

BELIVERS BIBLE CHURCH - CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

NAME OF THE CHURCH

The name of this church shall be Believers Bible Church of Lufkin, a Texas Corporation.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE OF THIS CHURCH

- A. To teach the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, for the edification of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and to stand for the fundamentals of the faith as contained in the Holy Scriptures.
- B. To present the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ at home and abroad to those who have not accepted Him as their personal Savior.
- C. To care for the spiritual and physical needs of the congregation.
- D. To do all things in the name of and for the honor and glory of our Savior; the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, even Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE III

DOCTRINE

- A. **THE HOLY SCRIPTURES** - We believe the Holy Scriptures, in the original autographs, to be the Word of God, verbally and plenary God-breathed, authoritative, and inerrant (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21, Matthew 5:18, Luke 24:27, 44).
- B. **THE GODHEAD** - We believe in one triune God, existing in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, eternal in being, equal in power and glory and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deut. 6:4; 2 Cor. 13:13; Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; John 1:1, 14; Acts 5:3-4).

C. THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN - We believe that man was originally created in the image and likeness of God, but in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally unable to remedy his lost condition. (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 3:22-23, 5:12; Eph. 2:12).

D. THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST - We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, and lived a sinless life in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man; that He accomplished our redemption through His death, which was for all mankind, on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice; that our redemption is made sure to us by His literal physical resurrection from the dead.

(John 1:1-2, 14; Luke 1:35; Rom. 3:24-25; I Pet. 1:3-5); that the Lord Jesus Christ is now in heaven, exalted and seated at the right hand of God, where as the High Priest for His people, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Heb. 9:24; 7:25; Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1-2)

E. THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT - We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person who ministers to mankind in these ways:

1. The unbeliever is convicted of the sin of unbelief, of the righteousness of Christ, and of judgment (John 16:8-11), and restrained from maximum evil (2 Thess. 2:6-7).
2. At the moment of salvation, the believer is permanently regenerated, baptized into the body of Christ, indwelt, and sealed unto the day of redemption. (John 3:3-7; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 1:13; 1 Cor. 12:13).
3. The believer is commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18), but the Spirit is grieved or quenched by sin in the life (Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19). Control (filling) by the Holy Spirit is restored by confession of sin (1 John 1:9, 1 Cor. 11:31); the result is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), which becomes more apparent as the believer grows in the grace, knowledge, and trust in our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18).
4. Spiritual gifts are bestowed by the Holy Spirit on every believer (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-11, 28-30; Eph. 4:11). Some spiritual gifts (such as apostleship, tongues, healing, prophecy) were temporary in nature, not used by God after the completion of the canon of Scripture. (1 Cor. 13:8-10; Heb. 2:3-4).

F. SALVATION- We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to men by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ whose precious blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Eph. 2:8-10, John 1:12; Eph. 1:7). Man appropriates this salvation on the simple basis of belief. (Acts 16:31, 4:12; John 20:31; 1 John 5:11-12). There is no work, deed, merit, or effort (such as going to church, praying, reading the Bible, baptism, witnessing, obeying the Ten Commandments, giving money, casting out demons, or doing good deeds) which man can perform which will in any way assist in achieving his salvation. (Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:5; Rom. 4:2-5). God does not overrule man's free will in accepting or rejecting His provision of salvation (2 Pet. 3:9; John 3:16; 12:48; Luke 10:16).

G. THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF BELIEVERS - We believe that all believers are kept secure forever; that is, that the believer's salvation cannot be lost (Rom. 8:38-39; John 10:27-30; 1 Cor. 1:4-8; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; Eph 1:13-14).

H. THE CHURCH- We believe that the church, which is the body and bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born again persons of this present age (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-27; 1 Cor. 12:12-14). The body of Christ is visibly functional through organizations called local churches (1 Cor. 1:1-2; Phil. 1:1).

I. THE PERSONALITY OF SATAN - We believe that Satan is a real created being, a fallen angel, who is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Job 1:6-7; Matt 4:2-11; Isa 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:13-18).

J. THE BLESSED HOPE - We believe that the next great event in the fulfillment of prophecy will be the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the air to receive to Himself the dead in Christ and believers who are alive at His coming, otherwise known as the rapture of the church. (1 Cor. 15:51-57; 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 4:13-18; Tit. 2:11-14).

