



SMYRNA BIBLE CHURCH CONSTITUTION

10/1/2015

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**SMYRNA BIBLE CHURCH
CONSTITUTION**

ARTICLE I- NAME

This organization shall be known as, "The Smyrna Bible Church," of Whites Bridge Road Smyrna, Michigan.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

Sec. A. - Phases of its Ministry

The object of this church is the ministry of the Word of God for the salvation of souls, the edification of Christians , the world-wide proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ , the promotion of Godly worship, the defense of the "Faith Once Delivered, " and cooperation with Christian activity.

Sec. B. - Independence and Autonomy

It is the purpose of the original incorporators of this church that it shall be and forever remain an independent and autonomous organization adhering to the fundamental and premillennial doctrines of the Christian faith, as set forth in the Holy Bible, and as defined in the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of IFCA International as revised in 2009. *(Approved and revised 10/1/2015)*

Sec. C. - Undenominational Charter

It is likewise the original purpose of this church, in accordance with the New Testament example and teaching, that it shall forever remain free from denominationalism. It shall, for this reason, avoid identification with denominations or associations of churches by means of its name, or by the observance of traditions peculiar to such denominations or associations. It shall never change its name nor its polity so as to effect such identification. I Cor. 1:11-13; 3:1-9

Sec. D. - Amendments to ARTICLE

The provisions of Article II shall be amended only by unanimous consent of the membership

ARTICLE III - FELLOWSHIP

Sec. A. - Fellowship with other local churches

Fellowship with other local independent churches shall be maintained by this church. It may also enter into such cooperation with other fundamental churches as shall not jeopardize its undenominational and fundamental position. To this end, the church may be a member of and affiliate with the Independent Fundamental Churches of America as long as such membership does not jeopardize its independence or fundamental character.

Sec. B. - Affiliation with local church councils

Affiliation or cooperation with local church councils, etc., shall be such as shall not compromise the fundamental doctrinal position of this church.

Sec. C. - Amendments to ARTICLE II

The provisions of Article II shall be amended only by unanimous consent of the membership.

ARTICLE-IV - STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE

Our Doctrinal Statement is the Articles of Faith and Doctrine of IFCA International as revised in 2009. *(Approved and revised 10/1/2015)*

ARTICLE V – ORDINANCES

We recognize two ordinances of the church for this age - The Lord's Supper and Water Baptism. They are not to be regarded, however, as a means of salvation, nor as means of grace by which special merit is obtained.

Sec. A. - The Lord's Supper

This ordinance shall be observed at least once each quarter and as often as the pastor and deacons shall decide on special occasions. All who have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior and are walking in fellowship with the Lord shall be welcome to join in this service unless they are under the discipline of the church, as defined in Article VI Sec. D Part 2. I Cor. 11:17-34.

Sec. B. - Water Baptism

When administered by this church, baptism shall be by immersion at the request of those who have personally acknowledged Christ as Savior. This ordinance shall not be a requirement for membership in this church, Acts 8:36-39; 10:47-48; I Cor. 1:14-17

ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP

Sec. A. - Qualifications of Members

Persons who give testimony to their faith in Christ as Savior who give assurance of their willingness to follow and submit themselves to the Word of God are, the only rule of faith, doctrine, and practice, and shall indicate their agreement with the Constitution of this church shall be eligible for membership.

Sec. B. - Reception of Members

1. Christians who desire to associate themselves with this church, and who fulfill the qualifications for membership shall make application to the Pastor or the Board of Deacons. They shall then meet with the Pastor and Board for examination and approval.
2. Applicants who have been approved for reception into the membership shall be recommended to the church, and the right hand of fellowship shall be extended to them at a following Sunday morning service. Their membership shall then be in force.

Sec. C. - Status of Membership

The membership of this church shall consist of three groups, namely Active Membership,

Associate Membership, and Inactive Membership.

