

Constitution of Cornerstone Baptist Church

Adopted originally on April 27, 2003
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Adopted originally on April 27, 2003

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Preamble:

We compile this constitution in order to preserve and protect our Church's foundational principles. Together we are, "contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints", with our hope in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This document is intended to guide the Church in areas of practice and procedure, and is not intended to replace the authority of the Word of God. Our purpose is to glorify God by accurately reflecting Biblical authenticity and efficiency in Church form and function. We will continually strive to do all things with Excellence in Christ.

For simplicity, all references in this document will be in the masculine gender unless stated otherwise. Therefore, references such as, "man", "men", "brother", etc. are meant to include the feminine gender as well. However, this is not meant to infer that other masculine references, such as, but not limited to, those relating to the office of Pastor/Elder, are meant to include the feminine gender, which is contradictory to our Biblical beliefs.

Our Mission:

"The Cornerstone mission is to magnify God's Glory by bringing people to Christ, by exalting God in worship and prayer, and by helping grow disciples of Christ for ministry in this world."

Article I: Name

The name of this Church shall be Cornerstone Baptist Church.
Incorporated in Topsham, Maine on August 20th, 2001 in the state of Maine.

Article II: Scope

Section 1: Purpose

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

Section 2: Focus

The Church shall: license men to the Gospel ministry, evangelize the unsaved by the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, educate believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Scripture, maintain missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country, and engage in any other ministry that the Church may decide to pursue in obedience to the will of God.

Article III: Gospel Confession

Introduction:

In an attempt to better clarify what we believe is necessary in identifying true believers, the following is a **Gospel Confession**. (This is to distinguish the core concepts of the Gospel from the body of doctrine that we will teach and adhere to as a church found in our Doctrinal Statement.)

1. We confess that God is the Sovereign Creator of everything (Genesis 1). Because He created everything, we also acknowledge that He has the supreme right to exercise His authority over all of this creation (I Cor. 15:25-28). We also confess that God perfectly made man in His own image, and designated man to steward His creation (Genesis 1:27-30, Psalm 8:5-8).
2. We confess that sin entered the world through the disobedient actions of Adam and Eve in the garden when they ate the fruit (Genesis 3:6) which God had instructed them not to eat (Genesis 2:17). This sin also condemned not only Adam and Eve to death, but also all humanity who have been born after them (Romans 5:12). Sin and death continue to rule over humanity (I Cor. 15:21).
3. We confess that humanity is completely incapable of reversing the consequences of sin and death (Hebrews 2:14-15; Ephesians 2:1), and for this reason and His own glory, God lovingly (John 3:16) both prophesied (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 9:6-7) and provided a Savior in the Person of Jesus Christ (Luke 2:11; John 1:14).
4. We confess Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord (Romans 10:13; I Timothy 1:15), because He alone satisfied the Holy Justice of God (I John 4:10) by being a sinless sacrifice for humanity by dying on the cross (II Cor. 5:21). By rising again from the grave, He conquered death and is worthy to be Lord of all for all eternity (I Cor. 15:20-28).
5. We confess that salvation is a gift of God (Romans 6:23) extended to each person who by faith (Romans 10:17, Romans 5:1) confesses Jesus Christ as Lord (Romans 10:9), and believes that God raised Him from the dead. This faith involves a change of understanding and heart, called repentance (Acts 17:30-31) – whereby we submit to Jesus Christ as our Lord (Romans 10:10).
6. We confess that being a Christian is not about birth, embracing a particular religion, or a certain set of rules, but having a reconciled relationship with God through Jesus Christ alone (Acts 4:12; John 1:10-13; John 14:6).
7. We confess that there is hope in light of the suffering experienced in this world (Romans 8:20). Our hope is that God will put all things right in His time through our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13; Isaiah 65:17-18; Revelation 21:4-5).

Article IV: Doctrinal Statement

Section 1: The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally and plenary* inspired Word of God and inerrant in the original writings. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are the complete and divine revelation of God to man, and therefore, are the final authority for faith and life. The Scriptures shall be interpreted according to their grammatical-historical, normal-literal, and dispensational meaning (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:20-21).

Section 2: The Triune Nature of God

We believe in the one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons -Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (Gen. 1:1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; John 10:30; Acts 5:3-4; II Cor. 13:14).

Section 3: The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

A. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been miraculously conceived in the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14; II Cor. 5:19-21; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:5-8).

B. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, substitutionary sacrifice; and that our justification was made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 1:7; I Pet. 1:3-5; 2:24).

C. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9-10; Rom. 8:34; I Cor. 15:1-4, 20-25; Heb. 9:24; I John 2:1-2).

D. We believe that the "blessed hope" of the church is the personal, bodily return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ which could occur at any moment (John 14:1-3; I Thess. 4:14-18; Titus 2:11-13).

E. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will physically and literally return to the earth to establish His millennial Kingdom on the earth with His saints from all times. Satan will forever be judged at the end of the Lord's 1000 year reign and all the unsaved of all times will be judged and cast into the Lake Of Fire. The Lord Jesus will deliver up the Kingdom to God the Father (I Corinthians 15:20-24; Revelation 20:4-6; 10-14)

Section 4: The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

A. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and that He is the supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the Day of Redemption (John 16:8-11; Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 12:12-14; II Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13-14).

* Plenary: adverb, in a way that is full, unqualified, or complete.

B. We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who assists believers to understand and appropriate* the Scriptures and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (I Cor. 2:9-16; Eph. 1:17-18; 5:18; I John 2:20, 27).

C. We believe that the Holy Spirit equips believers with spiritual gifts. God uniquely uses pastors/elders and teachers to help believers in the church understand their gifts so they can do the work of the ministry (Rom. 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:4-11, 28; Eph. 4:7-12).

D. We believe that the sign gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues and the gift of healing, were temporary. We believe that speaking in tongues never has been a common or necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit and that ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection, though God may choose to answer the prayers of believers for physical healing (I Cor. 1:22; 13:8; 14:21-22).

Section 5: Creation

We believe in the direct creation by God of the physical universe, all spirit beings, man, and lower forms of life, without the process of evolution, and also that the early chapters of Genesis are literal and accurate history. God sustains all creation but exists in no necessary relationship to it (Gen. 1, 2; Col. 1:15-17; John 1:3).

Section 6: Spirit Beings

We believe that God created an innumerable company of sinless spirit beings. One of these, though created holy by God, sinned through pride, thereby becoming Satan, the Devil, the enemy of his Creator, leading a host of angels in rebellion against God. He became the god of this age and the ruler of all the powers of darkness and is destined to the judgment of an eternal punishment in the lake of fire (Ezek. 28:12-19; Matt. 25:41; II Cor. 4:3-4; Col. 1:16; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 12:7-9; 20:10).

Section 7: Mankind

We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also the spiritual death which is separation from God, and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are now sinners by birth and by choice, positively inclined to evil, and therefore, under just condemnation to eternal ruin without defense or excuse (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:17; 3:1-19; Rom. 1:20; 3:23; 5:12-21; I Cor. 2:14).

Section 8 Salvation

A. We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (John 1:12; Rom. 10:9-10; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; I Pet. 1:18-19).

B. We believe that all the redeemed are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1, 38-39; I Cor. 1:4-8; I Pet. 1:4-5).

* Appropriate: **Verb**, take something for own use: to take something that belongs to or is associated with somebody else for yourself, [15th century. < Latin appropriatus, past participle of appropriare "make your own" < propius "own"]

C. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh (Rom. 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-13; I Jn. 5:13).

Section 9: Final Destinies

A. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13).

B. We believe that the souls of believers in Christ do at death immediately pass into His presence, and there remain until the resurrection of the body at the rapture when soul and body reunited shall stand before Christ to be judged of their Christian works for the giving of rewards; and they shall then be associated with Him forever in glory (I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:10; I Thess. 4:13-18).

C. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious misery until the final resurrection at the end of the millennium for judgment; the result of this judgment will be that all will be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (Luke 16:19-26; II Thess. 1: 6-9; Rev. 20:11-15).

Section 10: The Local Church

A. We believe that the local church is a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on an acceptable confession of faith, associated for worship, work, fellowship, observance of the ordinances, and the spread of the Gospel to all the world, and having two offices, Pastor/Elder and Deacon, which positions are to be held by men only (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2: 41-42; 10:47-48; Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 2:12; 3:1-13; Heb. 10:25).

B. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches until the rapture is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; Titus 1:5-11).

C. We believe in the autonomy (self-governing) of the local church, free of any external authority or control (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Rom. 16:1, 4; I Cor. 3:9, 16; 5:4-7, 13; I Pet. 5:1-4).

Section 11: Ordinances

We recognize Water Baptism and the Lord's Supper as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church in this age.

A. Water Baptism

We believe that immersion is the only form of baptism revealed and commanded in the Scriptures, that it has no saving power, but is only for those who are already saved, and that the new birth, which comes through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is the Scriptural prerequisite to baptism. Therefore, only those who are old enough to believe for themselves should be baptized (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:38; 10:47-48; Rom. 6:3-5).

B. Lord's Supper

We believe that the Lord's Supper is a memorial of the death of Christ and that only those who have been saved through faith in His atoning blood and are walking in obedient fellowship with Him ought to partake of it. We do not believe in closed communion¹ (Acts 2:41-42; I Cor. 11:23-32).

