

*CONSTITUTION*

For

**Bethel Chapel Church**

(Undenominational)

4100 K Street

Philadelphia, PA 19124

Revised

June 5, 1974

January 12, 1992

June 3, 1998

February 2, 2011

## PREAMBLE

By the grace of God and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, we, the members of Bethel Chapel Church, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves:

### ARTICLE I - Name

The name of this organization shall be Bethel Chapel Church (Undenominational) of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Inc.

### ARTICLE II - Purpose

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, the building, maintaining and operating of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, print shops, day care centers, camps, nursing homes, and cemeteries, and any other ministries that the church may be led of God to establish.

### ARTICLE III - Object

The object of this Church is to glorify God in:

- 1 The promotion of Christian fellowship and the edification of the believer through the teaching of the Word of God.
- 2 The salvation of the lost through the preaching of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3 The world-wide proclamation of God's grace as expressed in the shed blood and finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary.
- 4 The defense of "the faith once delivered" in harmony with God's Holy Word, the Bible, until He comes.

### ARTICLE IV - Doctrine

The Scriptural doctrines to which we ask the whole-hearted assent of each applicant for membership are briefly contained in the following Articles of Faith:

1. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally and plenarily inspired Word of God. The Scriptures in the original manuscripts are inerrant, infallible and God-breathed, and therefore the final authority for faith and life. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to the original author's intended meaning as revealed in its grammatical-historical context. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
2. We believe in the only true God Who is eternal and Who manifests Himself to us in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and Who created all things, and upholds all things by the Word of His power; in Whom we live and move and have our being; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He; and He shall judge the world (John 17:3; Deuteronomy 33:27; Revelation 4:11; Hebrews 1:3; Acts 17:28; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 9:8).
3. We believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the eternal Word manifested in flesh (John 1:14; 3:16). We believe that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary and that He is true God and true Man (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:1; Philippians 2:6-8). We believe in His vicarious, substitutionary and redeeming death, Christ receiving in Himself the penalty of man's sin (II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; I Peter 3:18). We believe in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension, and in His personal, imminent return for His redeemed ones, and His coming in glory to judge the rebellious and to establish His millennial reign (I Corinthians 15:1-8; Ephesians 4:8-10; Acts 1:11; Matthew 24:3-51; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 19 and 20).
4. We believe in the Holy Spirit, in His personality, that He is God, the source and power of all acceptable worship and service, that He is our abiding Comforter and Helper, that He never takes His departure from the Church nor from the feeblest of the saints, but is ever present to testify of Christ, seeking to occupy us with Him, not with ourselves nor with our experiences (John 7:38-39; 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9; Philippians 3:3). We believe His work is to reprove the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8).
5. We believe that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Judgment and condemnation came upon all men. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:12, 18; 6:23).
6. We believe we are saved solely by grace, through faith in the blood sacrifice, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Ephesians 2:8-9; I Peter 1:18-19; I Corinthians 15:3-4).
7. We believe in the eternal security and everlasting blessedness of the saved and the eternal judgment and punishment of all who reject our Lord Jesus Christ. "*This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*" (Revelation 20:14-15).
8. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to life eternal and the lost to judgment and everlasting punishment (I Corinthians 15:42-44; Acts 24:15; John 5:28- 29).

9. We believe in that *blessed hope*, the personal, imminent return of Christ who will rapture His Church. We believe Christ will personally and visibly return with his saints, to establish His earthly Messianic Kingdom. (Psalms 89:3-4; Daniel 2:31-45; Zechariah 14:4-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Revelation 3:10; 19:11-16; 20:1-6).

10. We believe that Satan is a person, the author of the fall, and that he shall be eternally punished (John 8:44; Genesis 3:1-6; Revelation 20:10).

11. We believe that Christ, the Head over all to the Church, has commanded us to baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We believe baptism is to be by immersion and is only for those who have expressed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and who purpose in their hearts to please Him (Ephesians 1:22; Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:4).

12. We believe that the Church is composed of all who are united by the Holy Spirit to the risen and ascended Son of God, that by the same Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles and, thus, being members one of another, we are responsible to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, on the basis of truth, and loving one another with a pure heart fervently (Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 2:32-47; Romans 12:5; I Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:3-10; Colossians 3:14-15). We believe that we are called with a holy calling to walk, not after the flesh but after the Spirit, and so to live in the Spirit that we should not fulfill the lusts of the flesh; but the flesh, being in us to the end of our earthly pilgrimage, needs to be kept constantly in subjection to Christ by faith in our identification with Him in crucifixion, or it will surely manifest its presence to the dishonor of His name (Romans 8:12-13; 13:14; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:1-10; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 3:5-9; Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:6).

13. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex (Genesis 2:24; 19:5,13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1;6:9 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

14. We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other fellow church members to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members, although outside Christian mediation and counseling may be used if necessary as a tool to help resolve conflict. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander (1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Ephesians 4:31-32).

NOTE: The teaching ministry of Bethel Chapel Church will be from a pre-millennial and dispensational perspective.

## ARTICLE V - Membership

### Section 1 - Obtaining Membership

a. Any person having come to the age of understanding who professes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who gives evidence of having accepted Him as their personal Savior, who has been baptized as a believer in Jesus Christ and who is in agreement with the doctrine and polity of this Church as set forth in this Constitution is eligible for membership following recommendation of the Official Board and approval by 2/3 vote of the members present. Under no condition shall any person be received into membership of Bethel Chapel Church until after four weeks have elapsed since time of application.

b. For the purpose of conducting business, the voting membership shall be restricted to those members who are 15 years of age or older and members who have attended at least one service at Bethel in the last three months.

c. All members shall read, sign and agree to abide by the Bethel Chapel Church Relational Commitments (a corollary document approved by the Official Board) and the Duties of Members (Article V, Section 2 below). The following agreement shall be signed by the applicant:

"It is my desire to be received into the membership of Bethel Chapel Church of Philadelphia. I cheerfully accept and subscribe to the Articles of Faith and the Constitution of this Church.

In assuming this membership, I agree to be loyal to the interests of this Church, to seek its purity and prosperity, to do some definite Christian work, to be subject to the discipline of the Church and to contribute financially as the Lord shall prosper me. If at any time I find myself out of harmony with the Articles of Faith or practices of this Church, or if my conduct or belief is called in question, I agree to apply the Scripture's formula for solving problems as outlined in Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15. If it be found that I am unwilling to settle the differences on Scriptural grounds I will expect the Official Board to make every effort to restore me to fellowship in accordance with Matthew 18:16-17."

## Section 2 - Duties of Members

a. All members are expected to whole-heartedly agree to the Doctrinal Statement of the Church.

b. It is the duty of all members to regularly attend the services of this Church, to contribute to its financial support, and to support its benevolent objectives.

c. It is the duty of members to abide in mutual love, to give active concern for the spiritual and temporal welfare of all, to make use of all the means of grace, and to be obedient to the will of the Lord.

d. It is the duty of members to be actively serving the Lord in this Church whenever possible.

e. It is the duty of members to honor and esteem their Pastors and all other leaders of the Church in the exercise of their offices.

f. It shall be the duty of all members to inform the Official Board of every change of address.

g. It shall be the duty of all members to be free from membership in oath-bound, secret societies.

## Section 3 - Removing from Membership

- a. Any member desiring to have his or her name removed from the Church roll may do so by making written request for such action to the Official Board.
- b. Any member who, in the judgment of the Official Board, fails to perform the duties of members shall be contacted by the Board and urged to fulfill these duties. If he fails to do so, the Official Board may remove his name from the membership rolls.

#### Section 4 - Suspension of Membership

- a. All personal grievances and public misdemeanors shall be dealt with and adjusted in the spirit of our Lord's admonition found in Matthew 18:15-17; I Cor.6:1-18.
- b. Any member found by the Official Board to be an offense to Christ and the Church by reason of immoral or un-Christian conduct shall be suspended from the membership and excluded from the fellowship at the Lord's Table until there is clear evidence of repentance. Should repentance not be forthcoming, said person shall be removed from the membership in accordance with the procedure found in Article V, Section 3b.

#### Section 5 - Restoration of Membership

Any person who has lost membership in the Church, upon confession of his error and giving evidence of real repentance may be restored to membership following recommendation of the Official Board and on approval by 2/3 vote of the Church members present.

### ARTICLE VI - Church Government

#### Section 1 - Authority

This Church acknowledges only the Lord Jesus Christ as its Head; the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible guide in matters of faith, discipline, and order; the Holy Spirit as its Teacher; and it is not and never shall be amenable to or under the jurisdiction or supervision of any other ecclesiastical body of any kind or nature whatsoever.

#### Section 2 - Government

- a. The government of the Church, the conduct of its business, and the management and control of all its property, real and personal, the supervision of its general work, its organizations, such as Sunday School, Young People's Societies, Missionary Societies, etc., and branch works shall, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, be vested in the Official Board, which shall consist of the Deacons and Pastors, who shall be elected as provided for in this Constitution.
- b. The Official Board shall have the power to delegate to either individuals or committees the right to transact any of its business or exercise any of its powers. The transaction of such business or the exercise of such powers, however, shall be at all times subject to the supervision and control of the Official Board.

c. The Official Board shall serve as the Trustees of the Church. As such, it shall be responsible for the following:

