

THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE FRIENDSHIP BIBLE CHURCH RANDOLPH, OHIO

The Constitution

Article I: Name and Purpose

Section A: Name

The name of this congregation of believers is the FRIENDSHIP BIBLE CHURCH.

Section B: Purpose

It shall be the purpose of this congregation to glorify God and to obey His commands and admonitions as found in the Bible, God's Word. Means of accomplishing this purpose include, but are not limited to:

- Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ in order to bring about the acceptance of Christ as personal Savior and Lord. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38-39)
- Providing regular opportunities for prayer, praise, and worship. (Acts 2:42; Psalm 100:1,4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Colossians 3:16-17; James 5:13-16)
- Encouraging Christians to grow in their faith and in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ, through public and private teaching of the Bible, the Word of God. (John 14:6-7; 2 Peter 1:5-8; 2 Peter 3:18)
- Reaching out to the community and world through acts of compassion and mercy, and through prayer, material, and financial support of worldwide missions. (Matthew 25:40; Galatians 6:2; James 1:22; James 2:17; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)
- Working cooperatively with other churches of like faith in furthering the gospel. (Ephesians 4:2-6)

Article II: Statement of Faith

WE BELIEVE there is one and only one living and true God, and that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Exodus 20:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Titus 2:13).

WE BELIEVE in the inspiration, inerrancy, authority, and sufficiency of the Scriptures, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments (2 Timothy 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).

WE BELIEVE the Biblical account of the creation of the universe through the direct and immediate creative acts of God (Genesis 1-2).

WE BELIEVE in the unique creation of man in the image and likeness of God and that physical life is His sovereign gift. The deliberate killing of the unborn, the sick, disabled or elderly is wrong and an abomination before Him (Genesis 1:27; 9:6; 30:1,2; Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 27:25; Job 1:21).

WE BELIEVE that all men are sinners by nature and in conduct, and cannot save themselves (Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 3:10-19 and 5:12).

WE BELIEVE in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ and that He is both fully God and fully man (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Philippians 2:5-11).

WE BELIEVE in the substitutionary death of Christ and in His literal, bodily resurrection from the dead (Romans 5:19; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 15:3-5).

WE BELIEVE in salvation by grace alone, through faith in the finished, redemptive work of Christ alone, and that no works of man, however good, need to be or can be added for salvation, evidence of salvation appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and newness of life (Romans 3:23-25; Ephesians 2:8,9; John 3:16,17; Hebrews 10:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 5:22-23; 1 John 5:1).

WE BELIEVE in the eternal salvation of all who put their faith in Christ; that all who are truly born again are kept secure by God the Father (Philippians 1:6; John 3:3-8; 10:28, 29; Romans 8:35-39; Jude 1).

WE BELIEVE in the primacy of the Church as an ordained institution of God with Christ as its Head. We recognize the authority of the local church and subscribe to the ordinances of baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper for all those who profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Matthew 16:18, 19; Ephesians 2:20; Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32).

WE BELIEVE in the reality and personality of the Devil or Satan, the enemy of God and man, and that he is destined for eternal judgment in the Lake of Fire (Matthew 4:1-11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10).

WE BELIEVE in the bodily resurrection, immortality and rapture of all believers at Christ's imminent coming and that His coming is both pre-tribulational and pre-millennial (Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:42-52; Revelation 3:10; 22:20).

WE BELIEVE in the existence of a literal heaven and a literal hell and that all men spend eternity in one of the two places (Luke 16:25; Revelation 20:14,15).

WE BELIEVE that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Genesis 2:24, Genesis 19:5, Genesis 26:8-9, Leviticus 18:1-30, Romans 1:26-29, Romans 7:2, 1 Corinthians 5:1, 6:9, 7:10, Ephesians 5:22-23, 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8, Hebrews 13:4)

WE BELIEVE that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. (1 Corinthians 6:1-8, Ephesians 4:31-32)

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all members. All literature used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith.

Article III: Church Covenant

"Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to Him; and upon our profession of faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying upon His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other, as one body in Christ.

We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church; exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.

We will endeavor to bring up such as may at any time be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

We will rejoice at each other's happiness, and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.

We will seek, by divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.

We will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Amen."

Article IV: Membership

Section A – Qualifications of Membership

The membership of this church will consist of:

- Those who unite with it by confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, giving expression to their faith through baptism by immersion.
- Those who unite by transfer of membership from another Bible-believing church of like faith, having been baptized by immersion.
- Those who unite by public statement of Christian experience, having previously confessed Christ, and experienced baptism by immersion.
- Those who, having been previously removed from membership, are restored to membership.

Prospective members:

- May (at the discretion of the pastor and elders) be required to complete a new members training class.
- Must be approved by a majority vote (51%) of church members present when the vote is taken.

Section B – Privileges and Limitations of Membership

- Only members at least eighteen years of age who are physically present at a duly called meeting of the church shall be entitled to vote. There shall be no proxy or absentee voting.
- This congregation functions not as a pure democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the pastor and elders. Determinations of the internal affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The pastor and elders shall oversee and / or conduct all aspects of this church.
- Membership in this church does not afford the members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. The pastor and elders have the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a member, to enter or remain on church property.

Section C – Termination of Membership

The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the member in question has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding six months. Upon good cause being shown to the pastor and elders, this provision for termination may be waived in the case of any individual member at the discretion of the pastor and elders.

The membership of any individual member may also be terminated in any of the following ways:

1. Death
2. Letter granted to another church upon request
3. Member's written request to withdraw membership
4. Evidence is produced that a member has established membership in another church
5. Disciplinary exclusion because of sin.

