

CONSTITUTION OF THE GOSPEL BAPTIST CHURCH  
103 North Old Fork Shoals Rd. Greenville, SC 29605  
*Amended & Voted Unanimously Into Effect on September 16, 2018.*

PREAMBLE

Confessing our faith in the LORD Jesus Christ as personal Savior and holding the Holy Bible in its entirety as the inspired, inerrant Word of God--the only rule and final authority in matters of faith and Christian practice--this group of baptized believers does bind itself together, adopting this Constitution and articles of faith in order to establish and direct the labor and service for the LORD at The Gospel Baptist Church.

ARTICLE I - LEGAL STRUCTURE

*Amended in 2018*

The name of this church shall be The Gospel Baptist Church, or in short, Gospel Baptist Church. It is located in Greenville, South Carolina, a corporation for non-profit according to the laws of the State of South Carolina.

The corporation is the legal entity that exists for the purpose of carrying on the legal business affairs of Gospel Baptist Church and such other integrated facilities, institutions, and affiliates as from time to time may be established under the control of the corporation, upon the approval of the membership of the church as a congregation.

The corporation owns, or leases, and operates all of the properties, facilities, buildings, equipment, materials, vehicles, and supplies of Gospel Baptist Church, and such other integrated institutions or affiliates as may be authorized by the membership of the church as a congregation.

The corporation is legally responsible for the bonded indebtedness, debts, promissory notes, mortgages, deeds of trust, purchase money security interests, liens, and other evidences of indebtedness held by creditors of any of its integrated organizations.

The corporation has the power and authority to acquire properties, exchange properties, or dispose of properties and to enter into and to consummate contracts, execute conveyances, and make delivery of properties of every kind and character, whether real, personal, or mixed, on behalf of any or all of its integrated church, church related educational institutions, or affiliates when so authorized by the membership of the church as a congregation.

The corporation has the power and authority to sue or be sued on behalf of its integrated church, church related educational institutions, or affiliates, and to compromise and to settle dispute claims, to enter into and consummate contracts, or agreements for the employment of officers, agents, and employees of any and all of its integrated church, church related educational institutions or affiliates, and to carry out such other activities as seen prudent and wise for the perpetuation of the ongoing purposes of the corporation and its integrated units.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of GBC is that this congregation shall be joined as an independent, fundamental Baptist Church, standing preeminently for the conversion of souls, the edification of believers, world-wide evangelism, and living in expectation of our Lord's return.

The membership of GBC as a congregation is to glorify God by conducting a Baptist church in accordance with the Word of God, the Articles of Faith, the Covenant, and the Constitution of this local church, promoting the worship of our God, edifying believers, preaching and teaching the whole counsel of God, administering the ordinances and Biblical discipline, seeking to win the lost to Christ through personal witnessing and the preaching of the Gospel, carrying on a vigorous missionary program around the world, establishing a good testimony for Christ in our community by Godliness and good works.

GBC shall have the authority to establish, operate, and maintain any facet of the Christian ministry: public worship services, Sunday schools, Christian day schools, missionary projects, benevolent works, public media ministries, literature ministries, youth works, Christian camping, etc., which are useful for the successful fulfillment of its purpose.

### ARTICLE III - ARTICLES OF FAITH

*Amended in 2018*

GBC shall be biblical in its theology, fundamental in its practice and premillennial in its hope. The following statement of faith shall be its doctrinal basis.

#### **Section 1. The Holy Scriptures**

We affirm that the Bible is inspired by God, its author (II Tim. 3:16; I Cor. 2:13; Gal. 1:11-12) through plenary verbal inspiration, meaning every word is God-breathed (II Pet. 1:16-21). It is inerrant and complete (I Cor. 2:13; Matt. 4:4; Prov. 30:5; II Tim. 3:16). The LORD has preserved His Word; It is eternal (Psalm 119:89,152; I Pet. 1:25). It is not the product of partial preservation, meaning some was preserved, but some was lost. Nor is it the product of thought preservation, meaning God gave men the concept and they expounded. It is absolutely and totally of divine origin. Scripture will endure forever (Matt. 5:18; Isa. 40:8).

#### **Section 2. The Authorized King James Version**

We affirm the use of the King James Version of the Holy Scriptures because of its historical place as the only truly conservative and accurate English translation. This is due to its translation from the Received Text or Textus Receptus, and because of the historical fact that no group of more sanctified and qualified scholars has ever since been assembled. We believe the Holy Spirit orchestrated and supernaturally guided and directed the events surrounding the translation. We believe it is God's chosen translation for the English-speaking people. It does not merely contain the Word of God; It is the Word of God. We reject and oppose the translations taken from the Alexandrian or Critical Text because of inferior, counterfeit manuscripts and apostate textual critics such as Westcott and Hort. The work of those men is unreliable because of their heretical beliefs, including but not limited to their denials of the infallibility of Scripture, the denial of Christ's deity, the virgin birth and the literal interpretation of Genesis chapters 1-3.

#### **Section 3. The Creation of The Universe**

We affirm that God is the Triune Creator (Gen. 1:1). He created in six, literal, twenty-four-hour days (Gen. 1-2). The Trinity cooperated in Creation; we see the Father (Gen. 1:1), the Son (Jn. 1:1,3; Col. 1:16) and the Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:2). We reject any theory of Evolution and hold to the Young Earth position.