1. Active Membership shall consist of such Christians as have been received in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and who are not members of any other church.
 - a. Active members who have reached the age of 18 years shall be entitled to vote.
 - b. No minimum age shall be set for membership. The fitness of each applicant who is under voting age shall be determined by the Pastor and Board of Deacons.
2. Associate Membership shall be extended to those who meet the qualifications of Active Membership, but are not permanent residents of this area; such as students and missionaries, who may hold regular membership elsewhere. They shall be permitted to teach a Sunday School class or participate in a similar ministry. They shall have the right to attend the business meetings of the church, but shall not have the right to vote.
3. Inactive Membership shall consist of the following :
 - a. Those who no longer have residence in this area, but still desire to hold their membership in this church;
 - b. Those who have been absent from the services of the church for a period of 4 months without giving a satisfactory reason for such absence ;
 - c. Those who have come under some disciplinary action of the church. Inactive members shall not have the right to vote or hold any office in the church.

Sec. D - Discipline of Members

1. The reasons for discipline are threefold,
 - a. Non-attendance, as described in Article VI, Sec. C., Part 3. An annual review of the active membership shall be conducted by the Pastor and Board of Deacons, after which those who have been absent for a period of 4 months shall be placed on the Inactive Rolls provided that a contact has first been made in the interest of restoring them to regular attendance .
 - b. Doctrinal deviation, or heresy. I Tim. 6:3-5; Titus 3:10-11; Rom. 16.,17-18
 - c. Immoral conduct. I Cor. 5:9-13; II Cor. 6:14-17; II Thess. 3:6.
2. The discipline of this church in doctrinal and moral matters shall be entrusted to the Pastor and the Board of Deacons, Any disciplinary action that is deemed necessary shall be in the spirit of love, (II Thess. 3 :14-15;) and meekness (Gal, 6:1).
 - a. No accusation shall be brought against any member except upon the testimony of two or three witnesses .Matt. 18 :16; II Cor. 13:1; I Tim. 5:19
 - b. The suspected person shall be confronted with the charge with the desire and effort to correct the difficulty and restore proper fellowship. If this does not lead to restoration of fellowship, charges shall be put in writing and placed in the hands of the suspected person, he or she summoned to meet the Board not more than two and not less than one week subsequently. Failure on the part of the accused to appear for trial will not prevent the Board from examining the case and rendering a verdict in accord with the testimony received. In the event the individual being disciplined is not satisfied with the decision of the Board, he or she may appeal to the congregation as a whole and will have the privilege of being tried before the congregation. A simple majority vote of all the

members of the church present at the final hearing will decide the case.

- c. The names of persons who leave this church to unite with another church, without a letter from this church, shall be erased from the roll by vote of the Board. Those disciplined because of doctrinal deviation shall be placed on the Inactive Roll. Those who are guilty of heresy and who refuse to report of their error shall be excommunicated from the church. Those who are guilty of immoral conduct shall be placed on the Inactive Roll and forbidden to partake of the Lord's Supper. I Cor. 5:11-13. Persistent immorality shall result in excommunication from the church by action of the Board. The names of any whose status of membership has been changed shall be reported at a Sunday Morning service either by announcement from the pulpit or publication in the Sunday bulletin, indicating whether they have been placed on the Inactive Roll, erased from the Roll, or excommunicated.

3. The purpose of all discipline shall be to restore the individual to fellowship and active membership in the church. Such efforts shall be made in the light of the following Scriptures Gal. 6:1-2; II Thess.- 3:14-15; Heb. 10:24-25; James 5:19-20; Restoration to fellowship shall be granted upon due repentance and by action of the Pastor and Board of Deacons,

Sec. E. - Letters of Transfer

1. Letters of transfer shall be received from other fundamental churches, subject to the provisions of Article VI, Sec. A and B.
2. Letters of transfer to fundamental churches shall be granted to those on the Inactive Roll. Application for dismissal from this church, and recommendations for membership in other fundamental churches should be made by letter to the Church Clerk, being careful to state the name of the church with which it is desired to affiliate. Letters shall be granted by action of the Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE VII - GOVERNMENT

Sec. A. - Church Government

The government of this church shall be vested in the Active Membership and executed through duly elected officers, boards, and committees in accord with all of the provisions of this Constitution.

