

Constitution and By-Laws of Faith Baptist Church Cheboygan, MI 49721

Preamble

We, the members of Faith Baptist Church of Cheboygan, Michigan, affirm the local church as established by the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we adopt this Constitution and By-Laws to guide our governance. (1 Corinthians 14:40)

Article 1 – Name

This Church shall be known as Faith Baptist Church of Cheboygan, Michigan. This church was established on January 13, 1969.

Article 2 – Purpose

The mission of Faith Baptist Church is to glorify God through:

1. Engaging in spiritual worship and fellowship.
2. Teaching and preaching the Bible.
3. Sharing faith in Christ with the lost.
4. Supporting believers in their spiritual growth.
5. Administering the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
6. By extending our ministry through prayer, gifts, and partnerships worldwide.
7. Christian education for children.

Article 3 – Member's Covenant

Having accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, I, in the presence of God and this church family, commit to:

Love and support my fellow members. Attend services regularly and uphold church teachings and practices. Contribute financially to support the church, to use my time and various abilities and skills for the church's ministry and mission. Train my children in the faith and seek the salvation of my family and friends. Engage in reconciliation when required and maintain open communication with fellow members, pastors and deacons.

Article 4 – Government

Faith Baptist Church operates independently and is governed by its members according to Scripture. The Scriptures are the final authority in all matters.

Article 5 – Statement of Faith

Section 1 **The Bible:** We teach that the Bible is inspired by God and has been produced by humans who were under the influence or direction of the Holy Spirit when they wrote the scriptures, therefore the Bible is the Word of God. We accept the 66 books of the Protestant Bible as holy Scripture. (2 Tim. 3.16-17; 2 Pet 1.19-21; Ps 119.89, 160, 105, 130; Pro 30:5-6; John 17.17; Eph 6.17)

Section 2 **The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Trinity)**

God: We teach that there is only one God. This God has always existed and is a trinity of beings who are the one God. These three are *the Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit*. Each of these persons is eternal and equal in power. All three are involved in salvation. In summary, we are trinitarians. (Gen 17.1; Ex 20.2-3; Jer. 10.10; John 4:24; 1 Cor 8.6; Eph 4.4-6; 1 Tim 1.17;)

Jesus: We teach that Jesus is fully divine and fully human. We teach that he was eternally begotten, not made or created. That he possessed two natures, human and divine. (Jn 1.1-8, 17.5; 1 Cor 2.10-12; Phil 2.5-6; Col 1.15-20; 1 Tim 3.16; Psalm 110)

Holy Spirit: We teach that the Spirit is a divine person and that he restrains the advance of evil in our world. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come. He regenerates unbelievers, empowers, and indwells believers, teaches believers, he seals believers, and leads us towards Christlike living. (Gen 1.1-3; Matt 3.11, 28.19; Jn 3.5-6, 16:4-11; Acts 5.4-5, 5.30-32; Rom 8.16, 8.26-27; 1 Cor 2.10-12; Titus 3.4-7; Gal 5.22-25; 1 Cor 12.1-11; Heb 9.14)

Section 3 **Satan/Devil:** We teach that Satan is real. He began as an angel serving God in heaven, but he rebelled against God and became unholy. He now opposes God in every way, and he opposes Christians. (Job 1; Isa 14:12-14; Eze 28.14-17; Matt 25.41; Lk 10.18; 1 Pet 5:8; 2 Pet 2.4; Rev 12.9)

Section 4 **Creation:** We teach that the origin of all things and people begins with God as it says in Genesis chapter 1 and 2. Human beings are created in the image of God and have individual personal value because of it. God created man and woman; these are permanent states that are unalterable. The male and female were created as compatible for marriage and bearing children. (Genesis 1-2; Ex 20.11; Mat 19:4; Acts 4.24, 17.23-26; Rom 1.20; Col 1.16-17; Heb 11.3)

Section 5 **The Fall of Man:** We teach that God made Adam and Eve, they were innocent and happy. God gave them a single law, and they broke that law. The consequence of that disobedience is that their nature was corrupted causing them to disobey God increasingly. This corruption has been passed on to their offspring and that is why the world is the way it is today. (Gen 3.1-6; Rom 1.18-32, 3.10-19, 5.12-14, 19; Eph 2.-3; Eze 18.19-20; Ps 58.3; Eccl 7.20)

