

# **THE CONSTITUTION OF CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH OF BYESVILLE, OHIO**

The following document outlines the beliefs and practices of Calvary Baptist Church. It is our desire that God's Word be uncompromisingly adhered to in our statement of faith and doctrine, and that the principles of God's Word be applied to areas where the Scriptures do not directly speak. Therefore we shall not consider any changes to our doctrine or statement of faith except to further clarify the meaning or ramifications thereof. As to our bylaws, they shall be reviewed to keep current with the needs of the ministry of Calvary Baptist Church. This document was approved by a majority vote on the 12th day of July, in the year 2009, and is held to supersede and nullify any previous set of rules, bylaws, and amendments.

[Revision 07-12-09]

## **ARTICLE 1 - NAME**

The name of this organization shall be Calvary Baptist Church of Byesville, Ohio.

## **ARTICLE 2 - OBJECT**

Its object shall be to promote the worship of God by the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ at home and abroad, trusting that as a result sinners shall be saved and believers edified. Its object is further expressed in the following historic covenant:

### **CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led 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, Son and Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ. We purpose to walk together in Christian love, and to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort. We commit ourselves to promote its prosperity and spirituality, and to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines. We will also contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel to all nations. We also purpose to maintain family and private devotions, to religiously educate our children, and to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

We further purpose to walk uprightly in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct, to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger, to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drink as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior. We purpose 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, to be ready for reconciliation and to secure it without delay. We moreover purpose that, when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with another church where we can resume the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## **ARTICLE 3 - DOCTRINE**

Its doctrine shall be in conformity with the generally accepted principles and practices of Baptist churches, as expressed in the following Confession of Faith:

## CONFESSION OF FAITH

1. We believe that the Holy Bible, as originally written, was verbally inspired by God and the product of Spirit controlled men. The Bible is free from all error and completely reliable. We believe the Scriptures are the foundation for true Christian fellowship, and the only infallible rule for all human conduct, creeds or opinions (II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:19-21).
2. We believe that there is only one living and true God, infinite in every excellence. We believe that in the unity of the Godhead there are three distinct persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit who are one in substance and equal in every divine perfection (Exodus 20:2,3; I Cor. 8:6; I John 5:7).
3. We believe in the absolute deity of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that He was divine as no other man can be, being God of very God. He existed from all eternity co-equal with the Father and the Spirit; that He never ceased to be God at any time and that His humiliation did not consist in laying aside His deity. Becoming man, He was miraculously begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (John 1:1,2; I John 5:20; Matt 1:20; Luke 1:26-38).
4. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with the Father and the Son and of the same substance and nature. He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment, bears witness to the truth, is the agent of the new birth. He seals, endows, guides, teaches, witnesses to, sanctifies and helps the believer, indwelling every true child of God (II Cor. 13:14; John 14:16,17; Rom 8:14-27).
5. We believe in the distinct personality of Satan. Created by God as an angel, he rebelled against God. He is the god of this age and director of all the powers of darkness and sin and ultimately is destined to the judgment of eternal justice in the lake of fire (Matt 4:1-3; II Cor. 4:4; Rev 20:10).
6. We believe that God created the heavens and the earth, and all life, "each after it's own kind," by direct act and not by the process of evolution (Gen.. 1:2; Col 1:16,17; John 1:3).

We believe that man, in the person of the first Adam, was created in innocence but by voluntary transgression fell into sin and plunged all mankind into condemnation and death. Accordingly, all mankind is born in sin and continue to sin. They are without excuse and guilty before God (Gen. 3; Rom 5:10-19).

7. We believe that the only escape from the condemnation of sin is through the atonement wrought by Jesus Christ. He voluntarily took upon Himself a human body and nature, apart from sin, and by His suffering, death and resurrection made full satisfaction to the justice of God for the sin of man. The blessings of this salvation are given on the grounds of grace to all who believe and confess Him as Savior (John 3:1-7; Acts 16:30-33; Rom 10:9-13).
8. We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation, and that works cannot make that salvation more secure (Acts 16:31; Titus 3:5-7). Nevertheless, saving faith does of necessity result in good works (James 2:17-18, Eph. 2:10).

We believe that all who receive Christ as Savior are born from above and are eternally secure (John 10:28,29; Rom 8:35-39; Phil 1:6).