Sec. B. - The Church Board

1. The Board shall be composed of the Pastor(s), Board of Deacons, the Church Clerk and the Sunday School Superintendent. (*Approved and revised 10/1/2015*)
2. This Board shall consist of at least three men. In the event there are less than three Deacons, any three Board members shall be designated as Trustees for the purpose of handling legal matters, These Trustees shall continue in office until their successors are in office. When possible, the Board of Deacons shall consist of three or more men, depending on the size of the church and the availability of qualified persons.
3. This Board shall meet within two weeks of the Annual Meeting for organizational purposes. It shall meet monthly thereafter at times designated at the first meeting ,

and at other times when deemed necessary upon call of the Pastor. The Pastor shall preside at these meetings. In the absence of the Pastor, the Chairman shall be appointed by the Board from its membership.

Sec. C. - Election of Officers

1. Nominating Committee

- a. A Nominating Committee, composed of the Pastor, two Board members and two other Active Members of the church, shall be appointed by the Church Board at a meeting held three months prior to the Annual Meeting.
- b. This Committee shall meet to consider the qualifications for office of all active members, of the church. It shall present to the church a slate of candidates for the various offices to be filled. It shall recommend the number of Deacons to be elected, and shall nominate, if possible, more than one candidate for each vacancy in all offices to be filled.
- c. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be announced from, the pulpit and posted on the bulletin board one month prior to the Annual Meeting. Members of the church who object to any part of the report or who desire to nominate additional candidates shall notify the Committee within two weeks of the day the report appears with reasons for their action. All nominations must be approved by the Nominating Committee.

2. Election Procedure Officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the church. When there is more than one nominee for any given office, voting shall be by ballot. A simple majority is required to elect all church officers except the Pastor.
3. Vacancies In the event of an office being vacated after the Annual Meeting, the remaining members of the Board may appoint a man to fill this office until the next Annual Meeting of the church.

Sec. D. - Committees

1. Standing Committees for the administration of the various phases of the work shall be designated and appointed by the congregation at the annual meeting or by the Church Board at the first meeting following the Annual Meeting of the church.
2. Special Committees for short term service may be appointed as needed by the Board or other duly constituted board of the church.
3. The appointment of all committees shall be reported to the church on the Sunday following the meeting at which they were appointed.
4. Every Committee and organization shall report regularly to the unit by which they were appointed, and annually to the church.

Sec. E. - Meetings

1. Annual Meeting

- a. The Annual Meeting of the membership shall be held the first Monday evening of May each year. The Fiscal Year shall be May 1 through April 30.
 - b. The agenda shall include the presentation of reports by the officers, committees, organizations, and Pastor of the church; the annual election of officers; and such other matters as are deemed necessary.
2. The Board of Deacons shall meet within two weeks of the Annual Meeting, and all other organizational units within one month of the Annual Meeting for organizational

purposes. They shall at this time set a schedule for meetings throughout the year at regular intervals.

3. Special business meetings of the membership may be held at any time upon call of the Pastor, the Board, or by written request to the Board of twenty five percent of the voting members of the congregation. The call of such a meeting and its purpose must be announced at the morning service on two consecutive Sundays preceding the date of the meeting. Records of those announcements must be kept with the regular minutes of the business meetings of the church by the Clerk.
4. A Quorum at the Annual Meeting or Special meetings of the membership shall be twenty five percent of all voting members. When less than fifty percent are present, a two-thirds majority shall be required to pass any measure.
5. The Pastor shall preside at the Annual Meeting and all Special Business meetings. In the event of the absence of the Pastor, the Chairman of these meetings shall be appointed by the Board.
6. The membership shall meet at such times as designated by the board or as otherwise called regularly to transact the same business as above (1b), with the exception of election of officers.