K. THE TRIBULATION - We believe that the rapture of the church will be followed by the fulfillment of Israel's Seventieth Week, the latter half of which is the Time of Jacob's Trouble, the Great Tribulation. (Dan. 9:27; Jer. 30:7; Matt. 24:15-21).

L. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST - We believe that the Great Tribulation will be climaxed by the premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth to set up His kingdom. (Zech. 14:4-11; Matt. 24:27-31; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 20:6).

M. THE ETERNAL STATE - We believe that the souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation do at death immediately pass into His presence (2 Cor. 5:8; Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:23) and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His coming, when soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever. (1 Thess. 4:17). But the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious misery (Luke 16:19-26) until the final judgment of the Great White Throne at the close of the Millennium, when soul and body, reunited, shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated but to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence and glory of the Lord. (2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:11-15).

N. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BELIEVERS - We believe that all believers should seek to walk in such a manner as to bring glory and not to bring reproach upon their Lord and Savior which includes biblical separation, though not isolation. (1 Cor. 5:9-13; Rom. 12:1-2, 14:13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1); that it is the obligation and privilege of every believer to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the gospel to all the world (Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20); that it is the responsibility of all believers to remember the work of the Lord in prayer and support it with their means as the Lord has prospered them. (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7).

O. CHURCH ORDINANCES - We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ instituted only two ordinances:

- Baptism of believers by immersion. (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41; 8:12, 36, 38; 1 Cor. 1:16).
- Communion to be observed until His return. (Luke 22:19-20; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23-26)

ARTICLE III

GOVERNMENT

The government of this church, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and under the guidance of the Scriptures, is invested in its membership hereafter referred to as members.

The members through the authority of this Constitution invest authority in the Board of Elders. Any authority not so granted is specifically reserved in the members. Items reserved for the members include calling and dismissal of the pastor, election and dismissal of elders, dismissal of members (church discipline) and the decision to make purchases or sales of real property.

This church is neither under the jurisdiction of or accountable to any other ecclesiastical body and it shall not at any time become a member, sanction, or support an apostate, ecumenical or any such organization.

MEMBERSHIP

A. PURPOSE OF THE MEMBERSHIP - One of the purposes of establishing membership is for the orderly administration of the business affairs of this fellowship.

B. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP -

- Confesses the Lord Jesus as personal Savior.
- Takes the Word of God as their final rule of faith and practice.
- Agrees to be governed in church affiliation by this Constitution (1 Thess. 5:12-13).

C. RECEIVING MEMBERS - Any person desiring to become a member of this church who makes such request of the pastor or of the elders, and who meets the qualifications of this church as determined by an interview by two (2) elders, shall be received.

D. VOTING MEMBERS- The voting members shall be limited to those members in Angelina and adjoining counties of Texas, who are eighteen (18) years or older.

E. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS - Persons who desire to retain their membership in another church outside Angelina County may be admitted as Associate Members in

the same manner prescribed for members, and shall be eligible to vote and hold office if staying in residence year-round.

F. MEMBERSHIP ROLL - It shall be the duty of the elders to examine membership roll prior to duly called business meetings to determine the current voting membership.

G. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS - In all cases in which a member of this church engages in conduct which is disruptive to the ministry of the church internally or externally or espouses doctrine contrary to the church doctrinal statement so opposed to the church's life and faith as to disrupt fellowship among the members, the following procedure shall be observed pursuant to Romans 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Tim. 2:16-21; and Titus 3:10.

1. The member shall be first visited by one who has recognized the problem and asked to repent of his conduct/doctrine.
2. If he refuses to repent, he shall be visited by the one who visited him first and one or more members of the church as directed in Matthew 18: 15-18.
3. If he still refuses to repent, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Board of Elders. If deemed appropriate by the elders, the unrepentant member shall be visited by two (2) or more members of the Board of Elders and asked to repent of his conduct/doctrine.
4. If the member refuses to repent, he shall be recommended for dismissal from membership to the voting members of the church pursuant to 2 Thessalonians 3:6 and 1 Corinthians 5:11 by an affirmative vote of not less than 3/4 of the members of the board of elders. After such recommendation, he shall be dismissed from membership in this church by an affirmative vote of not less than 2/3 of the voting members present at a duly called business meeting.
5. If the member refuses to permit a visit or circumstance or thwarts the reasonable efforts to contact him as described in subparagraphs 1, 2 and or 3 above, then the requirement for such visit is waived, and such member may be recommended for dismissal and dismissed in accordance with subparagraph 4 above.
6. If the member gives satisfactory evidence of repentance and fellowship with Christ he is to be forgiven and comforted (2 Cor. 2:6-8).

H. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS -

1. Members shall strive to follow the principles of faith and practices set forth in this constitution through the filling of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).
2. Any member who harbors a dissatisfaction with some aspect of this church- whether procedure or personnel - shall make his case known to the pastor or the elders. Such dissatisfaction should not be voiced among the congregation, keeping in mind the teaching of Romans 14:19, "follow after things which make for peace."

WORSHIP MEETINGS

Worship services shall be held as often as the Board of Elders may determine and should include: Sunday worship services, Sunday school, communion services, baptismal services, mid-week prayer and Bible study opportunities.

BUSINESS MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS

- A. **PLACE** - All business meetings of the members shall be held at the principal place of worship of this church unless otherwise specified in the notice.
- B. **TIME OF ANNUAL MEETING** - There shall be an annual business meeting of the members within the month of November, the exact date is to be determined by the elders and called in the manner prescribed for special business meetings of the members.
- C. **SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETINGS** - Special business meetings other members shall be called by the elders or upon written request of 10% of the voting members. Announcement of said meeting and the notice and purpose of said meeting shall be posted on the church bulletin board and in each of the Sunday bulletins or programs in the eight (8) day period prior to such meetings. No questions may be voted upon and this stated in the notice of such meetings.
- D. **QUORUM AND CONDUCT OF BUSINESS**
 1. A quorum for the transaction of business shall be twenty (20) percent of the voting members. The majority vote of such members present and voting shall prevail unless a vote of a greater number is required by law or this Constitution.

2. The agenda of all business meetings of the members shall include the following: opening and closing prayer, proof of notice of meeting quorum, reading of the minutes, disposition of business for which meeting was called, reports and elections as required by this Constitution.

3. In all business meetings, the chairman of the elders shall preside or a chairman shall be appointed by the elders.

4. In the transaction of business, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, revised, shall be used in all cases not covered by this Constitution.

E. **VOTING** - The Chairman of the meeting shall determine the method of voting, except that the following shall be by secret ballot: the election or removal of elders, purchase, sale or transfer of real property, the calling or dismissal of a pastor.

F. **FISCAL YEAR** - The fiscal year of this church shall begin on the first day of January and end the last day of December of each year.

THE BOARD OF ELDERS

(1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9)

A. NUMBER

1. The Board of Elders shall consist of men who are voting members of this church.

2. The senior pastor-teacher is automatically a member of the Board of Elders.

3. The current Board shall determine the appropriate number of the elders. There shall be a minimum of five(5) on the Board of Elders, provided that God has raised up qualified men.

B. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION

1. Elders shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the members. All nominees for elders shall be made by the Board of Elders in accordance with the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9 and in dependence upon the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28)

2. Elders are appointed to an indefinite tenure consistent with their continued desire and ability to serve in this capacity. This must be evaluated and recognized by themselves, by the other elders, and by the church body (Rom. 12:3-8). The removal of elders from office shall be effected by personal resignation or by disciplinary actions in accordance with the following:

- **Voluntary Resignation:** Any elder may step down at any time he so chooses. The elder should prayerfully reflect on his decision and seek counsel from the Board before making a final decision.
- **Involuntary Dismissal:** Involuntary dismissal of any elder, paid or non-paid, will be by disciplinary action of the church body in accordance with the instruction of 1 Timothy 5:19-20; Galatians 6:1; and Matthew 18:15-18.
- **Sabbatical:** Should an elder desire a leave of absence for a period of time, he shall be placed on inactive status until the predetermined period of time has elapsed. He shall then return to active service.

3. Nominations for elders are to be made by the month of October and the nominations presented to the members as soon as completed.

