

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS
of
CORNERSTONE BAPTIST CHURCH
TERRELL, TEXAS

Adopted by the membership on April 17, 2016
Revised by the membership on April 29, 2018

Preamble

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants to unite here in July 1981, under the name Cornerstone Baptist Church of Terrell, Texas, for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and He has sustained and prospered this work to the present day; and Whereas we, the members of Cornerstone Baptist Church, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Spirit, have recognized the need to constitute ourselves to more closely conform to His will for the Church in this age and prepare ourselves for greater efforts in His name;

Now therefore we, the members of Cornerstone Baptist Church, do hereby organize ourselves and adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in the Statement of Faith (1853) and Covenant (2016) of this church.

Article 1 – Name

The name of this church is Cornerstone Baptist Church.

Article 2 – Purpose

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through:

- Worshipping Him;
- Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study;
- Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture;
- Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work, local, domestic, and international;
- Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion;

- Encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers;
- Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ;
- Calling fellow churches to biblical faithfulness and purity through instruction and encouragement about the nature of the local church.

Article 3 – Membership

Section 1 – Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person’s qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person’s profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

Section 2 – Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission and accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God’s leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members’ meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

Section 4 – On Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and the example

of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3: 14–15; 1 Timothy 5: 19-20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5).

- The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15: 5; 29: 15; I Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; I Timothy 3: 4–5; Hebrews 12: 1–11; Psalm 119: 115; 141: 5; Proverbs 17: 10; 25: 12; 27: 5; Ecclesiastes 7: 5; Matthew 7: 26–27; 18: 15–17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2: 40; I Corinthians 5: 5; Galatians 6: 1–5; II Thessalonians 3: 6, 14–15; I Timothy 1: 20; Titus 1:13–14; James 1: 22);
- For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33; Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5: 14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24–32 25);
- For the purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5: 6–7; II Corinthians 13: 10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2);
- For the good of our corporate witness to non–Christians (see Proverbs 28: 7; Matthew 5: 13–16; John 13: 35; Acts 5: 1–14; Ephesians 5: 11; I Timothy 3: 7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3: 10); and
- Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5: 11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chronicles 19: 2; Ezra 6: 21; Nehemiah 9: 2; Isaiah 52: 11; Ezekiel 36: 20; Matthew 5: 16; John 15: 8; 18: 17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15: 5–6; II Corinthians 6: 14–7: 1; Ephesians 1: 4; 5: 27; I Peter 2: 12).

Section 5 – Termination of Membership

The church shall recognize the termination of a person’s membership after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the elders) upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. The church shall have authority to refuse a member’s voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason. The church shall also remove a member following his or her death.

Article 4 – Meetings

Section 1 – Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

Section 2 – Members’ Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. There shall be a regular members’ meeting at least every quarter, at some time apart from a public worship service agreed upon by the membership.

An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members’ meetings of the church. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members. Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present.

A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members’ meeting not more than three months after the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders’ discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year’s level.

At any regular or special members’ meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

Special members’ meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of five percent of the voting membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

Article 5 – Officers

Section 1 – Summary

The Biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of clerk and administrator. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Section 2 – Elders

The elders shall be comprised of not less than three men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 6–9. If possible a majority of the active eldership shall be composed of church members not in the regular pay of the church, and no elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6: 1–6 and I Peter 5: 1–4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock.

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church triennially. After an elder, other than the senior or associate pastor(s), has served two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be elected to the office of elder after at least one year.

An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and I Timothy 5: 17–21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members' meeting of the church.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of senior and associate pastor. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.

The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons and the membership, shall present to the church an itemized budget. The elders, may establish unpaid positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling this responsibility and will be required to do so if there are more staff elders than lay elders. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a specially-called budget meeting and called up for a vote. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.

The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings. For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the State of Texas, the Senior Pastor will serve as the president of the corporation unless the elders decide to elect one of their number to.

Section 3 – The Senior Pastor

The senior pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out in Article 5, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 3.

He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the constitution.

In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

Section 4 – Associate Pastors

The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of associate.

An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out in Article 5, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 4.

He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation.

In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders.

Section 5 – Assistant Pastors

The church may call additional pastors, from within the congregation only, whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of assistant.

An assistant pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

His call shall be subject to the triennial reaffirmation and term limitation set out in Article 5, section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 5

He shall assist the senior pastor and associate pastor(s) in the performance of their regular duties, and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor. The elders shall define the responsibilities of the assistant pastor(s).

