

Columbus Baptist Church Constitution

ARTICLE 1

FOUNDING AND INCORPORATION

Columbus Baptist Church was founded as a mission church in September of 1993 under the authority of Grace Baptist Church in Jonesboro, AR. In January of 1998, CBC was organized by Grace Baptist into an independent self-supporting church located at 4821 N US Hwy 31, Columbus, IN 47201, where it continues to operate as such. Columbus Baptist Church was incorporated in October 23, 2015.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

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).

1. We will work for the salvation of the lost.
2. We will scripturally baptize those who have received Christ as their savior.
3. We will teach these saved and baptized believers to observe all things the Lord has commanded.
4. We will commit to supporting missions with our prayers, physical help, and finances.

ARTICLE III

THE DOCTRINAL STATEMENT OF COLUMBUS BAPTIST CHURCH

1. **The Bible:** 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. **The Trinity:** God is triune: the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19).
3. **Creation:** The Genesis account of creation is indisputable (Genesis 1-2).
4. **Virgin Birth:** Jesus was born of a virgin (Matthew.1:20-23).
5. **Christ's Deity:** Jesus Christ is God (John 10:30).
6. **Salvation through Jesus's Blood:** Jesus shed his blood and died as payment for our sins (Hebrews 9:22, Romans 6:23).

7. **Salvation:** 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. **The Second Coming:** 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. **Hell:** Those who reject Christ will be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Luke 16:19-26, Revelation 20:11-15).
10. **The Nature of the Church:** A Church is always a local and visible assembly of believers who have been scripturally baptized and united together to carry out the great commission (Matthew 28:19-20, Hebrews 10:25).
11. **Baptism:** Scriptural baptism is the complete 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:** Evangelism is the responsibility of every child of God and, as Church members, and it is our duty to work diligently to share the Gospel with all nations through the ministry of the local Church (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8, Ephesians 3:21).
13. **Christ's Lordship:** 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. **Communion:** 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:** 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).
16. **Biblical Marriage:** The Institution of Marriage as defined in the Holy Bible (King James Version). Biblical Marriage was created by God for the purposes of fellowship, mutual aid, reproduction, and sexual intimacy. Therefore, we believe that Biblical Marriage solely consists of one man (created by God as a male at birth) and one woman (created by God as a female at birth) joined together as one. Due to our beliefs about Biblical Marriage, the Pastor and/or any Ordained Ministers within this Church shall not perform ANY Marriage which is not in accordance with the above mentioned definition of Biblical Marriage. In addition, the buildings, property, and possessions of Columbus Baptist Church will not be used in ANY Marriage which is not in accordance with this Biblical definition of Marriage (Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:21-25; Matthew 19:6; 1 Corinthians 7:2-3; Ephesians 5:22-32).
17. **Sexual Immorality:** ANY form of sexuality outside of the confines of Biblical Marriage, as defined above, is contradictory to the Scriptures and therefore constitutes Sexual Immorality. This includes any and all forms of adultery and/or fornication, any Union or Marriage between any 2 (or more) persons of the Same Gender, and/or two (or more) individuals who at the time of their births were naturally born of the same gender. These actions will not be condoned nor promoted by this Church Body (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 20:10 – 21; Romans 1:18 – 32; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Ephesians 5:1 – 5; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3).

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 Statement of Faith which includes a public profession of their salvation and scriptural baptism if, for reasons beyond their control, they 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 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 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 to the leadership of Columbus Baptist Church (Hebrews 3:17).
 - 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 neither, 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).

1. Pastors

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

- a. To spend sufficient time necessary in God's word and prayer to allow his personal growth and establish harmony in God's will.
- b. To preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- c. To feed and oversee the flock's spiritual life.
- d. To proclaim the whole counsel of God as the Holy Spirit leads him.
- e. To moderate all meetings of business when present.
- f. To ensure visitors, members that are shut-ins, in rest homes, in hospitals and others are visited when needs arise.
- g. To visit potential Church members and answer any questions that they might have concerning the Church prior to their membership.
- h. The pastor will schedule sufficient time in the Church each week for Church business and ministering to the flock.
- i. The pastor will be diligent in setting aside personal time with his family.
- j. Additional pastoral staff will serve in harmony under the leadership of the senior pastor.
- k. As God places great importance on the sanctity of marriage neither a pastor nor his wife, if married, shall have ever been divorced.

2. Deacons

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

- a. Deacons shall be nominated by the Church body and shall fill said position with Church vote subsequent to ordination.
- b. 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.
- c. The number of deacons shall be determined by the Church based upon the needs of the Church.
- d. 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.
- e. A deacon may resign before the end of his term upon notification to the senior pastor.
- f. As God places great importance on the sanctity of marriage neither a deacon nor his wife, if married, shall have ever been divorced.

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).

- a. Teachers must demonstrate Christian character in their teaching ministry and their personal life.
- b. Teachers must be faithful members as outlined in Article 4 Section 2 and be faithful in attendance of all Church services.
- c. Teachers must attend all meetings pertaining to their position.
- d. 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).
- e. Teachers must be prepared to teach and should arrive prior to class time to greet their students.
- f. 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 & I Corinthians 4:1-2).