#### **Section 4. God The Father**

We affirm His eternal existence (Gen. 1:1; Psalm 14:1; James 2:19; Psalm 90:2), His infinity (I Kings 8:27; Psalm 139:7-12; 147:5; Isa. 55:8-9; Jer. 23:24), His immutability (Psalm 102:24-27; James 1:17; Mal. 3:6), His omniscience (Psalm 139:2; Isa. 46:10; Rom. 11:33-36), His omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10), His omnipotence (Gen. 17:1; Rev. 4:8; Job 42:1-2; Jer. 32:17), His holiness (Ex. 15:11; Psalm 22:3; Rev. 15:4), His justice (Gen. 18:25; Micah 6:8), His righteousness (Gen. 18:25; Neh. 9:7-8), His love (Jn. 3:16; I Jn. 4:7-19), His mercy (Rom. 5:8; Micah 6:8), His grace (Eph. 1:6-7; 2:7), His goodness (Psalm 145:9; Matt. 5:45), His truth (Num. 23:19; I Kings 8:56; Jn. 17:17) and His sovereignty. He is in control of all things (Matt. 5:45; Jn. 1:17; Job 12:10, 23), but His sovereignty is permissive of sin (James 1:13-15; Rom. 1:21, 24) and man's free will (Matt. 23:37; II Pet. 3:9).

## **Section 5. God The Son**

We affirm the existence of Jesus Christ—both His deity (Matt. 16:16; Luke 22:70-71; Jn. 1:1-3) and His humanity (Heb. 4:15; Matt. 4:2; Jn. 19:28; Matt. 8:24; Jn. 4:6). He was and is completely God and completely man. We affirm His part in Creation (Col. 1:16), His virgin birth (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35), His sinless life (Heb. 4:15), His death on the cross for the sins of mankind (Jn. 3:16)—in which He was forsaken by God (Psalm 22:1) and took on the sins of mankind (Heb. 2:9; I Pet. 2:24) and His bodily resurrection from the tomb (I Cor. 15:20, 54; Matt. 16:21). We affirm His offices of Prophet (Luke 24:19), Priest (Heb. 4:14) and King (Rev. 19:16).

## **Section 6. God The Holy Spirit**

We affirm the existence of the Holy Spirit, who functions as our comforter (Jn. 14:26; Jn. 15:26), guide (Jn. 16:13) and intercessor (Rom. 8:26-27). His work was manifested in creation (Gen. 1:2; 26; Psalm 104:30; Job 33:4), inspiration of the Scriptures (II Pet. 1:21) and the empowerment of individuals (Ex. 31:2-3; Judg. 6:34; Judg. 13:25; I Sam. 16:13). He indwells believers at the moment of salvation (I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:30; I Cor. 3:16; I Cor. 6:19) for our sanctification (Eph. 5:18).

## **Section 7. The Trinity**

We affirm that the doctrine of the Trinity is taught in the Old and New Testaments. The Trinity was involved at Creation—The Father (Gen. 1:1), The Son (Jn. 1:1,3; Col. 1:16) and The Holy Spirit (Gen 1:2). The Trinity is referenced in actions such as the creation of man (Gen. 1:26), the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:7) and in speaking to Isaiah (Isa. 6:3,8). It is also taught in the New Testament in Christ's baptism (Matt. 3:16-17)—during which, the Father spoke, the Son obeyed and the Spirit descended, the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19), the apostolic benediction (II Cor. 13:14), from the mouth of Christ (Jn. 14:16-17) and based on the fact that all three persons are called "God" (Rom. 1:7; Heb. 1:8; Acts 5:3-4).

## **Section 8. Man**

We affirm that man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), given a free will (Gen. 2:16-17) and an eternal soul (Eccl. 12:7; Matt. 25:46; Rom. 2:7). Man became under the curse of sin when the serpent "Satan" tempted Eve (Gen. 3:1,4-5) and Adam disobeyed God (Gen. 3:6). Man's disobedience resulted in the sin curse; Three types of death were passed upon all mankind: physical death (Heb. 9:27), spiritual death (Gen. 3:23; Isa. 59:2; Jn. 11:25) and eternal death (Jn. 8:24; Rev. 20:14-15; I Cor. 15:22). God's judgment came as a result of Adam and Eve's sin. Sin is transgressing God's law (I Jn. 3:4; James 2:10-11; Rom. 3:23) and is punished by death (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:14-15).

## **Section 9. Eternal Salvation**

We affirm that as result of man's sin and fall, salvation became necessary for all mankind (Gen. 3:15). Even though God is revealed in His Creation, natural revelation is not sufficient for salvation (Rom. 1:20; Psalm 19:1). Saving faith can only come through reading or hearing Scripture (I Cor. 2:14; Rom. 10:13-15,17; Acts 10:1-2). Salvation was provided by God in Jesus Christ (Jn. 3:16). As result of accepting God's salvation, believers are saved from the penalty of sin (Rom. 8:1; I Tim. 1:10) and the power of sin (Rom. 7:6; 8:9-11). The opportunity to accept Jesus Christ is limited to a man's lifetime (II Cor. 6:2; Heb. 4:7; Luke 16:19-31). Faith is required in Christ alone (Rom. 3:28; I Jn. 5:10-11; Eph. 2:8-9; Jn. 3:14-18) and is accompanied by repentance (Acts 2:37-38; II Cor. 7:9-10). Salvation gives believers access to God (Eph. 1:6-7; 2:18; 3:12; Heb. 4:16) and victory over sin (I Jn. 5:4; I Jn. 4:4). We reject the teachings of Reformed Theology or Calvinism that make God the author of sin and evil, that teach predestination double (election and reprobation), that limit Christ's atonement to an elect group, that teach salvation is achieved through works or sacraments or any other Reformed teaching that is contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture.