Sec. F. - Arbitration Board

1. In the event the internal affairs of the church should reach a state of controversy that it seems impossible to achieve peaceful negotiations between the Pastor and the congregation and/or between factions in the membership, a Board of Arbitration shall be called in to aid in reaching a point of agreement.
2. This Board shall be composed of Pastors of three independent churches, named by the Board of Deacons. The Board of Arbitration shall have the privilege of calling in two additional qualified consultants. *(Approved and revised 5/2/1994)*
3. The Board of Arbitration shall be filled by a two thirds majority vote by secret ballot of the Board, or by a petition presented to the Board bearing the names of twenty five percent of the voting membership.
4. The decision of this Board shall be binding upon the congregations and its conclusions must be accepted by all with the following exceptions;
 - a. It has no power to change the Constitution or Doctrinal Statement, nor even pass judgment on it. It must uphold the Constitution.
 - b. It has no power to dissolve the church, nor dispose of real estate.

ARTICLE VIII - MINISTRY

Sec. A. - Responsibility of the Membership

1. All members of this church shall be expected to participate in its ministry, in such measure as talents and circumstances enable them. Such service shall be voluntary and subject to the supervision of the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.
2. The members of this church are urged to cultivate all those graces in their Christian lives that will glorify the Lord, promote spiritual growth, and further the ministry of the church. And they are further entreated;
 - a. to engage in private and family Bible reading, prayer, and the regular attendance at the services of the church ; Heb. 10 :25; I Tim .4:12-16
 - b. to practice daily living that is consistent with the Scriptural principles of the

Christian life; to abstain from worldliness in all its forms, avoiding such alliances which would constitute an unequal yoke with unbelievers; To guard against religious apostasy and false teaching; Titus 2 :11-15; II Cor . 6:14-7:1; I John 2:15-17.

- c. to support the financial program of the church with systematic, "storehouse tithing"; I Cor. 16:2; Mal .3: 8-10
- d. to fellowship in Christian love and unity with the entire membership , so as to avoid the development of factions. I Cor. 1:10; James 2:1-5.

Sec. B. - Leadership and Duties of the Pastor

1. Qualifications

- a. The Pastor shall be a man who gives evidence of the call of God to the ministry of the Gospel and of adherence to the Scriptural principles the ministry of the Gospel and of adherence governing church leadership. He shall be recognized as a God- appointed leader of the congregation.
- b. Any man to be considered as a candidate for this pastorate shall have read this Constitution and verbally signify his unreserved agreement with its provisions and with the undenominational position of this church.

2. Call

- a. The Church Board shall act as a Pulpit Committee or shall appoint a Pulpit Committee to investigate possible candidates and arrange for them to speak at Sunday services. Investigation of a candidate shall include a questionnaire regarding training, pastoral experience, and qualifications mentioned in Sec. B. I, above. A visit by members of the Board to his present pastorate is advisable where possible.
- b. When a qualified candidate has spoken at two Sunday services, his name may be presented by the Board for a vote at a regularly called congregational meeting. A three-quarters majority vote shall be required to extend a call. Only one candidate shall be considered at a time

3. Duties

- a. The Pastor and his wife (if applicable), by virtue of his office as spiritual leader and shepherd of the flock, becomes a member of this church, and his duties shall be those generally associated with his office, including the ministry of the Word, administration of the ordinances, and the care of the spiritual welfare of the members. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and organizations within the church. (*Approved and revised 10-1-2015*)
- b. Activities and ministries outside the local field, such as attendance at conferences, Bible teaching and evangelistic campaigns, vacations, etc., shall be arranged in conference with the Board.

4. Termination

- a. The Pastor's term of office shall be indefinite. A notice of 30 days shall be given to terminate, with remuneration and services continuing through this period, unless otherwise mutually agreed.
- b. A vote may be taken by the congregation at any time to terminate the pastor's services subject to the following:
 - (1) A special meeting may be called for that purpose in accord with Article VII, Sec. E.