Section 12: Separation

We believe that separation is a doctrine as well as a practice and that the separation principle runs through the entire Bible. We believe that true spiritual fellowship is the result of common faith and practice. We believe there are several aspects of Biblical separation.

A. Political Separation—the separation of the church from the state. We believe that as individual citizens of our country we are responsible to our God ordained authorities, but that those authorities on the other hand shall not govern the church or impede the free exercise of its faith (Luke 20:25; Rom. 13:1-2).

B. Personal Separation—the separation of the believer from the world and sin in order to serve God. We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord. Therefore, personal separation involves a separation from acts of sin, the world system, heretics, and false teachers (Josh. 24:15; Rom. 12:1-2; 14; II Cor. 6:14-7:1; Eph. 5:15-18; Titus 3:10; I John 2:15-17; 4:1; II John 10-11).

C. Ecclesiastical Separation—the separation of the church from apostasy. While recognizing the unity of all true believers, it is also evident that unbelief and error in many organized fellowships has developed to the point where recognized apostasy exists. We believe we are to reprove apostates rather than recognize them, to rebuke rather than to reason with them, to reject rather than to receive or unite with them. We believe that loyalty to Christ also demands separation from those groups content to walk with or tolerate religious unbelief (II Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11-15; II Tim. 4:2-4; II John 10-11).

D. Familial Separation—the separation of the believer from an erring brother, when doctrinal or ethical compromise creeps into his life or ministry. We believe that we must separate from those brethren who continue in disobedience to the Word of God (Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 5:11; II Thess. 3:6, 14-15).

Section 13: Missions

We believe that God has given the Great Commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all available means to go to all people and not wait for them to come to us (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; II Cor. 5:20).

Section 14: Civil Government

We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: 1) the home; 2) the church; and 3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific biblical responsibilities and balanced those responsibilities with the understanding that no institution has the right to infringe upon the other. The home, the church, and the state are equal and

¹ Closed communion is the practice wherein a church limits the participants of Communion to its organizational Members.

sovereign in their respective Biblically assigned spheres of responsibility under God (Rom. 13:1-7; Eph. 5:22-24; Heb. 13:17; I Pet. 2:13-14).

Section 15: Giving

We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially. We believe that God established the tithe (10%) as a pattern for proportionate giving for Old Testament believers. Today every Christian should give offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the local church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; I Tim. 5:17-18; I John 3:17).

Section 16: Moral Issues

A. Abortion

We believe 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 mental well-being of the mother are acceptable (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:44).

B. Human sexuality

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity should be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, polygamy, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography, etc. are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex (Gen. 2:24; 19:5, 13; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; I Cor. 5:1; 6:9; I Thess. 4:3; Heb. 13:4).

C. Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

We believe that marriage is a divine institution and God intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. We believe divorce to be the consequences of sin and never part of God's original intention for marriage. While divorce and remarriage appear to have Biblical allowance in the cases of adultery or abandonment by an unbelieving spouse, divorce is ultimately covenantal unfaithfulness* (Gen. 2:24; Mal. 2:14-16; Matt. 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Rom. 7:1-3; I Cor. 7:15; II Cor. 5:17; I Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6; Hebrews 13:4-6).

Section 17: Authority of Doctrinal Statement

The Doctrinal Statement 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 Doctrinal Statement accurately represents the teaching of the Bible and will, therefore, all participants will seek to be in Biblical harmony with it.

* **Covenantal Faithfulness is simply defined as promises kept. Throughout Scripture we find the theme of covenants (Jeremiah 31:31). Covenants were God's promises to His people and His plan that He would do what He declares (Psalm 89 is a psalm of praise to God's covenantal faithfulness). Because marriage is instituted by God, and God is the agent who joins a man and a woman together (Mark 10:9), we believe that marriage is one of the most distinct portrayals of Covenantal Faithfulness (Ephesians 5:22-33).**

Article V: Church Government

Section 1: Biblical Authority

This Church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its only Head and the Bible as its only infallible guide in matters of faith and government.

Section 2: Authority of the Congregation

The congregation shall act, being led by the Holy Spirit, as the confirming agent of the Lord's will in matters of new Church business, Church discipline, and the calling of Church commissioned ministers.

Section 3: Authority of the Pastor(s)/Elder(s)

The Church acknowledges that Pastor(s)/Elder(s) are appointed within the Church for order, oversight, and for the duty of watching out for the spiritual well-being of the Church. The Pastor(s)/Elder(s) shall lead the Church in matters of faith and practice, shall commission Church called ministers, and shall be primarily accountable to God in the everyday decisions of their ministry.

Section 4: Fellowship

The Church may fellowship with organizations of like faith and practice, but no rules or commitments shall be made to such bodies which call for more than voluntary action on the part of the Church.