4. Ministry Leaders

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

- a. All must work in harmony with the pastoral staff.
- b. Coordinate the functions of their area of ministry.

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).

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):

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

7. Church Clerk

The Church Clerk must keep the records of the Church which includes membership records, minutes of business meetings, and any necessary correspondence when the need arises.

8. Trustees

Trustees must be members in good standing and elected by a majority vote of church members. It shall be the duty of the Trustees to act on behalf of the corporation (Columbus Baptist Church, Inc.) regarding legal matters, under the direction the church congregation and in accordance with State, County and City laws. These individuals are only representatives of the Church and bear no personal financial responsibilities.

On 9/20/2015, our membership voted in the following members as our Trustees:

Harry Shomaker 204 Newbury Ct S, Edinburgh, IN 46124 (903) 327-2241
Scott Winn 2181 N 650 E, Columbus, IN 47203 (812) 350-5168
Abraham Vivas 2027 Shadow Creek Blvd., Columbus, IN 47201 (937) 389-9982
Greg Simo 1502 Audubon Dr., Columbus IN 47203 (812) 371-0470

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 devotions; 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 ourselves from this church, 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 complete immersion in water and the Lord's Supper. Observance of the Lord's Supper will be by the authority of the Church. 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 for consideration 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

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, including those regarding Biblical Marriage. 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.

2. Living Quarters

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

- a. For those involved in ministry.
- b. For those in need of benevolence. Such individuals need to be attending our Church or a Church of like faith and doctrine.

3. Equipment

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

4. Church Vehicles

Use of Church vehicles will be limited to Church functions and activities and can only be driven by a member in good standing, who is over the age of twenty-five (25), and who holds a valid driver's license. Vehicles should be properly maintained and returned in a clean condition.

5. Smoking

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

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).

1. Offenses Requiring Church Discipline

- a. Disorderly walk (II Thessalonians 3:11-15).
- b. Failure to abstain from the appearance of evil in word and deed (I Thessalonians 5:21-22)
- c. Causing division among the Church family (Romans 16:17-18).
- d. Unfaithfulness in Church attendance or support of the work of the ministry.
- e. 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).

2. The Steps of Church Discipline

- a. The offending member will be personally contacted by a concerned member in good standing in order to seek restoration.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. 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).
- e. 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

1. Active Ministry

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:

- a. Sending out missionaries from our own Church family.
- b. Supporting missionaries from other Churches of like faith and doctrine.
- c. Inviting missionaries to preach and present their mission work before our congregation.
- d. Supporting and participating in short term mission trips and ministry teams.
- e. Being diligent to pray for each of these missionaries and mission works.

2. Financial Support

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

- a. A designated percentage of the general fund offerings. (At the time of the drafting of this Constitution, the percentage was ten percent and this amount is subject to change at a regular called business meeting.)
- b. Faith promise missions offerings.
- c. Love offerings, designated offerings, and special gifts.
- d. Sunday school offerings.
- e. Any other means approved by the Church.

3. Financial Review

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

ARTICLE 13

DISSOLUTION OF COLUMBUS BAPTIST CHURCH

Columbus Baptist Church and its assets are devoted to Biblical purposes. Therefore, if its members legally choose to dissolve the corporation, the corporation's assets shall be disposed of in the following manner:

1. All assets shall be sold or donated by the Trustees of the corporation, acting on behalf of and under the direction of the active church members.
2. The proceeds and any other church monies shall be used to:
 - a. Pay all outstanding external obligations of the corporation, including fees and expenses for the dissolution, and any legal requirements of any bequests.
 - b. Pay all commitments within the annual Missions Budget.
3. After all debts, fees, and commitments have been paid, any remaining funds shall distributed in the following manner:
 - a. To our founding church, Grace Baptist Church of Jonesboro, AR, if they are still in existence.
 - b. In the event that Grace Baptist Church is no longer in existence, to The Indiana Association of Landmark Baptist Churches, for distribution by said churches of this association among the missionaries of the Indiana Association of Landmark Baptist Churches.
 - c. In the event that the Indiana Association of Landmark Baptist Churches cannot use said funds, to the Treasurer of the American Baptist Association located in Texarkana, TX, for distribution and use among the missionaries of the American Baptist Association as deemed appropriate by said Treasurer.

ARTICLE 14

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 with the purposed of causing this Church to cease to be an Independent Baptist Church.

Amendments to Constitution:

March 3, 2024 – Language added to Article III (Doctrinal Statement of Columbus Baptist Church), #16 (Biblical Marriage). The words “created by God as a male at birth” and “created by God as a female at birth” were added to further clarify our dedication to the Biblical Truth that marriage is an institution created by God solely for one man and one woman. These words were added because many states, including Indiana, have legalized same-sex unions and many individuals seeking marriage are trying to change their physical biology or their gender identity.