

Columbus Baptist Church Constitution

ARTICLE 1

THE DOCTRINAL STATEMENT OF THE COLUMBUS BAPTIST CHURCH

1. The Bible is the verbally inspired, infallible word of God and contains no errors and it is the all sufficient basis of faith, doctrine, and practice (II Timothy 3:16-17).
2. God is triune: the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19).
3. The Genesis account of creation is indisputable (Genesis 1-2).
4. Jesus was born of a virgin (Matthew.1:20-23).
5. Jesus Christ is God (John 10:30).
6. Jesus shed his blood and died as payment for our sins (Hebrews 9:22, Romans 6:23).
7. Salvation is completely by grace through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8) and those who accept Christ can never lose their salvation (I Peter 1:5, John 10:27-30).
8. Jesus resurrected bodily and will do the same for the saved (I Corinthians 15). Jesus will return bodily and personally in his second coming (Acts 1:11). He will set up His Kingdom upon the earth and rule for a thousand years (Revelation 20:6).
9. Those who reject Christ will be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Luke 16:19-26, Revelation 20:11-15).
10. A Biblical Church is a local and visible assembly of believers who have been scripturally baptized and have come together to carry out the great commission (Matthew 28:19-20, Hebrews 10:25).
11. Scriptural baptism is the immersion of believers, administered by the authority of a Biblical Church (Acts 8:36-39, 18:24-19:5) in response to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20)
12. Evangelism is the responsibility of every child of God and as Church members it is our duty to do all we can to see that the gospel is preached to all nations through the ministry of the local Church (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8, Ephesians 3:21).
13. Jesus Christ is the sovereign head of the local Church and the Church is subject to no other spiritual authority (Ephesians 1:15-23, Ephesians 5:23-24).
14. The Lord's Supper is a memorial supper given to the local Church (I Corinthians 11:18-34). The Church is charged to keep the supper pure (I Corinthians 5). For this reason, the Supper is limited to the members of our Church.
15. Church discipline is vital to the purity of the Church and must always be carried out in love (I Corinthians 5, Matthew 18:15-18, II Thessalonians. 3:10-15, I Peter 4:8).

ARTICLE 2

THE NAME

1. The name of this Church shall be the Columbus Baptist Church in Columbus Indiana (Proverbs 22:1-2).

ARTICLE 3

THE PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this Church is the advancement of the kingdom of Jesus Christ through the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20, II Corinthians 8:1-5).
 - a. We will work for the salvation of the lost.
 - b. We will scripturally baptize those who have received Christ as their savior.
 - c. We will teach them to observe all things the Lord has commanded.
 - d. We will be committed to supporting missions with our prayers, physical help, and our finances.

ARTICLE 4

MEMBERSHIP

1. **Becoming A Member** - Individuals who have accepted Christ and are scripturally baptized may become members by the vote of members present in any of the following ways.
 - a. They make a public profession that Jesus Christ is their personal Savior and are baptized by the authority of Columbus Baptist Church.
 - b. They make a public profession of their salvation and scriptural baptism, and offer the promise of a letter of transfer from a Church of like faith and doctrine.
 - c. They make a public profession of their salvation and scriptural baptism and, who for reasons beyond their control, cannot get a letter of transfer from a Church of like faith and doctrine.
2. **Expectations of Members** – Members are expected to be growing in the likeness of the character qualities of Christ in thought, attitude, speech and action, abstaining from all appearances of evil in word and deed (Romans 12:1-2, I Thessalonians 5:21-22, Galatians 5:22-26).
 - a. Displaying Christ like love (John 15:12-13).
 - b. Honoring the Lord with faithful attendance (Hebrews 10:23-25).
 - c. Giving cheerfully of your tithes and offerings (II Corinthians 9:7).
 - d. Praying daily for the work of the ministry and the advancement of God's Kingdom (I Thessalonians 5:17-18, James 5:16).
 - e. Serving the Lord and others with your talents and gifts (Galatians 5:13-14, Romans 12:4-8).
 - f. Sharing the plan of salvation (Mark 16:15, I Corinthians 15:1-4).
 - g. Submitting yourself to the leadership of Columbus Baptist Church (Hebrews 13:17).
 - h. Maintaining unity within the membership (Ephesians 4:1-4).