We affirm that Jesus Christ lived a perfect life, fully keeping the Law of God in the place of all men, who cannot keep it. He gave His life sacrificially in our place, and made a perfect atonement for our sin by His death on the cross--thus satisfying the wrath of God and purchasing all those who would confess Him as their Lord and believe on Him alone for salvation. He fulfilled the Mosaic Law by His death and spiritually entered into the Heavenly Temple and offered His own perfect blood once for all sin and therefore fulfilled the Levitical priesthood and now abides as our Great High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. He now sits at the right hand of the Father making intercession continually for all the saints.

Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believer righteous. This is based on the merits of Christ (I Jn. 2:1-2). It is not because of anything man can do to earn God's favor or forgiveness (Eph. 2:8-9).

Sanctification is the process of being set apart from the world and being identified with God. Scripture teaches separation from the world (II Cor. 6:14-18; I Pet. 2:9) and separation unto God (Jn. 17:19-21; I Pet. 1:15-16). It is past, present and future in scope. When Christ's blood is applied to a man's heart, sanctification begins (Heb. 10:10). Believers are sanctified by holiness, adhering to the Word of God (Jn. 17:17; Eph. 5:26), submitting to God's will (Rom. 12:1-2) and prayer—all of which are to take place daily, setting believers apart from sin and the world (Heb. 12:12-15; I Thess. 3:12-13; II Pet. 3:18).

## **Section 10. Angelic Beings, Demons and Satan**

We affirm the existence of angelic beings, both righteous angels who serve God and fallen angels who serve Satan. Angels are unless otherwise specified(I Kings 22:19-24), spirits and messengers from God (Dan. 4:13-14; Luke 2:13). Characteristics of angels given in Scripture are that they are masculine (Matt. 22:23-30; Jn. 8:44; Gen. 18:2; Rev. 12:7) often in large groups (Psalm 68:17; Matt. 26:53; Heb. 12:22), travel quickly (Luke 1:11; Luke 2:13; Dan. 9:21), are powerful beings, but not all-powerful (II Kings 19:35; Psalm 103:20; II Pet. 2:11), have great wisdom (II Sam. 14:20) and are righteous (I Sam. 29:9).

The origin of angels is God. He created them (Col. 1:16; Ezek. 28:13-14; Psalm 104:4). The Bible gives three classes of angels: Angels—the general name given to Heavenly messengers, Cherubim—associated with God's throne and holiness (Gen. 3:24; Ex. 25:18) and have wings (Ezek. 1 & 10) and Seraphim—associated with fire, holiness and ceaseless worship of God in Heaven (Isa. 6:1-3; Rev. 4:8).

The ministerial activities of angels are as follows: They minister to God (Isa. 6:3; Heb. 1:14; Mk. 1:13) and men as messengers (Luke 1:13), guardians (Psalm 34:7; Matt. 18:10) observers (Luke 15:10), guides (Ex. 14:19; Acts 8:26-40) and minister to the needs of believers (Heb. 1:14).

The counterparts to angels, demons are the fallen angels who joined Satan in his rebellion (Jude 6-7). They are also spirit beings (Mark 9:25; Eph. 6:12) and intelligent. They believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Mark 1:24), are aware of their coming judgment (Matt. 8:29) and believe in Jehovah as God (James 2:19). Their activities are to oppress, attack and incite fear (Eph. 6:11-12).

Satan was a cherub: “the anointed cherub” (Ezek. 28:14) who rebelled (Ezek. 28:15). He is called the “father of lies” (Jn. 8:44). Satan thought he could be like God (Isa. 14:12-14). He lied to Eve (Gen. 3:4-5). Scripture calls him the “prince of this world” (Jn. 14:30) and reveals his name was Lucifer (Isa. 14:12). He has the power to do miracles (Rev. 13:1-4), but is not omnipotent (Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 5:12), omniscient (Matt. 24:36) nor omnipresent (Job 1:7; I Pet. 5:8). He is described in the Bible as the enemy of God and of Christians (I Pet. 5:8), an accuser of believers (Job 1:9-11; I Cor. 10:13) and a tempter (Matt. 4:3; I Jn. 2:16). He will deceive many (II Cor. 4:4; Gen. 3:1; II Cor. 11:4; Eph. 6:11), but in the end, he will be cast into the Lake of Fire forever (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

## **Section 11. The Church**

### Her Identity

We affirm the existence of Christ’s bride, the church. There is a distinction between the universal and the local church. The universal church is the collective group of believers on Earth (I Cor. 12:13; Matt. 16:18) called “the body of Christ” (Eph. 5:23). Christ is the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20) and also gave His life for the church (Eph. 5:25-32).

The local church is what we as believers interact in on a local level. The first local church was in Jerusalem (Acts 2:42-47); another local church was in Antioch (Acts 11:19-26). Paul established local churches in Ephesus (Acts 20:17), Corinth (I Cor. 1:1) and Thessalonica (I Thess. 1:1). Seven local churches were established in Asia Minor (Rev. 2-3). The purpose of the church is to glorify God (Eph. 3:21), to edify believers (Eph. 4:11-12), to sanctify believers (Eph. 5:25-27; I Cor. 5:7), to reach the lost (Matt. 28:19-20) and to be a light in the lost world (Matt. 5:13-14). From Scripture we also know the church must send and support missionaries (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 15:3; Acts 20:38; Phil. 4:16-18).