9. We believe that a local church is a congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel. These same believers observe the ordinance of Christ, are governed by His laws, and exercise the gifts, rights and privileges as stated in His Word. The church has the absolute right of self-government directed by the Holy Spirit, and is answerable only to Christ. Its officers are pastors and deacons. (Acts 2:41,42; I Cor. 1:2; Eph 1:22,23; 4:11; 5:23,24; I Tim 3:17; Col. 1:18).
10. We believe that there are two church ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water and is properly called "believer's baptism". It sets forth in a beautiful and solemn way our faith in a crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its effect in our lives of death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Baptism is a pre-requisite to the privileges of church membership. The Lord's Supper is the commemoration of our Lord's death until he comes and pictures our continual fellowship with Him. It should always be preceded by careful self-examination (Acts 8:36-39; Rom 6:3-5; I Cor. 11:23-32).
11. We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked and only those who, through faith, are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Spirit of God are truly righteous in His sight. All who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse, and this distinction is manifested after death in the everlasting joy of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost (Mal 3:18; Rom 6:17-23; Matt 25:34-41; Luke 6:25; John 8:21).
12. We believe in the bodily, personal, premillennial return of Jesus Christ in the air to receive His church unto Himself before the seven-year tribulation period. He will come to the earth with His church at the close of the tribulation to judge the living nations and to set up His kingdom (I Thes. 4:13-18; Matt 25:31-46, Rev 19:11-21).

13. We believe in the resurrection of the bodies of all the dead. The believers who sleep in Jesus will be raised when Christ comes for His church. The old testament and tribulation saints will be raised at His coming in glory, and the wicked dead shall be raised for the Great White Throne of Judgment at the end of Christ's millennial reign (John 5:21-30; II Thes. 4:16; Rev 7:9-17; 20:11-15).

## **ARTICLE 4 - ASSOCIATIONS**

As a New Testament Church cannot "join" anything outside itself, but only affiliates on grounds of fellowship, this church declares itself to be in fellowship with the Ohio Association of Regular Baptist Churches and the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (a nationwide organization).

## **ARTICLE 5 - MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1 - ADMISSION OF MEMBERS:**

- A. Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior and having been baptized by immersion as a testimony of their faith are eligible for membership.
- B. Anyone desiring to unite with this church may upon recommendation of the pastor and deacons be received into church membership. If such persons have been immersed according to the scriptural mode, their baptism shall be accepted as valid.
- C. Candidates for membership are presented to the church based on the recommendations of the pastor and deacons. Potential members are then subject to a vote of confirmation by the church body.
- D. Potential candidates will be announced one week prior to presentation for confirmation vote.
- E. It shall be the duties of members to live consistent Christian lives and to support their church by their prayers, contributions and presence. Members are to serve one another in Christian fellowship and love, and honor, esteem, and pray for their pastor.

## **SECTION 2 - DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS**

### A. Church letter:

- 1) Letters of transfer may be granted any member in good and regular standing. Such letters must be addressed to some particular church of the same faith and order as this and sent by the pastor to the church to which the member is uniting. No letter shall be granted except to a designated church of like faith and order.
  
- 2) Members not in good and regular standing or those desiring to unite with a church not of our faith and order shall be given Certificates of Standing to date.

### B. Expulsion of Members:

- 1) The matter of expulsion and discipline of members shall be in the hands of the deacons assisted by the pastor. No member shall be expelled until every effort has been made, including, if physically possible, personal visits, to reclaim him/her for Christ and the church.
  
- 2) Charges against the character or Christian standing of any member must be presented to the pastor and deacons in writing, and confirmed by another reliable witness. Such charges shall not be received or witness heard, until the accused has been notified in writing and given ample time to prepare his/her defense. Failure to appear for such defense will be considered supporting evidence of the charges made.
  
- 3) Members failing to support the church by their attendance within a period of one year without legitimate excuse, (such "support" and "excuse" to be defined by the deacons) may be placed on the "Inactive" list and so lose their right of franchise. Names continuing upon the "Inactive" list for more than a year may be removed from church membership at the discretion of the deacons, assisted by the pastor, subject to (B-1) of this section. If interest is renewed at least six months previous to any business meeting, a member shall be entitled to vote and his/her name will be transferred to the active list.

## **ARTICLE 6 - ORDINANCES**

### **SECTION 1**

BAPTISM: those professing saving faith in Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior shall by the pastor or some person authorized by the church, be immersed in water in accordance with the scriptural teaching. Baptism by immersion shall be a pre-requisite to church membership.

## **SECTION 2**

The Lord's Supper (communion) shall be served to the congregation by the pastor and deacons, or someone designated by the deacons on the first Sunday of the month. The pastor shall frequently state the scriptural order and shall explain the meaning of the ordinances.