C. VACANCY

The office of elder shall be considered vacant upon the happening of any one of the following: death, resignation, refusal to serve, removal at a duly called business meeting of the members, or absence from three consecutive meetings of the elders without excuse satisfactory to the Board.

D. DISMISSAL OF AN ELDER

An elder may be recommended for dismissal by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the total number of elders. Voting shall be in a duly called meeting of the elders. At least thirty (30) days prior to such meeting, the elder shall be notified in writing of the reason(s) for the recommended dismissal, and at his election may be represented by two members, introduce evidence, present and cross examine

witnesses. If the vote is for dismissal, recommendation shall be made by the elders to the members and the services of the elder may then be terminated by at least a majority vote of the members in a duly called business meeting.

E. FILLING VACANCIES

A vacancy shall be filled by election of an elder by the members at a duly called business meeting.

F. REGULAR MEETINGS

Regular meetings shall be held at such times as the elders may determine but at least once a month.

G. SPECIAL MEETINGS

A special meeting of the elders may be called at any time at the request of the pastor, the chairman of the elders, or two elders. During the month of December the new Board shall meet for the purpose of organizing.

H. QUORUM

A quorum shall be a majority. The acts of the majority of the elders present shall be the acts of the elders unless otherwise specifically required by law or by this Constitution.

I. PLACE OF MEETING

All meetings of the elders shall be at the principal place of worship of the church unless otherwise specified.

J. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Notice of call of a regular or special meeting of the elders shall be given at least three (3) days prior to such meeting. The requirement of notice may be waived by a majority of the elders.

K. DUTIES

The elders shall oversee and administer all the affairs of this church. The specific responsibility of the elders shall include:

1. Assist the pastor in the administration of all worship services and ordinances.
2. Make provision for the supply of the pulpit in the event of the pastor's failure to do so; and to take full charge of all services not conducted by the pastor.

3. To cooperate with the pastor in the shepherding of the membership of this church; “to strive to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus;” give counsel and comfort to the poor, the sick and afflicted; keep order in the assemblies of the members; act for the members in the reception and dismissal of members; supervise and administer the Sunday School and missions activities.
4. To supervise and administer all funds; to receive and disburse the funds in accordance with the Constitution or as directed by the members; to hire and discharge personnel; to act upon the recommendations of the Missions Committee regarding support of missions; to inform the members, but shall not acquire or dispose of real property or its fixtures or contract for any loans on behalf of this church except upon prior specific instruction and authority by the church for all extra or secular purposes; to execute any special instructions of the members adopted in a resolution at a duly called meeting of the members; to vote regarding discipline of members (ARTICLE V,G).
5. To interpret this Constitution.
6. To nominate deacons to assist them in the execution of the administrative details of this church as they judge necessary. The deacons remain under the oversight of the elders. Their appointment will be in accord with the principles of 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

CHURCH OFFICERS

The church officers shall be a chairman, vice chairman, secretary and treasurer, each of whom shall be an elder. The elders may elect from the members, assistant treasurers, who need not be elders. The officers shall be elected at the December organizational meeting of the new board (see ARTICLE VIII, G). The term of each office shall be one (1) year or until his successor has been elected. An elder shall hold only one such office and shall not hold the same office longer than three successive years.

A. CHAIRMAN

The chairman shall preside at all business meetings of the members and of the elders, unless the elders have appointed someone else to preside (see ARTICLE VII, D, 3); shall have general supervision of the administrative affairs of this church as provided in this Constitution and/or directed by the elders or members; shall sign all instruments of this church as authorized by the elders or members; and shall perform all other duties incident to this office.

B. VICE CHAIRMAN

The vice chairman shall assist the chairman as directed, and perform the function of the chairman during his absence.

C. SECRETARY

The secretary shall keep minutes of the business meetings of the members and the elders; receive and issue notice of all business meetings of the members and the elders; be custodian of the records; keep current roster of all members with addresses; maintain a record of attendance at elders' meetings; sign instruments authorized by the elders or members, and prepare the agenda of all business meetings of the members and elders.

D. REMOVAL OF OFFICERS

Any officer may be removed with cause by affirmative vote of at least two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the total number of elders. Voting shall be at the duly called meeting of the elders.

