. Approval of Facility Use:

- a) Bethany Church of Lincoln County makes its facility available for events, including weddings, to its members, and to outside groups whose aims and practices are compatible with the Constitution and By-Laws of Bethany Church and have received permission from one church Elder, one Deacon, and the Pastor. Any use of facilities must be in keeping with this policy and we ask that anyone using the church facilities treat the building and grounds with the proper respect as visitors and guests in the House of the Lord.
- b) The pastor of Bethany Church may not provide any services at the church or anywhere else that may not be in accordance with the church Constitution and By-Laws.
- c) No outside pastor or persons may provide services at the church or on church property that may not be in accordance with the church Constitution and By-Laws.
- d) **Events Hosted by the Church:** The Church's Child Abuse Prevention Policy (CAPP) will be followed for all Bethany Church events. (ex: Sunday School, VBS, Church Camp, Church Campout, etc...)

## ARTICLE XI – ADOPTION

By the adoption of this constitution the Church hereby rescinds any and all previous Constitutions, By-Laws, and Amendments.

ADOPTED MARCH 5, 2006

REVISED MARCH 28, 2007

REVISED JULY 7, 2010

REVISED JANUARY 31, 2016

REVISED MARCH 29, 2018

REVISED APRIL 17, 2019

(corrections made FEBRUARY 25, 2024 but not statement of beliefs: not voted on)