

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this constitution for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and so that this body may be governed in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches of the same faith.

Our original Church Covenant:

Providence Baptist Church Covenant

We whose names are under written being desirous to be constituted a Church of Jesus Christ at this place, and having all due knowledge of one another in point of a work of Grace on our hearts, Religious principles and moral character, and being desirous of enjoying the privileges that appertain to the people of God in a Church relation, Do in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ voluntarily and freely give ourselves up to the Lord and to one another according to his word, to be one body under one head, jointly to exist and act by the bands and rules of the Gospel, and do promise and engage to do all things by Divine assistance in our different capacity and relations that the Lord has commanded us particularly to deny our selves - take up our cross - follow Christ - Keep the faith - assemble our selves together - love the brethren - submit one to another in the Lord - care for one another - bear one another's burdens - endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. And now upon the above articles and covenant the undersigned was constituted and pronounced a Gospel Church of Christ by elders Nineon Ridgeway, Thomas Stephens and Toliver Craig at our meeting at brother Lewis Turners on Middle River Auxvasse in the county of Callaway, Mo the 5th day of August 1826.

James C. McCutchen
William Martin
Winifred Martin
Nathan Duly
Bazzle Rose
Elizabeth Rose
Martin Langley
Asa Williams
Elizabeth Williams
Isaac Stites

Mary Mc Cutchen
Lewis Turner
Sarah Turner
Malinda Thompson
Mary Williams
Susanna Stites Sr.
Susanna Stites Jr.
Samuel
Jane Stites
Nancy Heart

The Church now being constituted in gospel order proceeded to the order of business in a church capacity.

I. NAME

Section 1. This body shall be known as the Providence Baptist Church of New Bloomfield, Missouri.

Section 2. This church, organized August 5, 1826 and incorporated on July 27, 1953, in accordance with the laws of the State of Missouri, is organized for the sole purpose of furthering the Christian Gospel and not for material gain or profit.

II. STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Our original Articles of Faith read as follows:

Articles of Faith of the Baptist Church Called Providence

Article 1st - We believe in one only true and Living God, the Father, the Word and Holy Ghost.

Article 2nd - We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God and the only rule of Faith and Practice.

Article 3rd - We believe in the doctrine of original Sin.

Article 4th - We believe in the doctrine of Election and that God chose his people in Christ before the Foundation of the world.

Article 5th - We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the State he is in by nature of his own free will and ability.

Article 6th - We believe that Sinners are Justified in the Sight of God only by the imputed Righteousness of Christ.

Article 7th - We believe that God's Elect Shall be Called, Converted, Regenerated, and Sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Article 8th - We believe the Saints Shall persevere in Grace and never fall finally away.

Article 9th - We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ and that true believers are the Subjects and that the true mode of Baptism is by going down into the water and being buried with Christ in Baptism.

Article 10 - We believe in the Resurrection of the Dead and a general Judgment.

Article 11 - We believe that the punishment of the wicked and the Joys of the Righteous will be Eternal.

Article 12 - We believe that no Minister has a right to the administration of the ordinances only such as are Regularly Baptized, Called and authorized by the presbyter. (August 5, 1826)

III. CHURCH COVENANT

We who desire to walk together in the fear of the Lord, do by the help and influence of the Holy Spirit, profess our deep sense of sin and humiliation therefore, and in the presence of our eternal God and one another covenant together as one body in Christ.

We avow the Lord to be our God and ourselves His people and by the help of divine grace we promise to walk together with Him in all godliness, humility, and brotherly love.

We give ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ for the teaching, ruling, and sanctifying of us in matters of worship and daily living.

We resolve to cleave to Him alone for life and glory and to oppose all contrary ways of the world.

We promise to strive together for the truth of the gospel and its advancement in purity and power according to our abilities and opportunities.

We will earnestly endeavor to bring up those that are in our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

We engage to walk together in Christian love; to act toward one another as brothers and sisters in Christ; to watch over one another; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to forgive one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us.

We will seek the advancement of the Church in knowledge and holiness; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of its faithful ministry of the gospel.

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.

IV. CHARACTER

Section 1. Polity

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of

mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Callaway Baptist Association, the Missouri Baptist Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Section 2. Doctrine

This church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian Truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of other Southern Baptist Churches.

V. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT

Section 1. This Constitution shall be adopted upon a majority vote of the members present at the business meeting in which it is presented for adoption. This vote shall be taken at least thirty days after formal presentation of the Constitution to the church.