Section 5: Officers

The Officers of this Church shall consist of the Pastor(s)/Elder(s), Deacons, Church Treasurer, and Assistant Church Treasurer, (as necessary). The Pastor(s)/Elder(s) are Officers by virtue of their position. The Deacons, Church Treasurer and Assistant Church Treasurer shall be elected by the Church. The Officers are in place to perform corporate action for the Church.

Article VI: Membership

Introduction:

We believe that all born again believers are part of the universal body of Christ, and that local churches are established in communities for the proclamation of the Word of God, the building up of the saints, and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Becoming a member is an organizational tool to provide safety, accountability, and commitment to that local body of believers. While we encourage membership, it has no bearing on one's salvation. Those choosing not to become members may be limited in certain areas of ministry in the Church.

Section 1: Qualifications.

Anyone desiring to unite with the Church must appear before the Membership Committee. Candidates must be examined and must meet with the unanimous approval of this committee and be recommended to the Church a week or more in advance. All candidates must then appear before the Church and give public testimony except those candidates who are unable to appear because of handicap.

Section 2: Composition.

The Membership of this Church shall be made up of persons who have: (1) Professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; (2) Have been baptized by single immersion; (3) Have given evidence of regeneration and of conduct worthy of their profession; (4) Whose convictions are in harmony with the faith and practice of this Church as set forth in the Gospel Confession and Doctrinal Statement; (5) Who have been elected into Membership of the Church. No member shall be received on the basis of a letter or transfer of membership from another church. No member shall be received who is currently under the church discipline process of a church of like precious faith. All candidates shall receive and agree to submit to the authority of the Constitution of the Church in applying for membership.

Section 3: Reception.

All candidates for membership may become members of the church after receiving a majority vote of the members present, at any business meeting, or during any regularly scheduled Sunday service. All Members in opposition of a candidate for membership must appear before any Pastor/Elder and the Membership Committee and the candidate to give just reason.

Section 4: Responsibilities of Members.

Members are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with Biblical principles, to commit themselves to continued spiritual growth and maturity, and to actively support the Church through prayer, attendance, financial giving, and service. Members will refrain from propagating Scriptural interpretations that differ from those set forth in the Doctrinal Statement in order to avoid unprofitable division caused by contention. (1 Corinthians 1:10-11)

Section 5: Privileges of Members.

Members may participate and vote in members' meetings. Members may hold office in the Church and serve on committees.

Section 6: Restrictions.

No candidate can become a member who is a member of any organization which actively undermines the authority of Scripture or the governing authority established by God.

Section 7: Voting Members

All members have the privilege of voting during church business meetings. Some members due to geographical or circumstances which prohibit them from regularly attending church meetings may choose out of consideration to the congregation of the church to be taken off the list of voting members. The list of voting members is used to determine the quorum in business meetings.

Article VII: Discipline/Removal from Membership

Section 1: Discipline and Church Restoration

A. Introduction

Discipline is an essential requirement to be a true disciple of Christ (Matthew 16:24). It is a process described for His people (Matthew 18:15-20). It was commanded and practiced by the apostles

(I Corinthians 5). Therefore, as a matter of faith and conviction, discipline must be part of the ministry and practice of each local church. It is a matter of obedience to God, not convenience or preference. It is a necessary part of fulfilling our divine commission to disciple all nations (Matthew 28:19, 20).

B. Application

There are two general applications of discipline in the church. Formative discipline refers to the instruction of the Word of God in the context of daily life and public worship (II Timothy 3:14-17). Corrective discipline refers to the private and public confrontation of a member over unrepentant sin. Members remaining in an unrepentant sin, will eventually be removed from membership. Our purpose in any corrective discipline scenario is to first glorify our God by doing the following:

1. Restoring an erring brother (I Corinthians 4:4-5)
2. Preserving the purity of the Church (I Corinthians 5:6-7)
3. Maintaining the testimony of the Church for our Lord in the community (I Corinthians 5:1, 6:1-11)
4. Instruction of the Church (I Timothy 5:20)

C. Practice

Matthew 18:15-20 is our Biblically described process of correctively disciplining a sinning believer. The first step is for the individual offended to privately reprove the sinning believer. If this yields no change, then the sinning believer must be confronted again, but with one or two additional (spiritually mature – Galatians 6:1) believers who will aid in confirming the issue and seek to restore the relationship. If the sinning believer continues to remain unrepentant, the issue must be brought before the Church as a whole to use its united effort to restore the erring brother (Gal.6:1-2; II Thess. 3:15). Finally, after the Church leaders and congregation have made efforts to bring the sinning believer to repentance but are still unsuccessful, the sinning believer must be excluded from Church membership. The discipline process may continue to the dismissal and exclusion of a Church member even if the Church member should voluntarily resign from membership [I Corinthians 5:5-8]. A hearing will take place at a special or regular business meeting of the Church called by the Pastor(s)/Elder(s) or leadership of the Church. The member being considered for dismissal and exclusion from fellowship is permitted to attend and speak in turn. The decision of dismissal and exclusion from fellowship will be done by majority vote of the Members present at any business meeting.