Section 6 **The Virgin Birth:** We teach that Jesus was conceived in a supernatural manner, so Mary was pregnant without the aid or use of a man. Therefore, Jesus was born without the corruption of the sin nature that all other humans have. (Gen 3.15; Psalm 2.7; Isa 7.14, 9.6; Matt 1.23; Lk 1.31-34; Gal 4.4; Phil 2.7; Heb 4.14-5.4; 1 Jn 5.20)

Section 7 **The Atonement for Sin:** We teach that Jesus shed his blood as the atoning sacrifice for sin. It is only through Jesus that the just wrath of God is appeased. Jesus died as our substitute, in our place on the cross, and on the third day he rose bodily from the dead. After forty days, he ascended to his throne in heaven where he is the only mediator between God and man. (Isa 53; John 3.16; Rom 3.25; Gal 1.4; 1 Cor 15.47; 2 Cor 5.18-21; Heb 2.14, 9.12-15; 1 Pet 2.24, 3.18; 1 Jn 2.2, 4.10; Luke 24:50-53; 1 Tim 2:5)

Section 8 **Who can be saved:** We teach that the only thing preventing a person from putting their faith in Jesus Christ is their own sinfulness, their love of sinfulness, and their rejection of the gospel. (Isa 55.7; Jn 3.17-21, 5.40; Eph 2.1-3; Romans 1.16, 10.13, 8.28-33; 1 Tim 1.15)

Section 9 **Being Born Again:** We teach that being saved requires being born again by the power of the Holy Spirit, the new birth results in a change of mind (repentance) about sin and God; it causes us to believe in Jesus as our Savior. (Isa 55.6-7; Jn 3.1-8; Titus 3.5-6; Mark 1.15; Acts 2.27-38, 20.21; Lk 18.13-14; Rom 9.11)

Section 10 **Justification:** We teach that by placing one's faith in Jesus, a person is declared by God to be just. This means that all traces of a person's sinfulness are permanently erased from their record. (Isa 53.11; Acts 13.39; Rom 3.28, 4.1-8; 5.1, 5.9, 8.1, 8.33; Gal 3.11; Eph 2.8-9; Titus 3.5-7;)

Section 11 **Sanctification:** We teach that people who are born again begin a new life of being indwelt or filled with the Holy Spirit. This new life we live is a transformative journey in which we are transformed by the Holy Spirit into people increasingly like Jesus our Lord. This transformation will always be in process until we are finally in heaven. (John 17.17; 1 Cor 1.30; Gal 5.22-24; Rom 8.29; 1 Thess 5.23; Heb 10.10; James 1.1-6; 1 Peter 1.2)

Section 12 **The Church:** We teach that Jesus Christ is the head of the universal church (the body of Christ), and this church is composed of all people who have been born again. We also teach that a visible or local church is composed of people who have been born again, baptized by immersion, and have voluntarily united in fellowship with other people who have been born again and baptized. We further teach that no external power has control over a local/visible church. (Acts 2.41-42, 6.5-6, 14.23, 20.17-28; 1 Cor 16.1; Eph 1.22-23, 5.23; Col 1.18; 1 Pet 2.; Matt 28:18-20; Rom 6.1-4; and Paul's letters written to identifiable local churches)

We also teach that the local church has three positions:

- 1) Pastors, men who have been called by God and recognized by the church as fit to hold the office.[1] (1 Tim 3; Titus 1; Acts 14.23, 20.17-35)
- 2) Deacons, men who have been chosen by the church to serve the church's needs, and to assist the pastors in their work. (Acts 6; 1 Tim 3)
- 3) Members, whose duty it is to protect the church from error, to elect new members, to select church officers, and to exercise discipline and restoration when required. (Acts 1; 1 Cor 1.2-3, 1 Cor 5; 2 Cor 7)

Section 13 **Baptism and Communion:** We teach that Jesus left the church two ordinances or sacraments:

1- Baptism, is the rite by which a person identifies with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus by being immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matt 3.6, 28:18-20; John 3.23; Acts 2.41-42, 8.36-39; Col 2.12; Rom 6.1-4; Gal 3.27; Acts 2.38-40)