## **ARTICLE 7 - OFFICERS**

The officers of the church shall be the pastor, board of deacons, board of trustees, church clerk, church treasurer, asst. treasurer and superintendent of the Sunday School.

### **SECTION 1 - PASTOR**

A. The pastor shall be recognized as the spiritual leader and advisor of the church and, as such, he shall be given the Christian love, prayers, and hearty cooperation of all members.

B. The pastor shall be the moderator of the church and a member ex-officio of the board of deacons, and board of trustees. The pastor shall be responsible for the selection and supervision of the church secretary. Termination of the secretary will also be at the discretion of the pastor.

C. Meeting for the purpose of calling a pastor must be announced at the services on two (2) preceding Sundays. An affirmative vote of 2/3 of all members present shall be required to effect a call.

D. The pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time. The pastor shall continue in office until:

1.) The pastor resigns. Upon resigning in good standing the pastor shall give the church sixty (60) days notice.

2.) The board of deacons may request the pastor's dismissal or severance by a majority vote. The pulpit will be declared temporarily vacant at that time. The congregation at a special meeting would then consider pastoral dismissal or severance. Public notice of such meeting must be given from the pulpit two (2) successive Sundays prior to the meeting. The church may by a 2/3 majority vote declare the pulpit vacant. A maximum of thirty (30) days severance pay and or benefits may be paid, at the discretion of the boards.

E. The above by laws will affect all pastoral staff.

## **SECTION 2 – DEACONS**

A. The church shall elect from its membership by ballot and by a majority of votes cast, eight (8) or more deacons, dependent on church growth and the availability of qualified men. The deacon upon his election will not be ordained as such, but will serve a term of three (3) years. In case of a vacancy occurring during a term, the church shall, at a special business meeting called for that purpose, elect one of its male members to fill the unexpired term. At least one week advance notice must be given. In such a case, the board of deacons shall act as a nominating committee.

B. The deacons shall annually elect from their own number a chairman and secretary who shall perform the usual duties of such officers. Three (3) deacons present at any called meeting shall constitute a quorum. Meetings shall be held at such time and place as is deemed advisable for the best interest of the church. They shall make a report of their activities at each annual meeting of the church or when requested by the body. The board will use discretion concerning making public any information, discussions or decisions.

C. The qualifications for deacons shall be as described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The office of deacon is that of ministering and serving as is needed in the local church. (see Acts 6:1-3)

D. The deacons of Calvary Baptist Church shall also:

- 1) prepare the elements and table for the Lord's Supper and assist in serving the same;
- 2) assist the pastor in the scriptural supervision of the church;
- 3) assist the pastor, in careful examination of all candidates for church membership, recommending such as they consider eligible to the church for membership; and
- 4) assist the pastoral staff in seeking biblical restoration of wayward members (see Art. 5 Sec. 2)
- 5) maintain a register of all members of the church
- 6) announce the offices to be filled at the annual meeting.

## **SECTION 3 - TRUSTEES**

A. The church shall elect from its membership, by ballot and by a majority of votes cast, eight (8) or more trustees, dependent on church growth, chosen for a term of three (3) years. The treasurer and asst. treasurer shall be recognized as trustee members. In case of a vacancy occurring before the term has expired, a special business meeting will be

called and the church will elect one of its members to fill the unexpired term. In such case, the board of trustees shall act as a nominating committee.

**B. Duties of the Trustees:**

1) The trustees shall elect from their number a chairman and secretary. The former shall preside at their meeting and have general oversight of their work. The latter shall keep a faithful record of any important work, acts or transactions performed by the body. Meetings shall be held at the call of the chairman, pastor or any three trustees. A full report of their activities will be made to the church at each annual meeting or as requested by the church.

2) The trustees shall appoint a budget committee made up of the following: church treasurer, asst. treasurer, sr. pastor, one trustee, one deacon and one member from the congregation. Upon approval by the board of trustees the budget will be presented at the annual congregational business meeting for the church's approval.

3) It shall be the duty of the trustees to care for the property of the church. They shall oversee improvements and the business concerns of the church and will have the authority to spend up to \$1000 on any single transaction. Any transaction over \$1000 requires approval of the membership at a specially called meeting. They shall hire and supervise the janitor. The trustees are at all times servants of the church and subject to its corporate action.

4) The trustees shall have authority to sell, lease, give away, or dispose of church property up to \$1000 in value. Any transaction over \$1000 requires approval of the membership at a specially called meeting

5) The trustees and deacons shall determine for what purposes other than the religious services the church property shall be used.