- (2) It shall be placed on the agenda of a regular meeting, provided that previous action has been taken by the Board, or a petition if twenty-five percent of the membership has been presented to the Board.
 - (3) A two-thirds majority shall be required to terminate the pastor's services.
- c. In the event of doctrinal or moral defection, the Pastor's services may be terminated immediately by action of the Board, to be ratified by a vote of the congregation within 30 days.

Sec. C. - Qualifications and Functions of Board Members

1. All Board members must be active members of this church.
2. The qualifications set forth in I Tim. 3: 8-13, as applicable to each office, shall be required of all members of the Board. They shall be able to answer in the affirmative the following questions, to be asked by the Nominating Committee: First: - "Have you read the Scriptures listed above?" Second: - "Is it your purpose, God enabling you, to meet the standards in these Scriptures?"
3. The terms of Deacons shall be for three years, and their election shall be so arranged by the Nominating Committee that all shall not terminate at the same time.
4. Functions
 - a. The Deacons shall be responsible, with the Pastor, for the spiritual oversight of the church. They shall arrange the details of all church meetings, and perform all duties ascribed to them in other parts of this Constitution. The Board shall function for the Pastor in emergencies or when the church has no pastor. They shall administer all business matters of the church, shall function as trustees in all legal transactions, and shall be responsible for the maintenance of all church property. They shall, with the Pastor, minister to the needy and supervise the benevolent funds of the church.
 - b. The Clerk shall keep a record of all business meetings of the church and the Board, and of the call of such meetings. He shall maintain an up-to-date list of the names and addresses of all members, and be prepared to declare the voting membership at each business meeting. He shall be the custodian of all official papers and keep an inventory of the same. The Clerk shall possess the qualifications of a Deacon and shall be elected by the congregation for a term of one year. He shall be a member of the Board.
 - c. The Treasurer shall deposit all funds as soon as possible after receipt. The treasurer shall submit a monthly report to the Board of Deacons and an annual report to the church. The books of the Treasurer shall be audited annually under the direction of the Board of Deacons. The Treasurer shall be elected each year for a 1 year term by the congregation. *(Approved and revised 10-1-2015)*
 - d. The financial Secretary shall maintain any donor's records in separate, confidential files. The receipts shall be audited annually along with the books of the Treasurer. The Financial Secretary shall be appointed annually by the Board from the Active Membership, but his office shall not constitute him a member of the Board.
 - e. Offerings counts shall be accomplished by at least two persons other than the Financial Secretary and Treasurer. Counts shall be recorded by date and amount as to purpose(s) (general, youth, designation, etc.) and retained in

separate records for audit purposes. Funds shall be immediately transmitted to the Treasurer for prompt deposit in a bank.

Sec. D. - Sunday School Ministry

1. This ministry shall be recognized as an extension of the Bible teaching ministry of the church. It shall be administered by a Board composed of the Sunday School Superintendent and the teaching staff, and such officers as they may appoint.
2. The Teaching Staff, which are appointed by the Sunday School Superintendent, and all other Sunday School officers shall be Active or Associate Members of the church, and shall be appointed on a temporary basis until meeting the approval of the Pastor and Board of Deacons.
3. The Sunday School Superintendent shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Church.
4. The curriculum of the Sunday School must have the approval of the Pastor and Board of Deacons.
5. All regular Sunday school offerings and expenses shall be handled through the general fund of the church. A record of all offerings deposited with the Church Treasurer and all expenditures authorized by the Sunday School Board shall be kept by the Sunday School Secretary. Missionary contributions from the Sunday School must have the approval of the Missionary Committee.

Sec. E. - Missionary Policy

1. To insure the regular activity of the Church in the cause of missions at home and abroad, a Missionary Committee can be appointed at a congregation meeting or by the Board.
2. This Committee is responsible to communicate with all mission fields in which the Church has an interest, and to investigate and report to the Church on any matter requiring action.
3. The Missionary Committee shall make recommendations to the Board regarding changes or additions to the Church missionary program. All new commitments shall have Church approval, and shall be handled through an independent, fundamental, and reputable mission board or society.