2- Communion, which is a memorial meal where we eat and drink together as brothers and sisters in Christ to remember the death of Jesus. (Acts 2:41-42; 1 Cor 11:23-28)

Section 14 **Security of the Believer:** We teach that people who have been born again are saved forever and cannot lose their salvation. We teach that while a believer still sins and can make a mess of his or her life by sinning, that nevertheless a true believer persists in their attachment to and love for Jesus. (Psalm 121:3; Matt 13.19-20; Jn 3.16, 5.24, 3.36, 6.37, 8.31-32, 10:28-29, 12.25; Rom 8.33-39; Phil 1.6; 1 Pet 1.5; 1 John 2.19, 5.13)

Section 15 **The Eternal State:** We teach that for all born again people when they die their souls will go to heaven. We teach that the born again will be resurrected and receive glorious bodies in which they will enjoy the eternal state. We also teach that for all people who have not been born again will go to hell. After the millennial reign of Christ, they will be resurrected to face the final judgement, after which they will be cast into the lake of fire. (Gen 18.23; Pro 11.31; Malachi 3.18; Luke 23.38-43; John 5.28-29; Rom 6.17-18; 1 Thess 4.14-18; 1 Cor 15; 1 Pet 4.18; Rev 20-21)

Section 16 **Civil Government:** We teach that the secular governments, good and bad, are set up by God. We believe they should be prayed for, obeyed and respected, but if the authorities tell us to disobey God, we have the duty to obey God and disobey the government. The local, state or federal government has no authority over the local church's worship, discipline, or teaching. (Act 4.1-22; Romans 13.1-7; 1 Timothy 2.1-2)

Section 17 **The Second Coming of Jesus:** We teach the premillennial resurrection of the saved and return of Jesus Christ. (Rev 19-20)

Section 18 **Human Sexuality and Marriage:** We teach that sex outside of marriage is sinful. This includes adultery, bisexuality, orgies, pornography, incest, and all forms of same sex relations. We teach that transgenderism is rebellion against God's created order. We teach that marriage is a special and exclusive relationship between a biological male and female, and that same sex marriage is unbiblical. (Ex 20.14, Lev 18, Prov 5; Matt 19.1-10; Romans 1.18-32; Eph 5.3; 1 Cor 6.12-20; 1 Tim 1.10)

Section 19 **Abortion:** We teach that human life begins at conception and abortion is a sin. There should never be a time to take the life of an unborn fetus, however, there are rare exceptions in the case of saving the mother's life. (Prov 6:16-19; Ex 20:13)

Section 20 **Charismatic Gifts:** We teach that the sign gifts of speaking in tongues, on demand miracles, and revelatory prophecies equal to scripture ceased during the apostolic age or with the death of the last apostle John the Beloved. (1 Cor 13-14)

Article 6 – Membership

Section 1 – Qualifications for prospective members

To become a member, individuals must:

- A. Have personal faith in Jesus Christ.
- B. Have evidence of regeneration and assurance of salvation.
- C. Have been baptized by immersion after conversion.
- D. Accept the church's teaching and practices.
- E. Have the desire to lead a consistent Christian life.
- F. Be at least 18 years of age

Section 2 – Reception of Members

- A. Persons interested in Membership must attend a Membership Class. (These are held as needed throughout the year.)
- B. Be interviewed and recommended by the pastor and deacons to the church. A membership application created by the pastors and deacons shall be used in this process.
- C. Candidates are voted into membership by a majority of the active members present in a meeting called for the purpose of voting on members.

Section 3 – Other methods of Membership

Membership can be obtained through the following, provided the steps of section 2 have been fulfilled.

- 1. Transfer from another church of like faith. The procedures of section 2 must be fulfilled.
- 2. Restoration^[2] by a majority vote of members after recommendation from the pastor and deacons. Persons who are restored are exempt from attending the membership class.^[3]

Section 4 - Privileges of Membership

- 1. Members have the right to vote in church meetings where a vote is required.
- 2. Members may hold elected offices in the church.
- 3. Members are entrusted with protecting the purity of the teaching of this church.
- 4. Members participate in the discipline and restoration of fellow members.
- 5. Only members of the church may teach classes etc.