Section 6 – Pastoral Assistants

The senior pastor may hire additional staff to assist with pastoral ministry, designated as pastoral assistants. These shall not be pastors, though they may be recognized as elders should they be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation, in accordance with Article 5, Section 2.

The senior pastor shall assign the responsibilities of the pastoral assistant(s). They shall serve at the will of the senior pastor for an initial term up to four years, though that term may be extended with the approval of the elders.

Section 7 – Deacons

The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3: 8–13 and Acts 6: 1–7. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons.

Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration.

The deacons shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.

The deacons, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

Section 8 – Clerk

It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the pastor, the elders, the deacons, or the church.

The clerk shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of at least one year.

In the absence or incapacity of the clerk the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk.

Section 9 – Administrator

The administrator, who shall not be an active elder, deacon, or paid church staff member, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The administrator shall also ensure that all administrative actions function in accordance with predetermined church policy. Certain responsibilities may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The administrator shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The administrator shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as administrator and of the financial condition of the church.

The administrator shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of at least one year.

Article 6 – Elections

Section 1 – Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:

- Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process;
- Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;
- All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;
- The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2 – Selection of Officers

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, clerk, or administrator shall be presented by the elders at the previous members' meeting (providing that previous meeting occurred at least four weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting.

The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a 75% majority of all votes cast for the office of elder. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

Section 3 – Calling of the Senior Pastor

In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential senior pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as senior pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

Section 4 – Calling of Associate Pastor

In the calling of any man to the position of associate pastor, the same basic process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential associate pastor (unless that pastor will not be functioning as a preaching pastor) and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as associate pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

Section 5 – Calling of Assistant Pastor

The calling of any man to the position of assistant pastor requires that that man have been recognized and called by the congregation to the office of elder, according to the process described in Article 6, Section 2. Such a man may then be called by the elders to serve as assistant pastor with defined duties for a fixed period of time specified by the elders in the terms of his call.

Article 7 – Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

Section 1 – Marriage

The church believes that the term “marriage” has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive and covenantal union, as delineated in Scripture. Due to the importance of marriage in the biblical witness, the church adopts the following policy:

Section 2 – Clergy

- 1) Only duly ordained clergy shall officiate at marriage ceremonies conducted on church property.
- 2) Clergy employed by the church shall be subject to dismissal and/or loss of ordination for officiating a same gender marriage ceremony.

Section 3 – Applicants

1) Applicants wishing to have a ceremony performed by a member of the clergy employed by the church, or to use the church facilities, shall affirm their agreement with the church's Statement of Faith, and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.

2) Applicants shall receive 4 sessions of premarital counseling by clergy or counselors employed by the church or other persons who, in the sole opinion of the pastoral staff of the church, have appropriate training, experience, and spiritual understanding to provide such counseling.

Section 4 – Premises

1) Any marriage performed on church premises shall be officiated by a member of the clergy.

2) Clergy officiating marriage ceremonies on church premises, whether or not employed by the church, shall affirm their agreement with the church's Statement of Faith and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.

3) The clergy assigned by the church to implement the procedures contained in this Marriage Policy may, in his sole discretion, decline to make church facilities available for, and/or decline to officiate at, a ceremony when, in his judgment, there are significant concerns that one or both of the applicants may not be qualified to enter into the sacred bond of marriage for theological, doctrinal, moral or legal reasons.

Section 5 – Sexuality

The church believes that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. That God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. The church believes that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God. The church believes that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

The church believes that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

The church believes that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the church.

Article 8 – Dispute Resolution

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18: 15–20, I Corinthians 6: 1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities.

Article 9 – Dissolution

Upon dissolution, all assets of the Church shall become the property of the Kauf-Van Baptist Association.

Article 10 – Amendments

The Statement of Faith and Church Covenant may be amended by a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members by the church clerk.

CORNERSTONE BAPTIST CHURCH
Statement of Faith

1 – The Bible We believe that the Holy Bible was inspired by God, written by men and is completely free from error. It is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction and reveals the principles by which God will judge us. It is to be believed, obeyed, and embraced in all that it teaches, commands, and promises. It includes within it the only way of salvation. It will remain to the end of the world the supreme standard and final authority by which all matters of life and doctrine should be tested.

2 – The True God We believe that there is only one living and true God. He is the eternal, infinite Creator and supreme Ruler of heaven and earth. He is merciful, just, and loving and governs all things according to His sovereign will for His glory. He is inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and is worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love.