### Her Government

The Scriptures teach local church government. The human offices are the pastor and deacons. The Pastor is the under-shepherd and overseer (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2). Requirements in Scripture (I Tim. 3:1-7) dictate he must have a God-given call, be blameless, be a husband of one wife, be sober, be given to hospitality, be apt to teach, be not given to wine, be no striker, be not greedy of filthy lucre, be one that ruleth well his own house, be not a novice and be of good report. His duties include being an example of the believer (I Pet. 5:2-3), ruling the local church (I Tim. 5:17), guarding and contending for doctrine (Tit. 1:9-11), edifying the saints, maturing the saints (Eph. 4:12) and preaching the Bible (II Tim. 4:2).

Deacons are helpers of the pastor (Acts 6:2-3). Their requirements are the same as the pastor, except for teaching ability (I Tim. 3:8-13). They have no ruling authority, but are servants of the Church and ease the

burden of the pastor to free him for prayer and studying the Word.

### Her Ordinances

There are two church ordinances commanded by Scripture: Baptism and the Communion. Baptism by definition of the Greek word means “to dip under water”; it is a sign of one’s obedience in identifying with Christ and is a public testimony that they have repented of their sins, trusted in Christ alone for salvation and are now living as new creatures in Christ (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). The prerequisite for Baptism is faith in Christ alone for salvation (Acts 2:41; Acts 8:37). We therefore reject any teaching of baptismal regeneration or infant baptism (paedobaptism).

Communion is described in four Bible accounts (Matt. 26:26-30; Mk. 14:22-26; Luke 22:17-20; I Cor. 11:23-26). It was an explanation of Christ’s of the Jewish Passover Feast in which Christ revealed He was the object lesson of the unleavened matzah and the third cup of Redemption. Communion was instituted as a memorial of Christ’s blood atonement on the cross. The prerequisites for participation are that it is for believers only (written to saved members of the church) and then only those worthy of the table (I Cor. 11:26-28). Frequency of its observation is to be determined by each local church (Acts 2:46; 20:7). The elements used are only unleavened bread (Ex. 12:15; I Cor. 5:7-8) and grape juice (Matt. 26:29).

### Her Financial Support

The church derives its funding by sacrificial giving of the congregation (Heb. 7:9; Lev. 27:30; Deut. 14:22). We do not believe fundraisers and sales projects follow the Scriptural example for church business, but that the Lord will provide financially within the congregation’s giving.

### Her Display of Christian Love

We affirm that we should demonstrate love for others, not only toward fellow believers, but also toward both those who are not believers, those who oppose us, and those who engage in sinful actions. We are to deal with those who oppose us graciously, gently, patiently and humbly. God forbids the stirring up of strife, the taking of revenge, or the threat or use of violence as a means to resolve personal conflict or obtaining personal justice--except in the case of self defence or defence of another life in a life-threatening situation. Although God commands us to abhor such sinful actions, we are love and pray for any person who engages in such sinful actions (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; Luke 6:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10,17-21; 13:8-10; Phil 2:2-4; II Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 3:2; I John 3:17-18).

We also affirm that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. 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 (I Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32).

### Her Exercising of Spiritual Gifts

We affirm that God has given every believer a spiritual gift or gifts, but of those named in the New Testament, such as that of evangelists, pastors and teachers--these are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today. We believe that the gifts of speaking in tongues and working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New

Testament Scriptures were completed and the canon of Scripture closed (I Cor. 12:4-11; I Cor. 14:21-22; Isa. 28:11-12; I Cor. 13:8,11; II Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:7-12).

## **Section 12. Missions and Evangelism**

We affirm that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations, all ethnic groups and all manner of men and women that walk the earth. As ambassadors of Christ, we must use every Biblical and legal resource to spread the gospel from our church door to the ends of the earth. This means we will all engage in personal evangelism everywhere we go in life, but also that we will send and support missionaries as we are able (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; II Cor. 5:20).

## **Section 13. Music**

We affirm that the purpose of music in the church is to honor and glorify the LORD and to edify Christians (Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16; I Cor. 10:31); that the LORD is holy and therefore all music and lyrics used in the church must deliver a message that is in keeping with His holy character (Eph. 5:10-11; I Pet. 1:14-16; I Jn. 2:15-17). We believe we are called to come out from this world and be separate; this includes our music choices. Therefore we reject the use of any music associated with the genres of Rock, Country, Jazz, CCM and like genres. We believe that God deserves the best we have to offer in worship and therefore our choice in music ought to be the most excellent possible. Therefore, we choose not to use worship music that reflects the styles of Bluegrass, Country or Southern Gospel.

## **Section 14. Israel**

We affirm the existence of national Israel as God's chosen people to whom He chose to reveal Himself, to bless and to sanctify; He also promised them an eternal land. This covenant was originally founded with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), continued with Isaac (Gen. 26:2-5), continued with Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15) and renewed with Moses and the children of Israel (Ex. 3:6-10; 23:20-31). God has not forsaken Israel, nor has the church replaced Israel (Rom. 11). God has promised national revival in the last days (Mal. 4:5-6; Rev. 11).

## **Section 15. Eschatology**

We believe that the next event on God's prophetic calendar is the Rapture of the church. Although the word "rapture" does not appear in Scripture, it is derived from the Greek word in I Thessalonians 4:17 meaning "to catch up or be caught away". The New Testament teaches the Rapture will be the time when Christ calls up the dead and living saints to meet Him in the air (I Thess. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:51-53; Rev. 4:1). The Rapture is pictured in the Old Testament (Gen. 6-7; 7:1; Gen. 18:23-25; 19:22).

Following the Rapture, believers will stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ (II Cor. 5:8-10; Rev. 22:12; Luke 14:14; Luke 19:11-26). This judgment decides not eternal destiny or judgment of sin, but rewards for believers (Jn. 5:24; I Jn. 2:28; Rom. 14:10-12; II Cor. 5:10). The believer may receive several types of crowns (I Cor. 9:25; II Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; I Pet. 5:4) all of which will be cast at Christ's feet (Rev. 4:10). This judgment is followed by the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19).