Section 5 – Termination of Membership

Membership ends through the following:

- 1. Upon a person's death.
- 2. Written transfer request to another church.
- 3. Voluntary request: A voluntary request for removal from the membership list may be made to a pastor or a deacon via a letter, an email, a text message, or a phone call. The member's request shall be announced to the church at the next convenient business meeting. After this announcement, their names will be removed.
- 4. Non-attendance: Failure to attend church services can result in being dropped from the membership list. The pastor and/or deacons may recommend removing a member from the list to the church for non-attendance.
- 5. Via the Disciplinary Process: The steps of Matthew 18:15-20 shall be followed. Sins that will bring a person under discipline are found in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13. Failure to abide by the Church Covenant and/or the statement of faith are also cause for disciplinary action.

The discipline process shall be:

- 1) Meeting with the pastors and deacons.
- 2) If this meeting does not produce a remedy, then this matter shall be heard by the members of the church. The church shall vote on this matter, and their decision shall be accepted by all parties involved.

3) Unrepentant church members, upon a vote of the church, shall be removed from all offices they hold, and their membership in the church will be terminated.

Section 6 – Maintenance of the Membership List

Each year in October the pastor and deacons shall review the membership list to be sure it is accurate. They shall note people who are cause for concern because of non-attendance. If there are people who (after investigation) should be dropped from the members' list, or who have been left off through a clerical error. If so, the deacons shall give this report and recommendation to the church at a business meeting.

Article 7 – Policies

Section 1 – Financial

1. The church is primarily funded through free will gifts.
2. All designations for funds received are *suggestions* and are *non-binding* on the church. Normally designations will be honored unless necessity demands otherwise.
3. Restricted use donations shall only be received at the approval of the pastor and deacons.
4. The church may establish accounts necessary for the financial business of the church: Checking Accounts, Savings Accounts, and Certificates of Deposit. At no time shall a fund or account be established that puts the church's financial position at risk.
5. The pastor and deacons shall lead the church to establish a budget for each calendar year and shall reasonably abide by it. The Deacons may spend up to \$8,000 dollars without church approval for repairs on church facilities for each occurrence.
6. Only by a majority vote of the membership shall the church buy and sell real property. A majority vote is also required to secure loans and mortgages; in such cases the deacons shall be the trustees of those obligations.
7. The signers/owners of all financial accounts shall be the treasurer and as many deacons as prudent.
8. Only the pastor, deacons, treasurer, or their mutually agreed upon designee shall have access to the financial accounts and records of the church.

Section 2 – Missions

1. The church shall financially support foreign and home missions to glorify God, promote the salvation of the lost, and encourage discipleship.
2. All mission projects will be recommended to the church by the pastor and deacons for approval by the church via a majority vote.

Section 3 – Association

1. This church may affiliate with churches of like faith and practice by majority vote.
2. This church is currently in association with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches on a state level through *The Bridge Fellowship* (aka Michigan Association of Regular Baptist Churches).

Section 4 - Funerals, Weddings, Social functions

1. All requests to use the church facilities shall be approved by the pastor and deacons. Members of the church have priority in the request procedure.

2. All events must adhere to church standards regarding conduct. The consumption of alcohol on church property is not permitted.
3. The pastor[4] has the privilege of performing or declining the solemnization of marriages at his discretion. The pastor may not solemnize a marriage that is not in conformity with (see Article 5; Section 18) of the statement of faith. A pastor who violates this is subject to censure by the church and the potential termination of his ministry.

Article 8 – Meetings of the Church

1. Regular church services occur each Sunday; the pastor and deacons may schedule other services as needed.
2. Required Business Meetings:
 - 1) There shall be three required meetings each year on the convenient Sundays of January, April, and October.
 - 2) The election of officers and approving the budget shall take place at the October meeting.
 - 3) There shall be a review of the prior year's activities and finances at the January meeting.

3. The agenda for all meetings shall be presented to the church on two Sundays prior to the meeting. Agendas for all business meetings will be determined by the pastor and the deacons and will be made available to the membership at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Any member may make suggestions to the Deacons for topics to be added to the agenda before the agenda is made available. At the meeting each item on the agenda will be explained, discussed, and questions answered and then there will be a vote if the by-laws call for it, or at the discretion of the pastor and deacons.