1. To hold in trust the property of the Church and act as legal representatives.
2. To keep the Church property in good repair and make certain that the Church is heated and lighted properly.
3. To have charge of all business matters of the Church in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
4. To see that records of all incomes and expenditures of the Church are kept.
5. To draw up and submit a proposed budget for the coming year to the Annual Church Business Meeting for the approval of the Church members.
6. To authorize expenditures
  - a) No Church officer or member shall have the right to expend funds outside of the approved budget for any purpose until it is first approved by a majority vote of the Official Board.
  - b) The Official Board shall have authority to spend sums up to \$5,000 without sanction of the Church.
  - c) All donations given to the church are considered to be the Lord's property and cannot be returned. This is especially vital so we can comply with IRS tax deduction regulations.
- d. The Official Board shall meet at the call of the Senior Pastor or its Chairman in the absence of the Senior Pastor.
- e. Officers  
Annually, as soon as is reasonable after the annual congregational meeting, the Official Board shall elect its own Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary.

## ARTICLE VII - Officers

The officers of this Church shall be the members of the Official Board as specified in Article VI Section 2 Paragraph a.

### Section 1 – Pastors

#### a. Membership on the Official Board

Pastors shall be men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of Pastor set forth in I Timothy 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 6–9. Pastors shall serve on the Official Board.

b. Duties

In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6: 1–6 and I Peter 5: 1–4, the Pastors shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.

They shall have oversight on all boards, committees, and auxiliary organizations of this church.

c. Election and Terms

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as Pastors. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church triennially.

A Pastor's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by congregational vote. Any two members with reason to believe that any Pastor should be dismissed should express such concern to the Official Board and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and I Timothy 5: 17–21. Any of the Pastors may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any duly called meeting of the church.

d. Senior Pastor

1. Duties and Qualifications of the Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall be a Pastor. He shall perform the duties of a Pastor described in Section 1, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching.

His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation set out in Article 7, Section 1, Paragraph c. for Pastors. He shall preach biblically and faithfully the Word of God on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution. In the absence or incapacity of the Senior Pastor the Pastors shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

The Senior Pastor may resign from the pastorate by giving a written 90-day advance notice of such intention to the Chairman of the Official Board to be read publicly at the next Sunday Morning Worship Service of the Church.

2. Calling of the Senior Pastor

If the Official Board believes that a Senior Pastor needs to be invited to serve at Bethel Chapel Church, it shall be the duty of the Church, without unnecessary delay, to invite a qualified Pastor (from within or outside the congregation) of the same faith and practice and of good reputation to fill the vacancy.

(a.). A Pulpit Committee of six members consisting of two Deacons, two Pastors and two members-at-large shall be appointed by the Official Board. It shall be the duty of this Committee to seek a man to serve as Senior Pastor and to recommend him to the Church.

(b.). When the Pulpit Committee shall have decided upon a minister who, in their judgment, will make a desirable Senior Pastor and who has subscribed his signature to this Constitution, they shall fix a date for him to preach at the Sunday morning service. Notice of one week prior thereto shall be made. Two successive Sunday announcements shall be made for a meeting to vote to extend a call to said minister. A 75% majority vote of the Church members present at a duly called business meeting shall be necessary to extend a call to a new Senior Pastor.

e. Associate Pastors

1. Duties and Qualifications of Associate Pastors

The church may call additional Pastors whose relationship to the Senior Pastor is that of associate. An Associate Pastor shall be a Pastor. He shall perform the duties of a Pastor described in Section 1, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall not be subject to the triennial Article 7, Section 1, Paragraph c. for Pastors.

He shall assist the Senior Pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of Pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation. In the absence or incapacity of the Senior Pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the Associate Pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the Official Board.

2. Calling of Associate Pastors

If the Official Board believes that an Associate Pastor needs to be invited to serve at Bethel Chapel Church, they shall recommend a candidate to the congregation. A 75% majority vote of the Church members present at a duly called business meeting shall be necessary to extend a call to a new Associate Pastor.

Section 2 - Deacons

a. Membership on the Official Board

Deacons shall be-godly men who are active members of the Church and who fulfill the qualifications for the office as set forth in the Scriptures (1 Timothy 3:8-12; Acts 6:1-4). Their number shall vary according to the availability of qualified candidates.

b. Duties of Deacons

1. To be diligent and faithful in attendance at the meetings of the Official Board and at the regular services of the Church.

2. To assist the Pastor at the Lord's Table and in the ministry of visitation among the members of the Congregation.

3. To pray for and encourage the Pastors and assist them in the spiritual oversight of the Church.

4. To receive and use the Deacons' Benevolence Fund for the relief of the needy.

c. Removal of Deacon's from Office

A Deacon's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by congregational vote. A member with reason to believe that a deacon should be dismissed should express such concern to the Official Board and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and I Timothy 5: 17–21. Any Deacon may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members' meeting of the church.