Section D – Discipline of Members

Members of Friendship Bible Church who shall err in doctrine or conduct shall be dealt with according to Matthew 18:15-35, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, and Galatians 6:1-5. The goal of this discipline is loving restoration. It is the purpose and practice of this church to take every reasonable measure to minister to and counsel with any troubled member in the Biblically prescribed manner. However, if it should be evident that the member is unwilling to repent, and has become a liability to the general welfare of the church, the member may be removed from church membership by the pastor and elders, with notification being made to the congregation.

Members dismissed by the pastor and elders shall be restored by the pastor and elders according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:6-8, upon convincing evidence of repentance.

Article V: Management

Section A: Church Officers

The church officers are pastor, elders, deacons, deaconesses, treasurer, and secretary.

Section B: Corporate Officers

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, the pastor shall serve as president of the corporation; the secretary shall serve as secretary of the corporation; the treasurer shall serve as treasurer of the corporation and the deacons shall serve as trustees of the corporation.

Section C: Qualifications of Officers

- The church shall not install or retain an officer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith (as set forth in Article 2).
- All officers, with God as their helper, must make every effort toward:
 - Regular attendance at church services and meetings.
 - Regular contributions to the financial support of the church to the best of one's ability.
 - Conduct of one's life in a manner consistent with the teachings and example of Christ.
 - Willingness to strive toward continued personal growth in the Christian faith.
- Only church members are eligible for appointment to any church office.

Section D: Duties of Officers

Pastor

Shall be male, and shall meet the Biblical qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

Shall serve as president of the corporation and chairman of the elders.

Shall preach the gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God as the Lord leads him. He shall administer the ordinances of the church, act as moderator at all church meetings, supervise the teaching ministries of the church, and tenderly watch over the spiritual interests of the membership.

The term of the pastor's ministry will be for an indefinite period and may be terminated by either party upon 30 days' notice. Election of the pastor will be by ballot, and will require two-thirds (67%) affirmative vote of members present. Dismissal of the pastor will require a three-fourths (75%) affirmative vote of members present. In the event of dismissal, the church shall provide a 30 day severance period. In the event of voluntary resignation, the pastor shall provide 30 days written notice prior to vacating the pulpit.

Elders

Shall be male, and shall meet the Biblical qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

Shall have responsibility of overseeing the entire operation of Friendship Bible Church. (If the number of active elders should decrease to less than two (2), all affairs of the Friendship Bible Church shall be administered by a Leadership Team comprised of the remaining active elder (if an active elder remains), deacons, and the pastor. This Leadership Team shall be overseen by the pastor, and shall remain in effect until such a time as the team determines that additional elders shall be chosen. Throughout this constitution, any reference to the elders shall also refer to this leadership team, if it is in effect.)

Shall encourage a deepening of the spiritual life within the congregation.

Subject to the approval of the church membership, the pastor and elders shall have sole responsibility to

hire, supervise, and/or dismiss church staff, whether paid or volunteer.

Shall function as a nominating committee in the event the pulpit is vacant, shall seek and approve candidates for pastor, and shall bring these candidates before the congregation for election.

Deacons and Deaconesses

Shall assist the pastor and elders as needed, following the example in Acts 6:1-4.

Shall meet the Biblical qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Secretary / Clerk

Shall be appointed by the pastor and elders.

Shall take minutes at congregational meetings, and ensure all meeting minutes are filed and available when needed.

Shall maintain the church membership records.

Treasurer of the Church

Shall be appointed by the pastor and elders.

Shall maintain the church financial records.

Shall ensure that all bills are paid on time, and all church receipts are deposited and accounted for.

Shall make a financial report at congregational meetings if so requested.

Article VI: Amendments

Amendments to this constitution may be made at the annual congregational meeting, or at a specially called congregational meeting. Amendments must be approved by a two-thirds (67%) affirmative vote of the membership present at that meeting.

THE BYLAWS

1. The church year will begin on January 1 and end on December 31.
2. An annual congregational meeting will be held during the last month of the church year. Additional congregational meetings will be held as deemed necessary by the pastor and elders.
3. Nominations for the offices of elder, deacon, and deaconess shall be requested from the members of the congregation prior to the annual congregational meeting each year. Individuals nominated shall be reviewed by the pastor and elders and if approved, their names shall be placed on the ballot. All nominees whose names appear on the ballot, and who receive a majority (51%) affirmative vote at the annual congregational meeting, will be elected.
4. The manner of voting will be by raising of hands. Secret ballot may be used, if approved by the pastor and elders. There will be no proxy or absentee voting.
5. The term of service for all offices and positions in the church, except the pastor, shall be one year, at the expiration of which the officers may be re-elected or reappointed. The pastor and elders may appoint qualified individuals to fill unexpired vacancies. These appointments shall be effective until the next annual meeting.
6. Dual controls are to be used on all bank accounts. The treasurer and at least one other elder or deacon must be registered signers with the bank.
7. All offerings are to be counted and recorded under dual control by two church officers.
8. Financial statements and records of Friendship Bible Church shall be audited every other year by an outside agency.
9. For nonmembers to use the church building, there will be a \$100 fee, \$25 of which will be returned if the church building is left in a clean and neat condition. Nonmembers requesting to use the church building

may be asked to sign a written agreement.

10. Any unanswered questions shall be addressed by the pastor and elders.
11. Amendments to these bylaws may be made at the annual congregational meeting, or at a specially called congregational meeting. Amendments must be approved by a majority (51%) affirmative vote of the membership present at that meeting.