For orderly business the general principles of *Roberts Rules of Order* will be followed.

4. During a business meeting when a vote is required, the method of voting shall be determined by the chair of the meeting, unless specified by other sections of this document. (Article 9, Section 3, B.)

For secret ballots the church clerk shall certify the vote by giving one ballot to each person present on the membership list; there shall be no absentee ballots. A member may not give their proxy to vote for another member to vote on their behalf. The deacons shall collect the ballots, count them, and report the results to the chairman of the meeting.

5. A meeting to receive members may be called at any Sunday of the year, providing that two weeks' notice is given.
6. The quorum for a meeting shall consist of 25% of the members on the list of members.
7. Emergency meetings may be called on any Sunday, providing the following procedure is followed:
 - 1) The pastor may call for one, majority of the deacons may call for one, or 40% of the congregation may ask for one in writing, presented to the board of deacons. The need for an emergency meeting will be stated.
 - 2) A voice vote from the church is called for; and if there is a majority approval, the meeting will be convened.

- 3) Only the announced reason for the meeting shall be considered.

Article 9 – Pastor

Section 1 – Qualifications

The pastor must meet the biblical qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

Section 2 – Responsibilities

The pastor's duties include preaching, ensuring compliance with the by-laws, guiding the church towards spiritual maturity, overseeing church operations, and providing reports at the annual meeting. The pastor shall be the chairman of the board of deacons. The pastor is an *ex-officio* member of all committees and boards, and if he chooses, may assume the chairmanship of all such committees and boards. The pastor shall have direct oversight of the music ministry of the church.

Section 3 – Calling a pastor.

- A. The board of deacons shall normally act as the search committee for calling a pastor. At their discretion, they may appoint a committee to assist them in procuring candidates for the office. The candidate recommended to the church must have unanimous approval from the board of deacons to be recommended to the church for a vote. The church shall only know of or vote for one candidate at a time.
- B. Voting to call a pastor shall be by secret ballot. Ballots shall only be given to members[5]. A quorum of 50% of the members and a 75% majority of ballots cast are required to call a pastor.
- C. The church shall have an installation service soon after his assumption of the pastoral office.
- D. When the candidate accepts the call to the pastorate, he and his wife (if he has one) shall automatically become members of the church when he is installed as pastor.

Section 3 - Pastor's Compensation

The pastor's initial salary package shall be negotiated between him and the deacons before his assumption of the pastoral office. These agreements shall be recorded and kept on file. Normal compensation elements (if possible) shall be salary, vacation time, retirement, housing allowance, and medical coverage. The deacons shall review his salary and needs each year.

Section 4 - Dismissal of a pastor

- A. When an issue comes up that causes this action to be considered, Matthew 18 shall be followed. Following that process, a pastor may be dismissed by a 75% majority vote of the members in a meeting called for that purpose. The procedure is that two weeks' notice shall be given, and only members may attend.
- B. Because of the seriousness of this vote, a quorum of 50% of the members on the list is required, and a vote of 75% is needed to dismiss.

Section 5: Resignation or retirement of the Pastor

- A. A letter is sent to the deacons. The deacons shall convene to consider the matter and then vote to accept his resignation.

B. A public announcement will be made.

C. Termination will occur within 30 days or as agreed upon by mutual consent of the pastor and deacons.

D. Unused vacation time and pay owed will be paid.

E. Upon acceptance of the pastor's resignation, the deacons shall meet to take steps to seek out a new pastor. The outgoing pastor may only assist in this process at the request of the deacons.

Article 10 – Deacons

Section 1 - Deacons must meet the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3.

- A. Deacons are elected to assist the pastor and fulfill specific duties related to church governance, administration, and spiritual care.
- B. Deacons shall serve three-year terms and may not be re-elected until he has been out of office for one year.
- C. Deacons shall be elected by a majority vote of the church members. The deacons shall also be the trustees of the church.
- D. The deacons shall also be the church's finance committee; they have the oversight of the finances of the church, and they oversee the treasurer. They will prepare the annual budget for submission to the church at the annual meeting.