3. Change in membership status may occur for the following reasons.

- a. Death (II Corinthians 5:6-8).
- b. Relocation (Hebrews 10:23-25, Luke 4:16).
- c. Transfer of membership (I Corinthians 4:17).
- d. As a result of Church discipline (See Article 12).

ARTICLE 5

GOVERNMENT

1. The government of this Church shall be vested in the Church body. All things pertaining to the body must be decided by a 75% majority vote of the members age 12 and older (Hebrews 5:14, Luke 2:41-52) who are present and voting at any regular or duly called meeting. A meeting for the purpose of changing this Constitution, dismissing the pastor or calling a pastor, dismissing or calling a deacon, shall be announced at regular services at least two weeks prior to such meeting (I Corinthians 14:40, Psalms 133:1).
2. This Church will not tolerate any secret meetings that pertain to Church business decisions. Upon sufficient evidence of such, all persons involved will be subject to the discipline of this Church.
3. This Church shall be absolutely independent and shall never under any circumstances whatsoever come under the direction or control of any denomination, federation or organized religious group, nor shall it ever have membership in any such organization or group.
4. No ministries or members within this Church shall make significant business decisions pertaining to the Church without the Church's approval.
5. The pastor or his designee shall preside at all business meetings. In the event there is no pastor the Church shall elect and appoint a moderator to preside over all Church business until a pastor is called.
6. Only active members in good standing have a right to vote on any matter acted upon.

ARTICLE 6

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

No person other than an active member in good standing shall hold a position of leadership in this Church (I Corinthians 4:12).

Section 1) Pastors

The qualifications and duties of a pastor shall be as set forth in (I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9).

1. To spend sufficient time necessary in God's word and prayer to allow his personal growth and establish harmony in God's will.
2. To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. To feed and oversee the flock's spiritual life.
4. To proclaim the whole counsel of God as the Holy Spirit leads him.
5. To moderate all meetings of business when present.
6. To ensure visitors, members that are shut-ins, in rest homes, in hospitals and others are

visited when needs arise.

7. To visit potential Church members and answer any questions that they might have concerning the Church prior to their membership.
8. The pastor will schedule sufficient time in the Church each week for Church business and ministering to the flock.
9. The pastor will be diligent to set aside personal time with his family.
10. Additional pastoral staff will serve in harmony under the leadership of the senior pastor.
11. As God places great importance on the sanctity of marriage neither a pastor nor his wife, if married, shall have ever been divorced.

Section 2) Deacons

The qualifications and duties of a deacon shall be as set forth in (Acts 6:1-7, I Timothy 3:8-13).

1. Deacons shall be nominated by the Church body and shall fill said position with Church vote subsequent to ordination.
2. The duty of a deacon shall be to minister directly to the spiritual and physical needs of the Church family, in the spirit of loving compassion, under the leadership of the senior pastor so the pastor may fulfill his duties.
3. The number of deacons shall be determined by the Church based upon the needs of the Church.
4. He shall serve as deacon for a term of two years, as directed by the Church, and no more than two consecutive terms without a one term break.
5. A deacon may resign before the end of his term upon notification to the senior pastor.
6. As God places great importance on the sanctity of marriage neither a deacon nor his wife, if married, shall have ever been divorced.

Section 3) Teachers

Teachers occupy an important position in the instruction of God's Word and the growth of God's people (James 3:1, Proverbs 22:6).