Section 2: Removal by Request

A Member may request that their membership be terminated and his or her name removed from the Church roll. If approved by a majority vote of the Pastor(s)/Elder(s) and the Membership Deacon, the request shall be granted and the Member's name shall be removed from the Church Membership roll. A member may request a letter of transfer to another church. If approved by Pastor/Elder or Membership Deacon, the request shall be granted and a letter shall to be drafted, signed by any Pastor/Elder or Membership Deacon and forwarded to the Member.

Section 3: Removal for Non-Disciplinary Reasons

Any Member may be removed from the Church roll if that person has not attended the Church for a period of one year as determined by the Pastor(s)/Elder(s) and Membership Deacon. A Member shall be removed from the Church roll upon that Member's death. A Member may be removed from the Church

roll upon a determination by the Pastor(s)/Elder(s) and Membership Deacon that the Member obtained membership in another church.

Article VIII: Officers, Servants and Staff

Section 1: General Qualifications of the Officers, Servants and Staff

- A. All Officers, elected Servants and Staff of the Church shall be Members of the Church. No Member can become an Officer of the Church unless he has been a Member of the Church for at least three months, except for Pastor(s)/Elder(s). A non-member cannot serve in any elected or appointed capacity in this Church.
- B. No Member shall be eligible to hold the position of Officer or elected Servant unless he/she has reached the age of eighteen (18).
- C. New Officers, elected Servants and Staff shall assume their duties upon the closing of the annual or appropriate special business meeting at which they were elected.
- D. All new Officers shall receive an annual review by the Pastor(s)/Elder(s).
- E. Dismissal proceedings may be initiated against any Officer, elected Servant or Staff Member on grounds of proven immorality, heresy in doctrine, apostasy, or failure to properly attend his duty. He/she may be dismissed by a majority vote of the Members present at any business meeting.

Section 2: Officers

The appointed Officers of this Church shall consist of the Pastor(s)/Elder(s). The Pastor(s)/Elder(s) are Officers by virtue of their position. The elected Officers of this Church shall consist of the Deacons, Church Treasurer, and Church Assistant Treasurer as necessary, and shall be elected by the Church to perform corporate action for the Church. Any Officer failing to attend three (3) successive meetings of the board to which he is elected, without reasonable excuse, may be dismissed from that office by the Deacons and the Pastor(s)/Elder(s).

Section 3: The Pastor(s)/Elder(s)

A. Role

We believe that the appointed Pastor(s)/Elder(s) are to be the spiritual leaders of the Church, who will give account to God for those within the congregation (Hebrews 13:17). They are to exercise spiritual oversight, care, and leadership. We will also endeavor to have more than one Pastor/Elder at any given time, to accurately reflect the Biblical precedence of having multiple Pastor(s)/Elder(s) appointed within the Church (Titus 1:5, Acts 14:23)

B. Qualifications (in addition to those outlined in Section 1)

1. The candidate shall be a male who agrees without reservation to the Church's Gospel Confession and will adhere to the Doctrinal Statement in their ministry to the church.
2. He must display the personal qualification for the office of bishop described in I Timothy 3:1-7 and also in Titus 1:6-9.
3. He shall not be a member of any group or fellowship associated with spiritual compromise, such as the American Baptist Convention, National Council of Churches, National Association of Evangelicals, or any group connected with the Ecumenical movement.

C. Duties

1. Endeavor as a minister to hold forth the Word of God as a faithful servant.
2. Have the general oversight of the spiritual life, regular services, and administration of the ordinances of the Church.
3. May appoint voluntary Servants such as, but not limited to, non-compensated Staff and Ministry Directors.
4. Be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees connected with the Church or any of its organizations.
5. Have oversight of the programs and ministries of the Church.
6. Approve and invite only those guest speakers who are in harmony with the Doctrinal Statement. Out of courtesy they shall inform the Board of Deacons when inviting outside speakers.
7. Approve all guest speakers for officially church-sanctioned organizations and ministries.

D. Organization

When there exists more than one Pastor/Elder, the Pastor(s)/Elder(s) will organize themselves in a manner in which they can, with wise stewardship, exercise their duties most effectively. Financial compensation will be desired for all Pastor(s)/Elder(s), but required for those whose primary focus is the preaching and teaching ministry of the Church (I Timothy 5:17). For sake of identification, we will identify all Pastor(s)/Elder(s) receiving financial compensation as Vocational Pastor(s)/Elder(s) and all Pastor(s)/Elder(s) not receiving financial compensation as Lay Pastor(s)/Elder(s).