3 – The Trinity We believe that the one living and true God exists eternally as three distinct persons– the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; each is fully God and equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

4 – Humanity and the Fall of Man We believe humanity is the special creation of God, made in his own image. God created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. The gift of marriage consists of the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime, and this gift models the way God relates to His people. God created the human race in holiness under his law. By voluntary transgression, however, humanity fell from that holy and happy state. As a result, all people are now sinners, not by external compulsion but by choice. They by nature entirely lack the holiness that is required by the law of God and are actively inclined to evil. Therefore, they are under just condemnation to a sentence of eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

5 – The Way of salvation We believe that the salvation of sinners is only by the grace of God through the work of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the all-sufficient Savior of the world. He is truly God and truly man, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught the way of God's kingdom, worked miracles, suffered, died, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven where He now rules and reigns. In His death He became our sacrificial substitute, providing full atonement for our sins, satisfying the wrath of God.

6 – Justification We believe that justification is the blessing in which those who believe in Christ are declared righteous. It includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on the basis of Christ's righteousness. It is given freely by God, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the person and work of Christ. This brings us into peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needed for time and eternity.

7 – The Freeness Of Salvation We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel, and that it is the immediate duty of all to accept the gospel by a penitent and obedient faith. There is nothing that prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel, which results in condemnation.

8 – Regeneration We believe that in order to be saved sinners must be regenerated, or born again. Regeneration consists in God giving a holy disposition to the mind, and it is effected by the power of the Holy Spirit in a manner beyond our comprehension. This is in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel. Its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.

9 – Repentance And Faith We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties as well as inseparable graces. They are brought about in our souls by the Holy Spirit in regeneration, whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with genuine sorrow, confession, and supplication for mercy. At the same time we heartily receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and rely on Him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

10 – Sovereign Grace We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners, only because of His sovereign good pleasure. This is perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, and is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable. It utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy. The election of individuals to life may be confirmed by its effects in everyone who truly believes the gospel. It is the foundation of Christian assurance.

11 – Sanctification We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness. It is a progressive work that is begun in regeneration and is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who is the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of spiritual disciplines, including reading and hearing the word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, prayer, and the oversight and fellowship of the visible church.

12 – The Perseverance Of Saints We believe that genuine believers are only those who endure to the end. Their persevering obedience to Christ and attachment to His people are the primary mark distinguishing them from superficial professors. A special providence watches over their welfare and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

13 – The Church We believe that the invisible church is the communion of God’s people drawn from every tribe, language, people, and nation throughout all the ages. It is made visible in local churches: congregations of baptized believers, joined together by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel. A local church is marked by the right preaching of God’s word and right administration of the ordinances. It is governed by the word of God, which teaches that its offices are Elders and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined most clearly in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. The mission of the church is to be a corporate display of God’s glory to the world by preaching the gospel and making disciples.

14 – Baptism And The Lord’s Supper We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; to show forth our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior in a solemn and beautiful symbol. It symbolizes our death to sin and resurrection to a new life and it is a response to the command of Christ. Baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper then takes place as baptized believers, by the sacred use of bread and juice, commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination. The ordinances belong to the gathered church, marking off believers from unbelievers and making the church visible on earth.

15 – The Lord’s Day We believe the first day of the week is the Lord’s Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and points to the rest that awaits the people of God. It should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord’s Day should be consistent with the Christian’s conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

16 – Civil Government We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society, and that officials are to be prayed for and conscientiously honored. They are to be obeyed except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

17 – The World To Come We believe that it is only those who through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified by the Spirit of our God who are truly righteous in His esteem. At the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be judged and sentenced to endless conscious punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness. Those belonging to Jesus will have eternal life in the new heavens and the new earth and live in ever-increasing joy to the glory of God.

Appendix 2

**CORNERSTONE BAPTIST CHURCH
Membership Covenant**

Having been brought by God's grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to surrender ourselves wholly to Him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, we now, in dependence upon His Spirit, establish this covenant with each other.

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

We will be devoted to one another in brotherly love. With humility and gentleness we will patiently bear with each other, forgiving, encouraging and building one another up, exercising watchfulness over each other and admonishing one another when necessary.

We will not neglect to gather together, or to pray for ourselves and others.

We promise to bring up our children in the training and instruction of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

We will rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep, helping to carry each other's burdens.

We will seek, by God's help, to live carefully in this world, denying ungodliness and worldly passions. We will strive to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, as we wait for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

We will defend and maintain an evangelical ministry in this church by supporting and upholding: the preaching of the Word of God, the administration of the gospel ordinances, and the exercise of church discipline.

We will contribute cheerfully, generously, and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

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

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