1. Teachers must demonstrate Christian character in their teaching ministry and their personal life.
2. Teachers must be faithful members as outlined in Article 4 Section 2 and be faithful in attendance of all Church services.
3. Teachers must attend all meetings pertaining to their position.
4. For consistency, all teachers will strive to use the King James Version in their teachings, and use materials in harmony with the doctrinal statement of our Church (II Timothy 3:16-17, Revelation 22:18-19).
5. Teachers must be prepared to teach and should arrive prior to class time to greet their students.
6. In the event that they are going to be absent, teachers must notify the director of the ministry in which they teach as far in advance as possible (I Corinthians 14:40 & 4:1-2).

Section 4) Ministry Leaders

Ministry leaders should fulfill the qualifications of teachers as outlined in Section 3 as well as the following:

1. All must work in harmony with the pastoral staff.
2. Coordinate the functions of their area of ministry.

Section 5) Guest Presentations

Individuals who are not members of Columbus Baptist Church may be invited to present their ministry to our Church, as long as they are in harmony with the doctrinal statement of our Church (Amos 3:3).

Section 6) Finance Ministers

As faithful stewards of the financial blessings God has bestowed on us, the Church shall appoint a finance minister of integrity and humility who shall administer the day to day financial activities of the Church as follows (II Corinthians 8:20-21):

1. A member in good standing shall be selected as finance minister by the vote of our membership.
2. As needed, assistants may also be appointed by the vote of our membership.
3. The finance minister shall oversee accounts receivable, accounts payable, missionary accounts and all administrative accounts.
4. The finance minister shall oversee financial reports for Church business.

Section 7) Church Clerk

The Church clerk must keep the records of the Church, including the membership records and present the minutes of business meetings and shall write for and receive Church letters when the need arises.

Section 8) Trustees

Each trustee must be a member in good standing with the Church. It shall be the duty of the trustees to act as legal representatives of the Church in accordance with the laws of the city and state, as so empowered by the vote of the Church for each specific transaction. These individuals, as trustees of Columbus Baptist Church are only representatives of the Church and bear no financial responsibilities.

Section 9) Church Secretary

The Church secretary, nominated by the pastor, must be faithful in all services, possess a Christ like spirit, and be a member in good standing of the Church.

ARTICLE 7

CHURCH COVENANT

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 Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ. We engage therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit; to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this Church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort, to promote its prosperity and spirituality, to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines, 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.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotion; 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 deportment, to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger, to abstain from selling and using intoxicating drinks of beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Savior.

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 feeling and courtesy in speech, to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

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 8

ORDINANCES

The Church shall maintain the two scriptural ordinances, namely Baptism of believers by immersion in water and the Lord's Supper. Observance of the Lord's Supper will be by the authority of the Church. Concerning how often. The Church will observe closed communion and it will be administered only to members of the Church.

ARTICLE 9

ELECTION OF ANY PASTOR

In order to equip the saints, continue the work of the ministry and edify the body of Christ the Church members shall select a Godly man to serve as pastor by the following procedure (Ephesians 4:12).

1. A pulpit committee shall be nominated and selected by vote of Church members for seeking out a candidate who meets the Godly qualifications of a pastor and is in harmony with the doctrinal statement of our church.
2. When a potential candidate has been identified he will be invited to preach in view of being called as pastor.
3. Only one candidate will be considered at a time until the Holy Spirit moves the pulpit committee to invite the candidate to sit before the Church members in open interview.
4. Immediately following the open interview, a specially called business meeting will be convened for the purpose of voting on this candidate.
5. Voting will be conducted by secret ballot.
6. Upon a 75% majority vote in favor of the candidate, a 100% standing vote of acceptance shall be called for, for the purpose of maintaining Church unity.

ARTICLE 10

USE OF FACILITIES

Section 1) Church Facilities

Any member in good standing may request to use the Church building for any personal function that is not contrary to Biblical teachings. Such request will be honored when the building is not otherwise reserved. The building must be cleaned and returned in the same condition that it was found. While there is no charge to use the building, donations to cover the overhead expenses will be accepted.