Section 2. Changes may be made in this Constitution by amendment or other means at any regular business meeting of the church by a majority vote to the members present; provided that notice of such change shall be presented in writing and copies of the proposed amendment be furnished to each member present at least thirty days before the vote is taken.

Section 3. This Constitution is to be reviewed at least every five years, but more often if advisable, and revised if necessary.

BY-LAYS

I. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Qualifications

Any persons, regardless of race or nationality, may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular Sunday morning or evening worship service for membership in any of the following ways:

1. By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.

2. By promise of a letter from another Baptist church.
3. By statement of Christian experience indicating previous compliance with part (1) of this section.
4. By restoration. Any person whose name may have been dropped from the membership may upon making satisfactory explanation to the church be restored to membership.
5. Special considerations which are voted upon by the church membership.

Section 2. Responsibilities

Members are expected to be dedicated to living the Christian life, faithful in attendance at the services of this church, informed as to the essential tenets of this faith, diligent in keeping both the letter and the spirit of the Covenant, regular in bringing tithes and generous in giving offerings, and willing to share in its organized work.

Section 3. Privileges

All members who have been received in full and regular standing shall enjoy all of the privileges of the church, including participation in its ordinances, exercising the privilege of acting and voting in the transactions of the church, and opportunities for personal growth toward Christian maturity.

Section 4. Termination

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: (1) death, (2) dismissal to another Baptist church, (3) exclusion by action of this church*, (4) erasure upon becoming affiliated with a church of another faith or denomination.

*Should a member become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his covenant vows, or nonsupport of the church, the church may terminate his membership by a three-fourths vote, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such members to repentance and amendment.

Section 5. Restoration

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by vote of the church, upon evidence of repentance and reformation; or, if on account of continued absence, upon satisfactory explanation.

II. CHURCH OFFICERS

All church officers must be members of the church. The officers of this church shall be as follows:

Section 1. Pastor

(1) Duties: The pastor is responsible for leading the church in functioning as a New Testament Church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff in performing their tasks. A major concern of the pastor is to perform pastoral responsibilities. The pastor is the leader of worship, proclamation, education, and pastoral ministry. The pastor will follow the approved Pastor's Job Description of Providence Baptist Church.

(2) Election: A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice shall be given. A special Pulpit Committee composed of (5) members of the church shall be elected by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and their recommendation will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present being necessary for a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request.

(3) Termination: If the pastor terminates this relationship, he shall submit a resignation to the deacons and then to the church at least two weeks prior to terminating his responsibilities except otherwise by mutual agreement.

Section 2. Church Staff

This church shall call or employ such staff members as the church shall need. A job description shall be written when the need for staff members is determined. A current job description will be kept on file.

Section 3. Deacons

The deacon body shall consist of up to ten active deacons.

(1) Qualifications: To be eligible for deaconship a man shall have been a member of Providence Baptist Church a minimum of one year and shall comply with the Scriptural requirements in I Timothy 3:8-13.

(2) Election: Election shall be by secret ballot and will require a majority vote.

(3) Duties: It shall be the duty of the deacons to assist the pastor:

(a) In the general welfare of the church members.

(b) In evangelization, Christian growth, and the extension of the Kingdom of God.

(c) In the visitation and watchcare of the church membership spiritually and materially.

(d) In the administration of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

(e) In conducting the worship service during the absence or inability of the pastor.

(f) The deacons will conduct an annual review of the salary and benefits of the professional staff and make appropriate recommendations to the church finance committee for consideration in the development of the church budget.

Section 4. Trustees

Four trustees, two of whom shall be elected annually to serve for two years, will hold in trust the property of the church. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgaging, or purchase or rental of property on other legal documents where the signatures of trustees are required. The trustees shall see that all church property is kept in condition, having such repairs and

improvements made as seem necessary, spending no more than \$100.00 per month, without church action with the exception of emergency needs which may be handled at the discretion of the trustees, using prudent judgment and not exceeding reasonable and customary cost..

Section 5. Moderator

The moderator shall be the pastor. In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of the deacons shall preside, or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

Section 6. Clerk

The church shall elect a clerk annually from the church membership, following nomination by the church nominating committee. The clerk shall attend or be represented officially at all church business meetings, keep accurate record of all business transacted by the church and prepare the annual church letter to the association. The clerk shall keep a register of all members' names with dates of admission, dismissal, death, and a record of baptisms. The clerk shall issue dismissal letters by church vote, preserve and file communications and reports, and give legal notices if and when necessary.

Section 7. Treasurer

The church shall elect a treasurer annually from its membership following nomination by the church nominating committee. The treasurer shall receive, keep in a bank, and payout by check, as authorized by the church, all funds received by the church. The church shall provide such assistance to the treasurer in the counting of moneys received as it may deem advisable. The treasurer shall keep an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements. All books, records, and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be church property. The treasurer's books shall be audited annually after close of fiscal year and/or as the church directs. The treasurer shall be ex-officio member of the finance and budget planning committee.

Section 8. Financial Secretary

The church shall elect a financial secretary from its membership following nomination by the church nominating committee. The financial secretary shall receive the empty collection envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the proper persons and from these the financial secretary shall give donors individual credit. The financial secretary shall keep the envelopes for reference for a period of two years. The financial secretary shall also be responsible for preparing and mailing annual records of contributions to all members.

Section 9. Church Ushers

Every church usher shall be selected by the head usher. The head usher shall be selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church. The ushers are to greet people as they enter and leave the church, seat people at the proper time, provide bulletins and/or other materials at the time of seating. The ushers will be attentive to the needs of the congregation and the pastor.

Section 10. Church Council

This council shall consist of the pastor, other staff members, the chairman of the deacons, chairperson of trustees, and the heads of various church organizations. The council shall meet regularly to plan calendars of activities which shall involve the organizations and for the purpose of unifying and coordinating the work of the church. All matters agreed upon by the council, calling for action not already authorized shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

III. CHURCH COMMITTEES

Section 1. Nominating Committee

This committee shall consist of four persons who shall serve for two years with two new members being elected each year. The nominating committee shall be responsible for selecting, interviewing, and enlisting general church officers, heads of various church organizations, and church committee members to be elected by the church.

Section 2. Flower and Card Committee

This committee shall consist of four persons. The committee is responsible for securing, arranging, and disposing of floral arrangements for church services, and for providing flowers for bereaved members.

Section 3. Kitchen Committee

The kitchen committee composed of four members shall supervise the operations of the kitchen and dining room and assist in any events requiring hostess arrangements and hospitality functions.

Section 4. Finance and Budget Planning Committee

Budget planning and finance committee composed of four members shall meet as necessary to consider the financial condition of the church. The budget committee shall prepare annually a proposed church budget including local expenses and missions and submit copies of the budget to the church at least two weeks prior to the June business meeting for approval by the church membership prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year. (July1)

Section 5. Other Committees

Other standing and special committees needed by the church shall be recommended and elected by the church.

IV. CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship

The church shall meet morning and evening each Lord's Day for the public worship of Almighty God. Wednesday evenings should be used for prayer and further edification of the membership. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once each quarter.

Section 2. Business

The regular meetings for business of the church shall be on the second Sunday of every other month, and those present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Special business meetings of the church may be called by the pastor or

deacons or by the vote of the church with a minimum notice of one week in advance.

V. RULES OF ORDER

The church shall abide by the parliamentary procedures as set out by Robert's Rules of Order.

The Original Rules of Decorum from 1826 are as follows:

Rules of Decorum of Providence Baptist Church

Article 1 - The Church Shall hold a meeting for business once in each month which shall be opened and closed by public worship and the members present shall form a quorum to transact any business that shall come before them.

Article 2 - The Pastor or Elder of the Church shall act as Moderator until the Church shall direct otherwise. It shall be his duty to keep good order.

Article 3 - The Moderator shall invite all Baptists of Sister Churches which are in good standing to seat with us and act in council with us.

Article 4 - The Church shall then open a door for the reception of members.

Article 5 - All difficulties between brother or sister Shall be settled according to the 18th Chapter of Matthew.

Article 6 - After the church be thus organized the references from any former meeting shall be taken up and acted upon.

Article 7 - In the transaction of Business each motion meeting with second shall be acted upon unless withdrawn by the mover.

Article 8 - When a question of debate be before the Church only one member shall speak at a time whose duty it shall be to first to arise and address the moderator.

Article 9 - The member speaking shall not be interrupted provided he attends strictly to the subject before the Church.

Article 10 - Any member may have a right to call to order and where that point is disputed the moderator shall decide. Yet if the member should not consider himself out of order he may appeal to the Church.

Article 11 - No member has the right to speak more than three times to the same subject without leave of the Church and if the debate be protracted and the church or individual wish the main question may be introduced in these words shall the main question be taken.

Article 12 - When a question is before the Church for discussion it shall be the duty of each member to give their vote.

Article 13 - In choosing a pastor or other officers of the church, 2/3rds of the votes cast shall Elect. Receiving and dismissing members a unanimous vote shall be had. In other business of the Church a majority shall rule.

Article 14 - No member shall withdraw from the business unnecessary until regularly dismissed.

Article 15 - No member shall address another with any other title but Brother or Sister.

Article 16 - We think it the duty for all the members of the Church to take seats at the Communion Table.

Article 17 - We think it a breach of fellowship for any member of the Church to take the Lord's Supper with any religious sect which is not of our faith and order.

Article 18 - It shall be the duty of the members of the church to meet as near as they can at 11 O'clock AM at regular meetings and Rules of decorum shall be read if called for.

Article 19 - Those members who may violate any of the above rules may be dealt with as the church may think proper.

VI. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Holding of Property

This church shall hold and maintain its property, buildings and equipment for the specific purpose of providing for public worship and participating in the interests, objectives and programs set forth in this Constitution and its Statement of Faith.

If and when this church shall alter its beliefs and practices in such way, in such spirit, or in significant aspects, as to be at variance with the character of such a church and its beliefs and practices as described in the Constitution and Statement of Faith; if the decision is not by unanimous vote of those present at a regular business meeting of the church; it is understood that all right of ownership of the church's property shall remain with and inhere in that part of the church's membership which agrees to continue using the property for the purpose for which the church was established and to that time maintained. That part of the church's membership abiding by the established Constitution and Statement of Faith, may elect its own trustees to hold the title.

Furthermore, if and when the church ceases to exist for the purpose for which it was established and maintained, or it ceases to cooperate with and support its affiliation with Southern Baptist organizations, the property of the church shall revert to the Callaway Baptist Association.

Section 2. License and Ordination

Licensing: Any member of this church who by his piety, zeal and experience, and aptness to teach, gives evidence that he is called of God to the work of the pastoral ministry, may, by a vote of a majority of the members present and voting at any regular business meeting, be licensed by this church to the Christian ministry.

Ordination of Ministers: When a church of like faith and order shall have called as its pastor a member of this church who possesses scriptural qualifications for ordination to the work of the gospel ministry, and shall request in writing that he be ordained, this church shall consider such request. If the church by a vote of the majority of the members present and voting at a regular business meeting, approve such request, it shall then authorize and direct the pastor to assemble an ordaining council of ordained ministers of the gospel of like faith and order and deacons of like faith and order, who shall perform the ceremony of ordination in the name of, and in the presence of this church.

Ordination of deacons: If this church at regular business meeting shall elect a member, or members, to the office of deacon it shall authorize and direct the pastor to assemble an ordaining council which may be composed of ordained ministers of the gospel of like faith and order, and of deacons of like faith and order, who shall perform the ceremony of ordination in the name of, and in the presence of this church.

Section 3. Financial policies:

1. Finance: The following general policies shall apply:
 - (a) The financial needs of this church shall be supported by voluntary, free gifts of money, which shall be paid into and disbursed from the church treasury.
 - (b) This church believes in and subscribes to the New Testament doctrine of "storehouse tithing" as the minimum responsibility of Christian stewardship.
 - (c) The church shall operate on a budget adopted annually by the membership. All extraordinary disbursements and special funds must be authorized by the church.
 - (d) The church treasurer shall be custodian of all church funds and shall use the church budget as the authority for the disbursements of funds.
 - (e) The accounting of all funds, deposits, bonds, and audits shall be under the authority of this church.

- (f) The Finance Committee shall be responsible for proper use of funds, sufficient internal control and adequate historical records.
2. Obligations: No debt, commitment, or other obligation shall be created except by specific authority of this church.
3. Property: All property, real or personal, all monies, and all equities shall be held and controlled by this church.
3. Fiscal year: The church year shall be, for fiscal purposes, from Jan 1 to Dec 31.

VII. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT

Section 1. These By-Laws may be adopted by majority vote of the members present at the business meeting where they are presented, provided they have been formally presented to the church at least thirty days before the business meeting in which they are adopted.

Section 2. Changes in these By-Laws may be made by a majority vote of the members present at any regular business meeting of the church; provided that notice in writing must be given at the preceding business meeting of the church.

Revised 1999

Revised August 12, 2001 to change Business Meetings from Monthly to Every Other month and to change fiscal year to Jan-Dec.

Amended 2001 to include original church covenant, articles of faith and rules of decorum in constitution and bylaws in order to preserve our historical record and to keep us mindful of those who preceded us in the faith at Providence.