E. The Calling

The Call of a Pastor/Elder is initiated by God, and the confirmation of the Call of a Pastor/Elder to our Church will involve several steps:

1. The formation of a Church Pastoral Search Committee.
It shall be the Pastoral Search Committee's job to diligently interview and examine a candidate. This committee shall recommend the candidate to the Church congregation for examination only after they have approved him by a minimum of $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) majority of the committee.
 - a. If the Church desires to add an additional Pastor/Elder, this committee shall consist of all existing Pastor(s)/Elder(s), three Deacons, and three members of the Church, appointed by the Church.
 - b. When it becomes known that the Pastor/Elder of the Church will be leaving his position, and if there is only one Pastor/Elder, this committee shall consist of three Deacons chosen by the Deacons, and four church members, appointed by the Church, not currently holding the office of Deacon. The Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall be the chairman of this committee. The additional duty of this committee shall be to seek a qualified minister of the gospel who will carry out the mission of the Church by providing pulpit supply until the role of Pastor/Elder can be fulfilled.
2. A time of public interview and examination by the Church congregation no less than two weeks before a business meeting to vote on the pastoral candidate.

3. The confirmation of the Call of a Pastor/Elder to our Church will be confirmed by $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) majority vote of the Members present at a business meeting.

4. The Board of Deacons will be responsible for determining funding for expenses incurred while pursuing pastoral candidates.

F. Termination or Dismissal

1. The Pastor/Elder shall be free to resign as he feels led of the Holy Spirit, but out of Christian courtesy he shall give at least thirty (30) days written notice to the Church and shall receive his salary as long as he actively serves in that position.

2. Whenever dismissal proceedings may be in order against the Pastor/Elder on grounds of proven immorality, heresy in doctrine, apostasy, or failing to properly attend his duties as Pastor/Elder of the Church, his services shall be terminated by a majority vote of the members present at a business meeting. Although termination will be effective immediately, the Church Members shall also determine if continued compensation will be given for up to 30 days following.

Section 4: Board of Deacons

A. The Role

1. To free up the Pastor(s)/Elder(s) to give their attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word of God (Acts 6:4)

2. To ensure that the needs of individuals and the organization are met (Acts 6:1-2)

B. Qualifications (in addition to those outlined in Section 1)

1. The candidate for deacon must agree without reservation to the Church's Gospel Confession and will be in harmony with the Doctrinal Statement in their ministry to the church.

2. Deacons shall meet the qualifications listed in Acts 6:1-6 and in I Timothy 3:8-13.

3. Deacons, in an effort to be above reproach, will refrain from any activity which may cause a brother to stumble (I Corinthians 8:9-11).

C. Duties

1. General Responsibilities

a. Assist the Pastor(s)/Elder(s) in the administration of the ordinances.

b. Fill the pulpit with a qualified speaker when the Pastor/Elder or Pastoral Search Committee is unable to fill it.

c. May appoint Servants functioning in the role of non-compensated Staff member.

d. Review all candidates for membership and dismissal from membership.

e. Assist the pastoral Staff in visiting the sick, distressed, and widowed of the Church.

- f. Administer, at their discretion, the Deacon's Fund of the Church.
- g. Approve of all non-Church public assemblies on the property as well as be responsible to grant permission for appropriate use of the Church building, grounds, or assets.
- h. Hold in trust and have oversight of the property of the Church; keep the same in good repair.
- h. Not purchase, sell, mortgage, or encumber any real property or valuable assets belonging to the Church.
- i. Be responsible for the appropriate disposal of non-valuable assets.
- j. Be responsible for the hiring and dismissal of all compensated Staff except as herein otherwise noted.
- k. Be further governed in their duties and responsibilities by the Church Charter of Incorporation. They are responsible to the Church at all times for their actions and decisions regarding the Church.

2. Financial Responsibilities

- a. Be responsible to present an annual budget to the Church.
- b. Manage the general financial affairs ensuring that fiscal responsibility and integrity are being maintained in all aspects of the Church's finances.
- c. Assist in maintaining accurate records of both income and disbursements, and account for any discrepancies in the quarterly or annual review of the budget.
- d. Ensure that internal controls exist in the financial area.
- e. Assist the treasurer in any areas of finances upon request by the treasurer.
- f. Count tithes and offerings upon request.
- g. Determine funding for expenses incurred while pursuing pastoral candidates.

D. Organization

1. The Deacons shall be chosen by the Church and elected to three year terms unless otherwise declared. Toward the end of each term, the Deacons shall discuss with the Pastor(s)/Elder(s) their intentions to either be nominated again or step down from their position as Deacons.
2. To properly manage the Deacon Board, there will be a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Financial Deacon and Secretary appointed on an annual basis by the Board of Deacons.
3. The Deacons will divide their responsibilities as they shall determine.