ARTICLE IX - FINANCES

Sec. A.

The financial program of this Church and its sub organizations shall be supported only through the free-will offerings of Christians, and unsolicited gifts of those interested in its ministry.

Sec. B.

Loans or credit in excess of \$1500.00 above the liabilities reported at the last Annual Meeting must have congregational approval - Except for budgeted items.

Sec. C. - Designated Funds

1. Any temporary use of funds for purposes other than designated must have approval of the Board.

2. If the purpose for which funds have been previously designated is to be changed, it must be done with congregational approval.
3. Gifts designated through the Church for a specific purpose or person shall be so used, unless the donor approves a change. Otherwise, the gift shall be returned.

ARTICLE X - PROPERTIES

Sec. A. -

The title to all property of this Church, both real and personal, shall be and remain vested in that portion of the Active Membership that shall remain faithful to the original purpose stated in Articles II and III of the Constitution, and in Article Five of the Articles of Association of this Church .

Sec. B. - Acquisition and Sale of Property

1. The Church shall have power to acquire and hold property, both real and personal, for the general purpose of the Church. All property so acquired shall be in the name of the Church.
2. Any sale mortgage, or transfer of real or personal property valued in excess of \$500.00 shall be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a regularly called business meeting.

Sec. C. - Use of Property

1. All properties belonging to the Church shall be available to the membership for purposes consistent with the ministry of the Church, subject to regulation by the Board of Deacons.
2. The Pastor or other representatives of the Board shall have access at all times and under all circumstances to all properties owned by the Church.

Sec. D. - Dissolution

No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, director or officer of the corporation or to any private individual, and no donor, member, director, officer of the corporation, or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporation assets. Upon dissolution , any assets of the corporation must be distributed to, the Independent Fundamental Churches of America if it then exists and is exempt from Federal Income Tax, otherwise to one or more organizations recognized by the Internal Revenue as one organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary or educational purposes.

ARTICLE XI - ORDINATION

Sec. A. - Composition and Function of Council of Ordination

1. When, in the judgment of the Board of Deacons , a man in this membership, or in special cases a non-member , is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of said Board to call and conduct a Council of Ordination after the approval of the church has been obtained by a vote. This Council shall consist of ordained Christian ministers, and, if possible, one delegate from each fundamental church

- invited to participate.
2. The Council of Ordination shall thoroughly examine the applicant regarding his personal Christian experience, call to the ministry, educational training, doctrinal belief, reputation, and demonstrated efficiency in Christian service. The applicant shall give evidence of his agreement with those provisions of the Constitution of this Church with respect to doctrine, independence of the local church, and Scriptural qualifications for church leadership.
 3. Upon completion of the examination of the applicant, a 2/3 majority vote by the Council of Ordination shall be required to recommend his ordination to the church. When so recommended, a public ordination service shall be arranged by the Council of Ordination in consultation with the pastor or other representative of the church, and the applicant.
 4. The minutes of the Counsel of Ordination and of the public service shall be incorporated into the records of church meetings, and a Certificate of Ordination shall be provided for the newly ordained minister.

Sec. B. - Discipline of Ordained Ministers

1. The Board of Deacons shall have the power to discipline, even to the revoking of the ordination credentials of any minister ordained under this Constitution, if the said minister is found guilty of doctrinal or moral defection after an impartial trial conducted in the spirit of I Cor. 13.
2. The minister under discipline shall have the privilege of appealing his case to the congregation within 60 days after the decision of the Board.

ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS

Sec. A. -

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present, with the exception of articles II and III, at a regularly called meeting, provided that such amendment is presented in written form, at least one month previous to the meeting, and by public announcement as provided in Article VII Sec. E.

Sec. B. -

Amendments of Articles II and III shall require unanimous consent of the Active Membership.

AMENDMENT A

Associate Pastor:

Any Associate/Assistant Pastor(s) acquired by the church should follow the same spiritual qualifications set forth for the Senior Pastor. The church board shall act as a pulpit committee or shall appoint a pulpit committee to investigate possible candidates. The duties of the Associate Pastor shall be defined by the board and clearly explained to both the candidate and the church membership. The Associate Pastor's job responsibility will vary based on the current needs of the church.

He shall be an ex-officio member of the church board and any committees or organizations he may serve on within the church. By virtue of his office as a spiritual leader in the church,

he becomes a member of this church along with his wife (if applicable). He shall be recognized as a God-appointed leader in God's church.

As a board member the Associate/Assistant pastor(s) shall not participate in pastoral reviews or take part in retaining or releasing any pastor or assistant pastor.

A three-quarters majority vote shall be required to extend a call to an Associate/Assistant Pastor. The termination of the Associate Pastor shall follow the same guidelines as set forth for the Senior Pastor. *(Approved and revised 10/1/2015)*

AMENDMENT B

Marriage and Sexuality:

According to the Bible, marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race. We believe that sexual intimacy is a wonderful gift of God that is only to be expressed between one man and one woman (as genetically defined), within the love and bonds of marriage. (Genesis 2:24-25; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:21-33, 1 Corinthians 7:3-5; Hebrews 13:4).

We believe that any form of sexual intimacy outside of marriage is both immoral and a perversion of God's gift (Leviticus 18:1-30; Proverbs 6:32; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8). Furthermore, we believe that any form of sexual immorality such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, cohabitation (regardless of the age of the individuals involved), any attempt to change one's gender in disagreement with one's genetically defined gender, is sinful and offensive to God (Leviticus 18-20; Romans 1).

We believe that in order to preserve the function, unity 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 whether at church, home, or in the community.

In light of our biblical commitments, the pastor(s) of Smyrna Bible Church will perform no same gender weddings or any other anti-biblical weddings or ceremonies at the church or at any other location.

Furthermore, no member or nonmember parties will be allowed to use any facilities of the church for same gender and/or sexually immoral weddings, wedding receptions, or other functions.

We do believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Romans 8). And we believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior, attitudes or speech directed towards any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture or the doctrines of Smyrna Bible Church (1 Peter 2:13-25; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12). *(Approved and revised 10/1/2015)*

IFCA International
Articles of Faith and Doctrine

Section I. Articles of Biblical Faith

Each and every person, church, or organization, in order to become or remain a member of IFCA International, shall be required to subscribe to the following articles of faith:

1. The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16,17; 2 Peter 1:20,21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12,13).

2. The Godhead

We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – coeternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

3. The Person and Work of Christ

- a. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men (John 1:1,2,14; Luke 1:35).
- b. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for all mankind as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, and that the sufficiency of this atoning sacrifice to accomplish the redemption and justification of all who trust in Him is assured by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Romans 3:24,25; 4:25; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Timothy 4:10; Hebrews 2:9; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 2:24; and 2 Peter 2:1).
- 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; Hebrews 9:24; 7:25; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:1,2).

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; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13,14).
- b. We believe that He is the divine teacher who guides believers into all truth; and, that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (John 16:13; 1 John 2:20,27; Ephesians 5:18).

5. The Total Depravity of Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and, that man is totally depraved, and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Genesis 1:26,27; Romans 3:22,23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12).

6. Salvation

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

7. The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers

- a. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37-40;10:27-30; Romans 8:1,38,39; I Corinthians 1:4-8; 1 Peter 1:5).
- b. 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 (Romans 13:13,14; Galatians 5:13;Titus 2:11-15).

8. The Two Natures of the Believer

We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit; and, that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural (Romans 6:13;8:12,13; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 3:5-9).