Section 2 - Deacons may resign at any time. The pastor and deacons may choose to recommend a replacement to the church at the next business meeting, at a special meeting, or they may wait until the September meeting.

Section 3 - Deacons may be asked to resign from the board by their fellow deacons if their behavior contradicts the spirit of the office, the church covenant, or the statement of faith. The steps of Matthew 18 shall be followed.

Section 4 - The deacons shall appoint one of their numbers to the following duties:

- 1. Vice Chairman of the diaconate, when the pastoral office is vacant, or the pastor is absent, he shall take charge of the meetings of the deacons and shall moderate the services of the church.
- 2. Clerk of the diaconate, he shall keep minutes of the meeting of the board and shall present them at the next meeting of the board. He shall be the custodian of those minutes for his time as the clerk and when his term is over, he shall turn over the record of minutes to his successor. The minutes of the board are confidential.
- 3. The Collector, one of the deacons, shall be collector of the weekly offerings; he shall record the offering totals, and make the deposit. He will ensure there are two members counting the offerings, one of which may be himself. He shall inform the treasurer of the deposit amounts. He or his designee shall keep a record of individual financial contributions.
- 4. In January of each year, the board shall assign areas of responsibility to each deacon for their management and oversight.

Section 5 - The deacons shall serve as the nominating committee for the election of officers at the September meeting.

Nomination and Process

A. The pastor and deacons will make up the nominating committee.

B. The nominating procedure:

1. Names may be submitted by members to the nominating committee for consideration in writing. Submitting a name for consideration does not guarantee it will appear on the ballot.

2. The nominating committee shall review the membership list, recommending those qualified.

3. Nominees must be notified.

4. After selecting names (two when possible) then a written slate is submitted to the congregation. This will be included in the agenda for the annual meeting.

Article 11 – Treasurer

Section 1 – Election

The Church Treasurer shall be elected annually.

Section 2 – Duties and Authority

A. The Treasurer shall ensure that church bills are paid, accounts are reconciled and balanced, and that all income and spending is accurately tracked and documented.

B. If the Board of Deacons find it necessary, they may engage an accounting firm for the bookkeeping and bill paying, etc. At that point the Treasurer shall serve as the church's liaison to an engaged certified public accountant (CPA) or professional bookkeeping firm, reviewing the CPA's work, asking for explanations as needed, and reporting financial status to the pastor and deacons.

C. All financial records are the property of the church and shall be retained and turned over to the Treasurer's successor when the office terminates.

Article 12 – Church Clerk

A. The church clerk is elected annually to maintain records and minutes of meetings and manage the membership list adding and removing names at the church's direction.

B. When the congregation votes by secret ballot, the clerk shall certify the vote by giving ballots to people on the membership list.

C. The church clerk is the custodian of the churches records and may store them digitally, and they shall also secure hard copies at the church.

Article 13 - Committees

Committees are appointed by the pastor and deacons annually for specific tasks and report to the pastor and deacons. Any committee may be dissolved at the discretion of the pastor and deacons.

Article 14 – Ordination to the Gospel Ministry

The church shall ordain men who feel called to the gospel ministry, following serious evaluation and congregation approval. The procedures and services for ordination shall be directed by the pastor and deacons.

Article 15 – By-Law Amendments

The by-laws shall not be suspended at any time. By-laws may be amended during regular meetings with prior written notice of at least two weeks.

Article 16 – Division and Dissolution

In the event of a church division, the property and assets of the church will remain with the faithful group that upholds this Constitution.

In the event of dissolution, permanent closure, or disbanding of the church; all assets shall be liquidated, and the funds distributed in equal parts to the missionaries the church supports at that time.

[1] Pastoral duties are enumerated in Article 9

[2] This refers to members who have been removed from the membership lists for any of the things listed in Article 6, Section 5, D, E, F.

[3] Persons who are restored are exempt from attending the membership class.

[4] Christian ministers are empowered by the state to solemnize marriages based on their ordination credentials and not because of their connection to a local church. A pastor's ordination credentials do not *normally* come from the church of which he is the pastor. So, if a pastor performs a marriage that is in violation of the church's statement of faith and position of which he is a member and pastor of, he is liable to discipline.

[5] See Article 8,D