Section 5: Church Treasurer and Church Assistant Treasurer

A. Church Treasurer

1. At the discretion of the Deacons, the treasurer shall have check-signing authority.
2. Shall be responsible for the accurate bookkeeping of accounts established by the Church.
3. Shall generate quarterly, annual, and other financial reports as requested.

B. Church Assistant Treasurer shall assist the Treasurer as requested.

Section 6: Moderator

A. The Moderator shall be a Servant elected from the Membership for a period of one (1) year.

B. The role of the Moderator is to ensure order in Business Meetings.

C. In the absence of the Moderator, the Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall be responsible to appoint another Deacon to serve in that role.

Section 7: Staff

A. Staff, Compensated

Staff members hired for compensated positions shall meet the general qualifications of Church membership (Section 1) and be in harmony with the Church's Doctrinal Statement. They shall be chosen upon approval of the deacons; the Pastor(s)/Elders(s) may take part in the approval process. Hiring a Staff member for a newly created compensated position will take place only after the position has been approved by a majority vote of the Church.

B. Staff, Not Compensated

Staff members not receiving compensation shall meet the general qualifications of Church membership (Section 1) and be in harmony with the Church's Doctrinal Statement. They shall be appointed by the Pastor(s)/Elder(s) and Deacons.

Article IX: Meetings

Section 1: Corporate Worship

The Church shall meet, if possible, every Sunday for public worship, and at other times for religious purposes as recommended by the Pastor(s)/Elder(s).

Section 2: Educational Opportunities of the Church

It is clear that one of the great responsibilities of the church is to train up believers in the Word of God. To this end we will endeavor to provide consistent, age-appropriate, Bible-centered educational opportunities for the people of the Church.

Section 3: Business Meetings of the Church

A. Business meetings of the Church shall be held at regular intervals to publicly examine financial affairs of the Church, ministry pursuits of the Church, and/or decide on corporate actions of the Church. All business meetings shall be announced during a time of corporate worship on each of the two Sundays preceding the business meeting.

1. A quorum will be needed to transact any corporate action (motion) and will consist of at least one-third (1/3) of the voting members. If at any time during a business meeting the number of voting members present drops below 1/3, the meeting will be adjourned and another meeting called.

2. Annual business meetings shall be held after the third quarter of the fiscal year, and among other items of business, will provide the Church with the opportunity to vote on a budget proposal for the next fiscal year.

3. Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor(s)/Elder(s), the Board of Deacons, or on written request to the secretary of the Deacon Board by any member and approved by a majority vote of the Deacons. Notice of the special business meeting shall state the item or items that will be transacted.

B. Business meetings will be conducted decently and in order in a manner which brings glory to God. The Church will elect a moderator who will ensure that the meetings are conducted in a fair and orderly fashion. The general pattern of business meeting will be based on the current edition of "The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure," without overemphasizing minor technicalities. All items to be discussed at any meeting must first have a motion and then a second in order to be discussed. All matters are then passed by a majority vote, except where otherwise indicated in the Constitution. All outcomes of votes shall be announced at the meeting and recorded in the minutes.

Article X: Ordinances

Section 1: Lord's Supper

The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be regularly observed by the Church. The Pastor(s)/Elder(s) have the discretion to schedule the Lord's Supper during any service times or days.

Section 2: Baptism

The Ordinance of Baptism shall be administered upon request, in accordance with our Doctrinal Statement.

Article XI: Ministries

Section 1: Ministries of the Church

- A. Establishment – The Church has the right to create ministries for Biblical purposes.
- B. The authority to create or terminate any ministry is at the full discretion of the Pastor(s)/Elder(s).
- C. All such ministries will be accountable to the Church through the Pastor(s)/Elder(s) with respect to their programs, operations, finances, choice of speakers, and content.
- D. The Pastor(s)/Elder(s) shall appoint members to direct ministries established by the Church.

Article XII: Missions

Section 1: Purpose

To support missionaries engaged in evangelism in keeping with our mission statement. Missionaries shall be in agreement with the Church's Gospel Confession and Doctrinal Statement, both in doctrine and in practice, and will be considered extensions of our ministry in other locations. (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19-20).

Section 2: Associations

No missionary or mission board that is a member of any organization promoting doctrinal error shall be presented to or supported by this Church.

Section 3: Approval/Termination

The Pastor(s)/Elder(s) shall recommend missionaries to the Church for consideration and approval. The Church will approve of missionaries during a business meeting by a $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) majority vote of the members present before determining what financial support will be given. Termination of a missionary shall take place upon the recommendation of the Pastor(s)/Elder(s) and the majority vote of the Members at a business meeting.