While believers stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ and enjoy the marriage supper, the unsaved who remain on Earth will undergo seven years called the Tribulation (Dan. 9:24-27). Its purpose is to judge the world (Rev. 15:1; 16:1; 19:15), to reveal Satan's true nature (Rev. 12:7-12), to reveal the extent of human evil (Rev. 16:8-9), to

cause national revival in Israel (Jer. 30:7-11; Zech. 12:9-14:5), to save those who will repent and believe in Christ (Matt. 24:14) and prepare Earth for Christ's millennial reign (Rev. 19:1-6).

After the close of the Tribulation will be the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Luke 17:22, 24; Rev. 19:11-16). He will appear in glory and destroy all his enemies at Armageddon (Rev. 19:13-21).

After Christ returns, so will begin the literal reign of Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4-6). After a thousand years, all those who remain unsaved and all unsaved from all time will stand condemned at the Great White Throne Judgment. If their names are not found in the Lamb's Book of Life, they are sent to the Lake of Fire forever (Rev. 20:11-15). God will finally cast Satan into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20-21).

## **Section 16. Eternity**

We affirm the existence of a literal Heaven and Hell. Those who die in Christ or are raptured up with Him will live forever with Him in a literal place called Heaven (Heb. 13:14; Rev. 21:2,11). It will be a place of paradise, glory and unexplainable joy and wonder (Rev. 21:4-6; 10-21, 25, 27; 22:1-5). Those who die without Christ and reject Him will endure the torment of a literal place called Hell. They will be forever separated from God with no hope in the Lake of Fire (Luke 16:19-31; Rev. 20:15; Mark 9:43-44).

## **Section 17. Men, Women and The Family**

We affirm that men and women are spiritually equal before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for ordination to preaching ministry (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; I Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12).

We affirm that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits herself to the headship of Christ. Children are a gift and heritage from the LORD. Parents are to love their children and teach them spiritual and moral values and lead them through a consistent lifestyle and discipline--which includes Scriptural corporal correction. The Father is the ultimate bearer of this responsibility (Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Psalm 127:3-5; Proverbs 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mark 10:6-12; I Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; I Pet. 3:1-7).

## **Section 18. Marriage**

We affirm that marriage is a picture of Christ and His bride, and is only between one biological man and one biological woman (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; I Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23).

We affirm that God disapproves of and forbids divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on grounds of fornication or abandonment, or by abandonment of an unbelieving spouse. Although divorced and remarried persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God in His service, they may not be considered for the offices of pastor or deacon (Deut. 24:1-4; Mal. 2:14-17; I Cor. 7:15; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; I Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).

We affirm 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 any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe

that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance (Gen. 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Lev 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; I Cor. 5:1; 6:9; I Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4).

### **Section 19. The Sanctity of Human Life**

We affirm that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the physical or mental well being of the mother are acceptable. All human life is precious, regardless of the circumstances in which it began (Job 3:16; Psalm 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1,5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

We believe that the direct taking of innocent human life is moral evil, regardless of the intention. Life is a gift from God and must be respected from conception until natural death. Thus we believe that an act or omission which, of itself, or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder contrary to the will of God. Discontinuing medical procedures that are extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be a legitimate refusal of overzealous treatment (Ex. 20:13; 23:7; Matt. 5:21; Acts 17:28).

### **Section 20. The Civil Government**

We affirm that the administration of local churches should be completely free from any form of state control; that civil government is of Divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that government officials should be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed--except only in things opposed to the will of God on earth or that violate the clear teaching of Scripture. Our ultimate authority are the Holy Scriptures and Almighty God, yet we must try to live in peace and harmony with human government whenever possible (Matt. 22:20-22; Mark 12:14-17; Luke 20:20-26; Rom. 13:1-7; II Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:21-22; Acts 23:5; Titus 3:1; I Pet. 2:13-14; Matt. 10:28; I Peter 2:17; Acts 5:29; Acts 4:19-20; Dan. 3:17-18; Matt. 23:10; Rev. 10:6; Phil. 2:10-11; Psalms 72:11).

### **Section 21. Alcohol**

We affirm that the Scriptures teach against the consumption of alcohol for refreshment. It was used in Bible times to keep water and other drinks safe for drinking, but the content of alcohol was such that one would have to drink massive amounts to become drunk. The beer and wine of today is much higher in alcoholic content and designed for intoxication. Therefore, we know that verses speaking positively of "wine" in the Bible are referring to grape juice and not strong beverages. The Jewish fermentation practices were such that one would have to intentionally make alcoholic wine and deliberately allow enough fermentation and deliberately consume it for the purpose of being intoxicated. Therefore Jesus could not have made alcoholic wine nor distributed it, as this would have been a violation against the Law in four instances: No prophet, priest or king was to drink alcoholic wine. And for Christ to distribute such would have been encouraging the sinning of others. Therefore we affirm that Jesus made fresh grape juice, which is referred to in Scripture many times as "wine". The word "wine" in Scripture can refer to grape juice or alcoholic wine, but the context of each verse reveals which meaning is being used (Eph. 5:18; Prov. 20:1; I Tim. 5:23; Isa. 5:11, 22; Ecc. 9:7; Lev. 10:9; Prov. 23:20-21; Gal. 5:19-21).

## ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

*Amended in 2018*

### **Section 1. The Receiving of Members**

GBC believes that the primary means of growing the church membership is through the salvation of the lost. Those that are saved through the ministry of GBC will be received into membership upon their baptism. Other candidates for membership must make their desire known to the church. These candidates may be presented for membership into the church by:

- A. Testimony of salvation which was followed by baptism by immersion.
- B. By a letter of recommendation from their former church of like faith and practice.
- C. No members shall be received if there is no pastor or if the pastor is uncontactable.

Those attending faithfully who are not members, may, upon approval from the pastoral leadership, assist in certain ministries as helpers in the Kingdom of Christ, but cannot fulfill any role that requires doctrinal teaching. Preaching, teaching or any form of public leadership roles are reserved only for members in good standing.

### **Section 2. Voting Members**

In order to cast a legal vote in any church matter, a member must meet all the following conditions:

- A. A member for at least three months.
- B. At least eighteen years of age.
- C. In public, written agreement with the doctrines listed in our Articles of Faith.
- D. Present at the business meeting where the vote is taking place, and having an understanding of the issue at hand.
- E. Endeavoring to keep the responsibilities of membership as outlined in Section 3.

### **Section 3. Responsibilities of Membership**

All members should honor, love and pray for their pastor, the pastoral staff and their families. All members should strive to be faithful in attendance and support the church through prayer and giving. All members should be growing in their Christian faith and testimony for Christ in matters of language, habits, entertainment, modesty of clothing and in every aspect of life.

If a member is caught in sin or causing strife or division, they will Biblically confronted. If they persist in divisive, immoral or heretical practices and are unwilling to repent in accordance with the Scriptures, loss of membership shall be recommended by the pastor and finalized by the vote of the church. The door of restoration will remain open if the member publicly repents and turns from their error.

The church may revoke and withdraw a member's membership when one of the following conditions is met:

- A. There is rejection of the Biblical doctrines as outlined in the Articles of Faith.
- B. There is serious hindering of the unity of the Church: The New Testament teaches that we are to be in one accord and that we are to mark them which cause division and avoid them (Rom. 16:17).

- C. There is disorderly or immoral conduct (II Thess. 3:13-15; I Cor. 5:11-12).
- D. A member unites with another church.
- E. A member request that his or her name be removed from membership.
- F. A member who has not attended any services in a period of sixty consecutive days. Exceptions are made for members who are actively involved in full time service out of the area or members who are hindered by illness or injury. Contact will be made by a leader of the church or deacon to make sure the member is informed of church happenings.

#### **Section 4. Office Holding Members**

Members holding office, elected or appointed, at GBC, including all teachers, staff and employees shall:

- A. Carry out their duties in a spirit of humility and service to Christ.
- B. Show spiritual maturity and testimony in measure to the responsibility given.
- C. Be concerned for the spiritual and material welfare of the church.
- D. Maintain the responsibilities of membership found in Section 3.
- E. Abstain from the use of alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs in any form.
- F. Not hold membership in secret society or organization that violates the doctrines of Scripture.

### ARTICLE V - MEETINGS

*Amended in 2018*

#### **Section 1. For Worship**

- A. The regular meetings of the church shall be held on Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening. These shall be for the purpose of public worship and the preaching of the Word of God.
- B. Special meetings such as Bible conferences, evangelistic meetings or missionary conferences may be called as the pastor sees fit.
- C. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be commemorated at such times as the pastoral staff determines.

#### **Section 2. For Business**

- A. Business meetings shall be set on a quarterly basis to be held in the month following the end of the quarter in the service determined by the pastoral staff and announced one week in advance.
- B. Special business meetings may be called by the Pastoral staff at any time upon notice given from the pulpit at two regular Sunday services preceding such a meeting with the exact purpose of the meeting state. Voting and discussion will be limited to active members in good standing.
- C. The annual business meeting for the election of officers shall be held at the regular December business meeting.
- D. The pastor has the right to ask any non members to be excused from any meeting where he deems appropriate.

#### **Section 3. Quorum**

Seventy-five percent of the active voting membership shall constitute a quorum; however, no business meeting shall be held without the presence of the pastor. When the church is without a pastor, the chairman of the deacons shall moderate all business meetings. There shall be no absentee voting.

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS AND DUTIES

*Amended in 2018*

**Section 1. Officers**

The elected officers of this church shall be as follows: The Pastor, Deacons, Clerk, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. Church officers may be recommended to the Pastor by any church member.

**Section 2. Duties of the Pastor**

The Pastor shall conduct the public services for the edification of the saints and salvation of the sinners, and the general development of the church work shall be under his supervision. The Pastor is the overseer of the entire church ministry. The Pastor shall meet the qualifications of I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:3-9, He shall be ex-officio member of all boards and committees and shall preside at all business meetings. However, he can ask the chairman of the Deacons to preside or a staff member, when he considers is proper. He may call any board or committee together for the transaction of business. He shall have the authority to veto the election or selection of any officer or member of the church, school, Sunday School, or any other organization in connection with the church upon consultation with the Deacons, or upon stating the reasons for such a veto to the church. He shall have the authority to appoint, upon the approval of the Deacons and an established quorum of the congregation, additional members for the pastoral staff to assist him in the work as the LORD provides the means to support such. He shall be responsible for the supervision and direction of all employees of church and related ministries and all such employees shall be responsible to his direction. Employees involved in the ministries of the church shall be members of GBC. Their salaries shall be determined by the Pastor and Deacons, and recommended to the congregation as part of the budget. Pulpit supply shall always be at the discretion of the Pastor except when the church has called for his resignation. The church will pay the supply. In the training of the leadership of the church, it is expected that the Pastor will consult with the Deacons of the church for their advice and counsel in many of the decision which are designated to him.