**SECTION 4 - TREASURER**

At each annual meeting the church shall elect from its membership a treasurer and asst. treasurer. He or she shall receive all monies of the church and apply the same as directed by the church budget. The treasurer shall keep a true and fair record of accounts and make a full report to the church each month, or as otherwise directed by the church. The treasurer shall be recognized as a member of the trustee board.

## **SECTION 5 - CLERK**

The church shall elect from its membership at each annual meeting a clerk for the ensuing year. The official duty of the clerk will be to maintain a complete record of the proceedings of the church, as is determined in the various church business meetings.

## **SECTION 6 - SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT**

It shall be the duty of the superintendent of the Sunday School to exercise general supervision over all matters pertaining to the elementary school. He/She shall be subject to the advice of the pastor and church in matters relating to the organization, curriculum and general purpose of the church.

## **ARTICLE 8 - FINANCES**

### **SECTION 1**

The annual year shall begin on January 1 and end on the following December 31.

### **SECTION 2**

No monies shall be raised by the church or an auxiliary organization except by free-will giving and collection. At least ten (10) percent of all church offerings are to go to missions, except funds used to defray debts on church property. The church shall take an offering at every communion service for people who have special needs. Distribution of available funds will be at the discretion of the deacons.

## **ARTICLE 9 – MISSIONS**

### **SECTION 1**

It shall be the policy of this church to support primarily those missionaries whose principal emphasis is evangelism. They shall be known to be in agreement with our confession of faith, both in their doctrine and practice.

### **SECTION 2**

All missionaries and mission works to be considered for support shall be reviewed by the board of deacons, those who are recommended shall be presented to the church, and a 2/3 vote is required. All missionaries and mission works shall be reviewed annually by the

deacons. It is not necessarily the policy of this church to support all its members who may engage in missionary work.

## **ARTICLE 10 – AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS**

### **SECTION 1**

Church Sunday School: this organization shall be considered as the church studying the Bible. It shall be under the general supervision and control of the church. The Sunday School superintendent and officers shall be elected by the church at the annual meeting of the church. The superintendent shall select teachers on approval by the deacon board.

### **SECTION 2**

Other organizations: There shall be a youth organization together with other organizations as considered beneficial. These organizations shall be self governing but always accountable to the church through her elected officers.

### **SECTION 3**

All leaders of auxiliary organizations and all teachers in the Sunday School must be members of the church in good and regular standing.

## **ARTICLE 11 - COMMITTEES**

The church shall elect at its annual meeting or at such other times as it may desire, the following committees and others as deemed necessary.

The Pulpit Supply Committee: it shall be the duty of the deacons to provide preachers for Sunday services between pastorates, and to secure candidates.

Ushering and Seating Committee: ushers shall be male members of the church. It shall be the duty of the ushers to attend to the seating of the congregation and receive offerings at all services held under the direction of the church.

## **ARTICLE 12 - MEETINGS**

### **SECTION 1**

The church shall regularly meet every Lord's Day for the worship of Almighty God.

## **SECTION 2**

Once in each week it shall be the duty of members of the church to meet for prayer.

## **SECTION 3**

The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed by the church once each month as set by the deacons of the church.

## **SECTION 4**

The annual meeting shall be held on a Sunday night in December, at which time the reports for the year shall be made and the annual budget shall be approved for the following year. Officers for the following year shall be approved and installed.

## **SECTION 5**

Congregational business meetings other than the annual meeting shall be held when necessary. Meetings may be called by the pastor, deacon board chairman or the trustee chairman. These meetings are to be announced the Sunday prior to the meeting from the pulpit or in the church bulletin.

## **SECTION 6**

Fifteen (15) members shall constitute a quorum for called business meetings.

## **SECTION 7**

Order of meetings: In the conduct of business the parliamentary rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order shall govern all cases to which they apply. In exceptions, a majority vote shall establish the rule.

## **SECTION 8**

All members have the right to vote after their 14th birthday.

## **SECTION 9**

The church membership has final authority in all business matters. This includes, but is not limited to: purchasing and selling of buildings or property and major maintenance or repairs (see exception art. VII sec. 3, B-4). The church may assign one or more members to perform specific business matters on its behalf, as it deems appropriate.

## **ARTICLE 13 - AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended by a 2/3 vote of the membership present at any annual business meeting or at a called business meeting, provided that notice of proposed amendment shall have been printed in the church bulletin and notice have been given from the pulpit for two (2) Sundays prior to the meeting. The constitution shall be reviewed every four (4) years by the deacons, assisted by the pastor(s).