Section 2) Living Quarters

Scheduling the use of Church property for living arrangements shall be limited to one of the two following circumstances.

1. For those involved in ministry.
2. For those in need of benevolence.

Such individuals need to be attending our Church or a Church of like faith and doctrine.

Section 3) Equipment

Equipment may be used if it is authorized, scheduled and returned in the same condition before it is needed again.

Section 4) Church Vehicles

Use of Church vehicles will be limited to Church functions and activities and to be driven only by a member in good standing, over the age of twenty one who holds a valid drivers license. Vehicles should be properly maintained and returned in a clean condition.

Section 5) Smoking

The use of tobacco products is not permitted on the Church grounds or in the Church vehicles.

Section 6) Property Appearance

The Church building and grounds are not to be used for personal storage without prior permission.

ARTICLE 11

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

As the Church is the body and Bride of Christ, it is vital to the witness of each Church to maintain unity, purity and its Christian testimony. For this cause, Christ has instructed the Church in matters of discipline which shall be carried out in Christian love for the purpose of restoration (John 13:34-35, Galatians 6:1).

Section 1) Offenses Requiring Discipline

1. Disorderly walk (II Thessalonians 3:11-15).
2. Failure to abstain from the appearance of evil in word and deed (I Thessalonians 5:21-22)
3. Causing division among the Church family (Romans 16:17-18).
4. Unfaithfulness in Church attendance or support of the work of the ministry.
 - a. God's desire is for all members to attend all services. In the event of any unexplained absence from all Church services for three months, such member may be subject to Church discipline (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Section 2) The Steps of Church discipline

1. The offending member will be personally contacted by a concerned member in good standing in order to seek restoration.
2. In the event that restoration is unsuccessful, two or more concerned members in good standing will again personally contact the offending member in order to seek restoration.
3. If these visits do not result in repentance and restoration, then a recommendation will be brought before our Church body to remove them from membership.
 - a. Removal from the Church role will not end the Church's responsibility to continue to minister to that individual. God's desire is that they will be restored to fellowship (Ephesians 4:29-32).
4. Any member under the process of Church discipline shall have their voting privileges suspended, be removed from all leadership or ministry roles, be restricted from receiving the Lord's Supper, and will not be granted a letter of transfer to another Church.

ARTICLE 12

MISSIONS

In obedience to the Lord's command to preach the gospel to every people, Columbus Baptist Church will have an active ministry in missions in the following ways:

1. Sending out missionaries from our own Church family.
2. Supporting missionaries from other Churches of like faith and doctrine.
3. Inviting missionaries to preach and present their mission work before our congregation.
4. Supporting and participating in short term mission trips and ministry teams.
5. Being diligent to pray for each of these missionaries and mission works.

Section 1) Financial Support

Mission activities may be financially supported by Columbus Baptist Church in one of the following ways:

1. A designated percentage of the general fund offerings. (At the time of the draft of this Constitution the percentage was ten percent and this amount is subject to change at a regular called business meeting.)
2. Faith promise missions offerings.
3. Love offerings, designated offerings, and special gifts.
4. Sunday school offerings.
5. Any other means approved by the Church.

A review of all regularly supported missionaries and mission works shall be held at the first business meeting of each year for the purpose of determining our participation in meeting their financial needs. Additional changes may be made as needed provided a period of thirty days has been taken for prayer and the Church approves the change.

ARTICLE 13

CHANGING THIS CONSITUTION

The foregoing Constitution may be changed or amended at such times and in such manner as may be deemed wise and proper for the administration of the affairs of this Church by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present and voting at the time of such action, provided notice of the meeting for that purpose shall have been given from the pulpit two weeks in advance, such notice being given by the pastor or moderator. This notice is to be given on each of two Sundays immediately preceding the final vote. In no case shall this Constitution be changed as to cause this Church to cease to be an Independent Baptist Church.