**Section 3. The Call of the Pastor**

The procedure for calling a pastor shall be as follows:

- A. The Pulpit Committee shall consist of any voting age male members who have been elected by the church with the total number of participants to be any odd number greater than one.
- B. The Pulpit Committee shall approach a man whom they can approve. They should be prepared to present him a copy of the church Constitution and any other appropriate information that might be called for by the potential candidate during their examination of him. Upon satisfactory examination, he shall be asked to candidate.
- C. The Pulpit Committee shall vote after his candidacy and, upon approval, present him to the church for a vote by secret ballot.
- D. He shall be elected to the pastorate by the church at a meeting duly called for that purpose upon recommendation of the Pulpit Committee. Voting shall be by active members present, over eighteen year of age and a favorable vote of seventy-five percent of the active members shall be deemed sufficient for election.
- E. Upon acceptance of the call, the pastor and the eligible members of his immediate family shall make plans to become members of GBC as soon as possible. Also, upon acceptance of the call by the pastor, the Pulpit Committee shall immediately be dissolved.
- F. The establishment or dissolution of relationship: The pastor shall be elected for no specified term. In cases of dissolution by resignation of the pastor or by action of the church by seventy-five percent

majority vote of active members by secret ballot, the pastor shall vacate the pulpit immediately. The salary shall be fixed at the time of election and may be changed at any regular business meeting. Salary of the pastor shall be reviewed once a year except in extenuating circumstances.

- G. Leaving the field: The pastor shall be entitled to an annual vacation of one week after one year of service, two weeks after two years of service, and three weeks after three years of service. The time of this vacation shall be mutually agreed upon by the pastor and deacons. This vacation shall be with pay. When the pastor is away from any of the regular services of the church, this shall be mutually agreed on by the pastor and deacons.

#### **Section 4. Deacons**

The Scriptural office of deacon is an office of service, not of administration. While the deacons will serve the pastor by providing advice, counsel and assistance in other duties he may request, their primary duties shall be to assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in organizing and developing its strength for the best possible service, and in conducting religious services and all other work of the church. The deacons shall make proper provision for the observation of the ordinances of the church, serving the elements of the Lord's Supper. A deacon shall assist the pastor in home visitation and other personal work, and other evangelistic efforts of the church. The deacons shall cooperate with the pastor in being the pulpit supply and leading the prayer meeting in his absence as he request. At the pastor's request, one of the main duties of deacons will be as stated in Acts 6:1-7, to put down murmurings and disputings among the members, under the leadership of the pastor. Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13 give the Scriptural qualifications of this office.

#### **Section 5. The Election and Dismissal of a Deacon**

- A. Deacons shall be elected at the annual business meeting. They shall be elected for a term of three years unless it be to fill an unexpired term of another deacon who has resigned or been removed. They shall be elected from nominations from the church membership. No nomination shall be considered from the floor as this could lead to a public examination of the qualifications of the one nominated.
- B. The terms are to be so arranged that not more than one-half of the members are to be elected at any annual meeting.
- C. In the event that there are no qualified members for a vacancy or no need for additional deacons, those in office shall remain in office until their successors are duly qualified and installed.
- D. If qualified members are available to serve, there shall be at least three deacons. Others may be added as the need arises.
- E. The deacons shall meet within one month following the annual meeting for election of officers and elect a chairman and transact other business as may be necessary.
- F. The deacons shall meet with the pastor to consider the needs of the church and to coordinate their work. Their recommendations shall be presented at the business meetings of the church.
- G. Any deacon who is habitually absent from regular meetings or whose conduct is not in keeping with the Scriptural qualifications shall first be admonished by the pastor, and if no change is made, then dismissed from his office upon the advice and counsel of the majority of remaining deacons.

#### **Section 6. Legal and Supervisory Offices**

- A. Legal Trustees - The pastoral staff and any appointees shall fulfill the role of legal trustees, whose duty it shall be to acquaint themselves with the laws of the state pertaining to churches and church property, and to see that the church faithfully complies therewith. They shall act on behalf of the church on all

legal matters. They shall make recommendations to the church concerning needed repairs. They are wholly subject to the will of the church regarding church property.

- B. Clerk - The clerk shall keep a correct record for the church of all baptisms, issue letters and keep records of all business meetings. The church clerk shall serve for one year, being nominated and elected with the other annual officers. The clerk shall present to the church at the end of each one year term an up to date church roll. A copy of the church minutes shall be kept on file at the church and be open to all members for review.
- C. Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer - It shall be the duty of the treasurers to see that all money received is deposited in the name of the church in such bank or banks as the pastor and deacons agree upon. A correct account of all receipts and disbursements shall be kept under the direction of the pastor, deacons and treasurers. The treasurers shall see that there are two people counting all cash offerings and that the totals are accurate. The treasurer and assistant treasurer cannot be relatives.

## ARTICLE VII - COMMITTEES

*Amended in 2018*

### **Section 1. Nominations Committee**

The Nominations Committee shall consist of the pastoral staff and deacons. A list of all nominees shall be posted in the church building at least one Sunday prior to the election. When qualified candidates are available, two or more shall be nominated for each office. Before posting the nominations, the committee shall approach each nominee and secure their consent to serve in harmony with the pastor and the Church Constitution, if elected. Active church members who wish to submit nominations shall give their suggestions in writing to the Nominations Committee at least two weeks before the election to enable the committee to ascertain the qualifications of the nominee who shall be a member in good standing. No nominations shall be made from the floor.