Article XIII: Pastoral Licensing

Section 1: Pastoral Licensing and Ordination

Since it is the Church's hope that Spirit-filled men will be called out from within the congregation to proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God, such men may be given a commission to preach and to administer the ordinances. A Pastoral license or ordination may be issued by a $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) majority vote of the members present at a business meeting, provided the Pastor(s)/Elders and the Board of Deacons approve that the candidate has the Scriptural qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9), suitable gifts (Ephesians 4:11-12), necessary training, and the blessing of God upon his public ministry (Acts 13:2).

Section 2: Women Candidates

The Church believes that the Scriptures teach that women should not be licensed or ordained to the pastoral ministry; therefore, the Church shall not endorse such applications (I Timothy 2:12).

Article XIV: Finances

Section 1: General

The program of this Church shall be supported by the tithes and offerings of the members of the Church; certain ministries of the Church may be fully or partially supported by fees charged for tuition, programs, merchandise, trips, events, etc. All methods for raising funds must be thoroughly reviewed and approved in advance by the Director of the affected Ministry, and the Pastor(s)/Elder(s). All ministries are subject to the same controls and procedures relating to the accounting for funds under the approved annual budget.

Section 2: Budget

- A. The budget will be a general fund budget and will include all ministries of Cornerstone Baptist Church. The budget is a unified system with departments.
- B. The format will be determined by the Treasurer(s) and Deacons.
- C. The Budget will be presented to the Church at the annual business meeting for approval by the members.
- D. The Deacons, Church Treasurer, and Assistant Church Treasurer of the Church will be granted permission to spend funds in harmony with the proposed annual budget.

Section 3: Assets

Only the Church at a regular or special business meeting has the authority to purchase, sell, mortgage, or encumber any real estate belonging to the Church.

Section 4: Designated Contributions

A. Special Funds

On occasion the Church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish funds to accomplish specific goals. Any special fund proposed by any individual or organization of the church shall be established only if approved by the Deacons. These funds shall be managed by the Deacons and Treasurer and shall be separate from the church's other funds.

B. Contributions and Endowments

On occasion individuals may want to contribute finances, property, or other assets to the Church above their regular contributions. Any contribution or endowment shall be given to the Church without restraint and shall be used as deemed best by the Deacons.

C. Clearinghouse

The Church shall not act as a clearinghouse for designated giving to personal projects or ministry, and will return all such gifts to the contributors.

Section 5: Non-Budgeted Expenditures

Expenditures not provided for within the annual budget, or any other church-approved plan, must be presented to the Church for approval.

Section 6: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall begin January 1st and conclude on December 31st. The annual business meeting will occur in the month of October to determine the annual budget for the following fiscal year.

Article XV: Tax Exempt Provisions

As a tax exempt organization the Church must comply with the following provisions:

Section 1: Private Inurement

No part of the net earnings of the Church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, Officers, or other private persons, except that the Church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II, Section 1 thereof.

Section 2: Political Involvement

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

Section 3: Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the Church, the elected Officers of the Church shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the Church, dispose of all of the assets of the Church to other churches and non-profit organizations with preference to those in harmony with our Doctrinal Statement.

Section 4: Racial Discrimination

The Church shall have a racially non-discriminatory policy and therefore shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin (Revelation 5:9).

Article XVI: Amendments

This Constitution may be altered or amended at any meeting of the Church by a $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) majority vote of the members present at a business meeting, providing the notice of such alterations or amendments is presented to the Church in written form at least one month before action is taken

Article XVII: Prior Documents

All by-laws heretofore adopted or in force in this Church are hereby repealed effective upon the adoption date of the subject by-laws. Further, any other rules, resolutions, or regulations, to the extent to which they are in conflict with the subject by-laws, shall also be repealed at the same time.

Revisions Log

Revision Date:	Comments:
Jan. 25, 2014	Added a new section 7 under Article 5 (Voting Members) and defined what a voting member is.
June 24, 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Added Gospel Confession (Article III and renumbered the rest of the Articles 2. Changed "Statement of Faith" Doctrinal Statement throughout document 3. Article IV Section 3.D. – Simplified and described the Biblically defensible description of the Blessed Hope 4. Article IV Section 16.C -Clarified Biblical allowances for divorce and removed disqualifying issues regarding pastors and deacons as this is not part of our moral stance as a church 5. Article IV Section 17 – Changed Statement of Faith to Doctrinal Statement and declared the intention of the church that all participants will seek to be in harmony with it. 6. Article VIII Section 3.B.1 & 4.B.1 – Harmonized our qualifications for the office of Pastor/Elder and Deacon by clarifying agreement to the church's Gospel Confession and their responsibility to the Doctrinal Statement
July 6 2021	Minor Edits throughout to change Statement of Faith to Doctrinal Statement or Gospel Confession and Statement of Faith