PASTOR-TEACHER ELDER

(1 Timothy 5:17b; Ephesians 4:11)

A. DUTIES

The pastor-teacher shall watch over the spiritual life of this church, study and teach the Word, administer the ordinances and have charge of the worship services. He shall be a member of the elders and an ex-officio member of all committees.

Because Ephesians 4:11 indicates that his position is the result of a sovereignly given spiritual gift, and because of his position and authority in teaching the Word, his leadership will be prominent (1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim 5:17b; Heb. 12:17). The pastor-teacher shall not have authority to hold title to church property or to sign church checks.

B. CALL

A candidate for pastor-teacher shall be considered only after he has subscribed in writing to the doctrinal statement and Constitution of this church. He shall be recommended to the members by at least a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) affirmative vote of the total number of elders and called to serve for an indefinite term by at least two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) affirmative vote of the members in a duly called business meeting.

C. TERMINATING A PASTOR'S SERVICES

The pastor-teacher may be recommended for dismissal by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the total number of elders, excluding the pastor-teacher. Voting shall be in a duly called meeting of the elders. At least thirty (30) days prior to such meeting, the pastor shall be notified in writing of the reason(s) or the recommended dismissal, and at his election, may be represented by two members, introduce evidence, present and cross-examine witnesses. If the vote is for dismissal, recommendation shall be made by the elders to the members and the services of the pastor-teacher may then be terminated by at least two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the members present in a duly called meeting.

COMMITTEES

A. **COMMITTEES**- The committees shall be as follows: standing committees, and special (ad hoc) committees.

B. STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

1. The elders by majority vote shall establish such committees as necessary.
2. The elders shall appoint the committee chairmen.
3. Each standing and special committee shall have the following general functions and duties:
 - Be responsible to and report to the elders.
 - Become familiar with its sphere of activity.
 - Execute only such policy and procedure as is approved by the elders.

MISSIONS

A. The name of this committee shall be the Missions Committee of Believers' Bible Church.

B. The purpose of the Missions Committee shall be to annually review the missions policy and make recommended changes to the Board of Elders, who will determine the policy. The Missions Committee will execute the missions policy with the approval of the Board of Elders.

C. The elders shall appoint the Missions Committee chairman who shall, in turn, appoint, with the approval of the elders, members of the Missions Committee.

CONTRIBUTIONS

A. The finances of this church shall be obtained through the voluntary offerings of its congregation. No entertainments, suppers, bazaars, or other such money-raising projects shall be held by this church. It is our desire to depend upon the Lord's gracious provision. Potential rental income from the use of church properties and facilities will be assessed and evaluated in each individual case by the elders.

B. Designated contributions may be used as directed if in keeping with the purpose and policy of this church. Contributions designated for purposes which do not meet this requirement shall be returned to the donor, if possible. The elders shall have the right to determine the use of all contributions.

C. This church shall not knowingly, accept gifts from unbelievers; nor, make individual solicitation of funds or pledges among believers. Believers' contributions should be made "willingly" (2 Cor. 9:7) and "as God has prospered" (1 Cor. 16:2).

LICENSING AND ORDINATION

A. **LICENSE** - A license to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ may be issued in the name of the church to any man who in the judgement of the pastor and elders is called of God to the work of the ministry, by an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the total number of the elders. The issuance of such a license shall not bind this church to a future ordination of the licensee.

B. **ORDINATION** - A commission to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ may be granted by the unanimous vote of an examining council. The examining council will be composed of the pastor and elders, and any such other men as they deem proper, and said examining council shall include at least three (3) ordained ministers of the gospel. The examining council shall thoroughly examine all such applicants as to personal salvation, character, and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

C. **REVOCATION** - A license or ordination granted by this church may be revoked upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the total number of Elders.

AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a vote of not less than two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the members present at a duly called business meeting provided the proposed amendment has been approved by not less than a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the total number of elders, or has been submitted by a petition signed by not less than twenty (20) percent of the members, and that the written notice of such meeting stated the proposed amendment.

DISSOLUTION

In the event of the l of this Corporation, control of the monies and properties of the Corporation is to be given over to a Christian organization or organizations as determined by the members according to ARTICLE VII of this Constitution.

AMENDMENTS

On December 2, 1990 the congregation voted unanimously to amend ARTICLE VIII, B, 2, concerning tenure of elders. Changes have been so made.