### **Section 2. Budget Committee**

- A. The Budget Committee shall consist of the pastoral staff, deacons and treasurers. It shall be the duty of this committee to prepare the budget for the ensuing year for presentation to the church for its approval at the regular monthly business meeting prior to the beginning of the church fiscal year.
- B. It shall also be the responsibility of the Budget Committee to elect an audit committee composed of three members to examine the financial records of the church and related organizations. The audit committee, at their discretion, may recommend to the deacons an outside firm for the audit in whole or part of any of all records.

### **Section 3. Standing Committees**

The pastor, pastoral staff and the deacons shall form the only standing committee of this church. Any other committees formed for special purposes shall be directly responsible to the pastor or to the person he designates and the committee shall disband immediately after it has discharged its responsibilities.

## ARTICLE VIII - MINISTRIES

*Amended in 2018*

Section 1. All departments, organization, classes and groups are subservient parts of the church and shall under no circumstances be considered as separate and apart from the church or as operating independently of the

church. Each ministry shall remember this and be constantly careful not to detract from or divide the church body.

Section 2. No ministry shall be operated under the name of Gospel Baptist Church without the knowledge and express consent of the pastor and congregation.

#### ARTICLE IX - AUTONOMY AS A LOCAL ASSEMBLY

*Amended in 2018*

GBC is an independent Baptist church. It is to continue to be an independent, autonomous, Bible-believing, New Testament, Baptist church with the government of the church to continue to be in the hands of only the active members. There is to be no exception to this rule.

#### ARTICLE X - LITERATURE

*Amended in 2018*

The Authorized King James Version of the Bible shall be the only text of all preaching and teaching of GBC. Literature may be acquired provided that it does not expound unsound doctrine, teach practices foreign to this Constitution, or lend weight to inferior versions and perversions of the Scripture. Any printed material or music used in or produced by the church or one of its ministries shall be subject to the approval of the pastor or his designated substitute before it may be distributed publicly.

#### ARTICLE XI - FINANCIAL POLICY

*Amended in 2018*

The financial needs of the church shall be met by voluntary giving from its members and friends. No entertainments, suppers, market venues, yard-sales, etc. shall be given by the church for any fundraising purpose whatsoever. With approval of the pastor or deacons, special offerings may be taken apart from those received at regular services.

#### ARTICLE XII - ORDAINING AND SENDING WORKERS

*Amended in 2018*

### **Section 1. Ordination to the Ministry**

When a male member of this congregation shows good evidence of his salvation and of a separated life, and having been called of God to proclaim the glorious message of the Gospel, he may be recommended to the pastor, pastoral staff and deacons for examination of his qualifications. If he meets the basic requirements of Scripture, the pastor may call a council of ordination, containing the men of his choosing to fully and vigorously examine the candidate to ensure he is qualified, sound in doctrine, of good report and genuinely called of God into the ministry. He will submit a complete and satisfactory doctrinal statement that must be in total agreement to that of the Articles of Faith of GBC. One month from receiving that statement, the council shall establish a date of examination and prepare whatsoever questions they choose. Upon satisfactory completion of said examination, they shall confer and prayerfully vote. Upon a unanimous verdict, the candidate may be presented to the church and must receive a seventy-five percent vote in favor. Upon completion of this vote, he will receive a signed certificate of ordination into the ministry. A special service may be held at GBC to charge the ordainee and lay hands on him in prayer for his ministry.

## **Section 2. The Commissioning of Missionaries**

For males, the same process will apply as in Section 1. Single ladies will receive the same level of evaluation and examination, but will not receive ordination or commission to preach.

Financial support will be conferred on by the pastor, deacons and treasurers and submitted to the church at the next business meeting.

### ARTICLE XIII - PROPERTY, BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT

*Amended in 2018*

The buildings, property, equipment and other asset of GBC are always to be held in trust for the use of the ministries of this church.

The rental or use of any facility, resource or building of GBC is subject to the approval of the pastor. GBC reserves the right to refuse use of its private property to anyone for any reason it deems appropriate, with no obligation for explanation.

### ARTICLE XIV - DISSOLUTION OF CORPORATION

*Amended in 2018*

Upon dissolution, no part of the net earnings of this organization shall ever be put to the benefit of any donor, member, director, or officer of the organization or any private individual, and no donor, member, director or officer of the organization shall be entitled to share in distribution of any of the organization's assets. Upon dissolution, any assets of the organization must be distributed to one or more established missionaries currently active in missions work for more than two years.

### ARTICLE XV - PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

*Amended in 2018*

The procedure in all deliberation of this church, not otherwise covered by this Constitution, shall be governed by the plain teachings of the Holy Scriptures.

### ARTICLE XVI - AMENDMENTS

#### Section 1. Procedure For Amending

This Constitution may be revised or amended at any regular business meeting of the church by a seventy-five percent vote of active members present and voting, providing said proposed changes have been announced and posted at least four weeks prior to the time of voting.

#### Section 2. Extent of Amending

This document may be amended as long as the proposed amendment are consistent with the teaching of the Word of God, do not violate the purpose for which GBC was established and the doctrinal basis on which it was founded is to be perpetuated, and meet the needs of GBC.

#### Section 3. Constitutional Finality

Upon adoption, this Constitution shall invalidate any and all other procedural decrees made in church business meetings, committee or board meetings or by another method.

## ARTICLE XVII - MISCELLANEOUS

### Section 1. Fiscal Year

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

### Section 2. Church Year

The church year shall be from January 1 to December 31 inclusive.

### Section 3. Constitutional History

This Constitution was originally adopted by a unanimous vote Sunday, December 9, 1979.

Amendments since 1979 have been notated in appropriate locations.

Article V - Membership, amended March 2009, effectively replaced Articles III and X; all Articles were renumbered to reflect the changes.

*“And all God’s people said, Amen”*