9. Separation

- a. We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded of God (2Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 12:1-2; Romans 14:13; John 2:15-17; 2 John 1:9-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1).
- b. We believe that sexual intimacy is a wonderful gift of God that is only to be expressed between one man and one woman (as genetically defined), within the love and bonds of marriage (Genesis 2:24-25; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5; Hebrews 13:4). Therefore, we believe that any other form of sexual intimacy is both immoral and a perversion of God's gift (Leviticus 18:1-30; Proverbs 6:32; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).

10. Missions

We believe that it is the obligation of the saved to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8, 2 Corinthians 5:19,20).

11. The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts

- a. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts; and, that the gifts of evangelists, pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today; and, that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12).
- b. We believe that the biblical offices of pastor and elder in the church, or their equivalents, are restricted to biblically qualified men (1 Timothy 2:12; 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
- c. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His

own will, for the sick and afflicted (John 15:7; 1 John 5:14-15).

12. The Church

- a. We believe that the Church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of this present age (Ephesians 1:22,23; 5:25-27; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 11:2).
- b. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:27; 20:17; 28-32; 1 Timothy 3:1- 13; Titus 1:5-11).
- c. We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Romans 16:1-4; 1 Corinthians 3:9,16; 5:4-7; 13; 1 Peter 5:1- 4).
- d. We believe in the ordinances of believer's water baptism and the Lord's supper as scriptural means of testimony for the church age (Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 2:41,42; 18:8; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).


13. Dispensationalism

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these -- the age of law, the age of the Church, and the age of the millennial kingdom -- are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture (John 1:17; 1 Corinthians 9:17; 2 Corinthians 3:9-18; Galatians 3:13-25; Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:24,25; Hebrews 7:19; Revelation 20:2-6).

14. The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the fall; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and, that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6,7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

15. The Second Advent of Christ

We believe in that "Blessed Hope," the personal, imminent, pre-tribulation and premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to earth, with His saints, to establish His millennial kingdom (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; Revelation 3:10 ).

16. The Eternal State

- a. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46; John 5:28,29; 11:25,26; Revelation 20:5,6,12,13).
- b. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (Luke 23:43; Revelation

20:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; I Thessalonians 4:16,17).

c. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment (Luke 16:19-26; Matthew 25:41-46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7- 9; Jude vv. 6,7; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 20:11-15).

Section 2. Movements Contrary to Faith

Ecumenism

Ecumenism is that movement which seeks the organizational unity of all Christianity and ultimately of all religions. Its principal advocates are the World Council of Churches and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Ecumenical Evangelism

Ecumenical Evangelism is that effort to promote the Gospel by bringing fundamentalists into an unequal yoke with theological liberals and/or Roman Catholics and other divergent groups.

Neo-Orthodoxy

Neo-Orthodoxy is that theological movement which affirms: the transcendence of God, the finiteness and sinfulness of man, and the necessity of supernatural divine revelation of truth; but, while using evangelical terminology, seriously departs from orthodoxy: in accepting the views of destructive higher criticism, in denying the inerrancy of the Bible as historic revelation, in accepting religious experience as the criterion of truth, and in abandoning important fundamentals of the Christian faith.

New Evangelicalism (Neo-Evangelicalism, New Conservatism)

These terms refer to that movement within evangelicalism characterized by a toleration of and a dialogue with theological liberalism. Its essence is seen in an emphasis upon the social application of the Gospel and weak or unclear doctrines of: the inspiration of Scripture, Biblical creationism, eschatology, dispensationalism, and separation. It is further characterized by an attempt to accommodate biblical Christianity and make it acceptable to the modern mind. We believe that these movements are out of harmony with the Word of God and the official doctrine and position of IFCA International and are inimical to the work of God.

Section 3. Covenant of Faith

In subscribing to these articles of faith, we by no means set aside, or undervalue, any of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; but we deem the knowledge, belief and acceptance of the Truth as set forth in our Doctrinal Statement, to be essential to sound faith and fruitful practice, and therefore requisite for Christian fellowship in IFCA International.