Section 3 - Election to Office

a. Deacons and Pastors shall be elected for a three-year term unless removed by the Official Board according to the procedure set forth herein, or at their own written request. They may succeed themselves in office.

b. The method for election shall be as follows:

1. Nominees for Deacons and Pastors shall be made from among those men deemed qualified by the Official Board..

2. The Official Board shall draw up a list of proposed candidates, contact each person to determine his willingness to serve, and post the list prominently in the Church building for two weeks prior to the election.

3. At the Annual Church Business Meeting, a printed ballot listing all candidates shall be presented to the members present on which they mark their choices.

4. A 75% majority of church members present is required to elect a Deacon or Pastor.

## ARTICLE VIII - Committees

Committees shall be appointed as deemed necessary for the carrying out of the work of the ministry. All committee appointments shall be made by the Official Board.

## ARTICLE IX - Special Staff Workers

Section 1

In addition to designated officers and committee members, the Official Board may, when needed, enlist other workers to perform special functions (such as Staff assistants, Choir Director, Church Secretary, Custodian, Organist, Pianist, Treasurer, Youth Director, etc.)

## Section 2

In the event it is deemed advisable to pay a salary to any staff worker, a majority vote of the Church members present at a duly called business meeting shall be required before such salary shall go into effect.

### ARTICLE X - Meetings

Meetings of the Church shall be of two kinds: devotional and business meetings.

#### Section 1 - Devotional Meetings

The Church shall meet every Sunday morning and evening for worship. A meeting shall be held one night during the week for prayer and Bible study. Additional meetings may be held at any time deemed advisable by the Official Board or by a majority vote of the church members present in a business meeting.

#### Section 2 - Baptismal Services

Baptismal services shall be held as needed at the call of a Pastor. Under no circumstances shall infant sprinkling (so-called baptism) be practiced by this Church. This Church shall baptize by immersion, only those who express their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and who desire to live to please Him (Ephesians 1:22; Matthew 28:19).

Though infant sprinkling shall not be permitted, the dedication of infants by parents who know Christ as their Savior shall be practiced.

Candidates for baptism shall be recommended to the Church by a Pastor. At the time of their baptism they shall give public oral testimony that they have been born again.

#### Section 3 - Business Meetings

a. There shall be an Annual Meeting of the members for the election of officers, the reception of reports, the adoption of a budget, and the transaction of such other business as shall be properly brought before the meeting. This meeting shall be held on the last Wednesday of the month of January in each year. The Official Board has the right to reschedule this meeting on the first available Wednesday in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

b. Special meetings shall be called when deemed necessary by the Official Board or when a written request to call such a meeting is signed by 1/4 of the members of the Church and given to the Senior Pastor or Chairman of the Official Board.

c. Public announcements of the time of all business meetings shall be made at both the morning and evening services on the two Sundays preceding the date of the meeting.

d. The Official Board shall be responsible for arranging the details of all congregational meetings and for seeing that all possible preparations for their successful conduct are made.

e. The voting members present at any congregational meeting, called in accordance with the requirements of this Constitution, shall be considered a quorum for the transaction of business.

f. Members may be received or requests for removal from the membership roll may be acted upon at any devotional or business meeting.

#### Section 4 – Moderator

The Senior Pastor (or one of the other Pastors if the Senior Pastor is unavailable) will be the Moderator of each Annual Meeting or other Business Meetings held during the year.

### ARTICLE XI - Associated Organizations

All organizations wishing to be associated with the Church must be approved by the Official Board. Application for approval shall be made in writing. It shall be the duty of such approved organizations to prepare written Annual Reports of their activities to be given at the Annual Church Business Meeting.

### ARTICLE XII - Church Year

The fiscal year of the Church shall be from January 1 to December 31.

### ARTICLE XIII - Amendments

Amendments to the Constitution may be adopted by a 2/3 vote of the membership present at any regular congregational meeting or at any special meeting called for that purpose, provided in either case that such amendment be distributed in written form to the membership at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

### ARTICLE XIV - Rules of Order

The rules contained in Robert's RULES OF ORDER shall govern the conduct of business in Church meetings in all cases in which these rules are applicable, provided that they are not inconsistent with this Constitution or special rules of order of the Church.

### ARTICLE XV - Tax Exempt Provisions

## Section 1 - Private Inurnment

No part of the net earnings of the church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II hereof.

## Section 2 - Political Involvement

No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The Church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

## Section 3 - Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the Church, the Official Board shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities, dispose of all of the assets of the Church to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501(c) (3) or the Internal Revenue Law) as the Official Board shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to organizations which agree with the Church's Statement of Faith

## Section 4 - Racial Nondiscrimination

The Church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and therefore shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin.