

**CHURCH CONSTITUTION FOR THE  
TRI-COUNTY BAPTIST CHURCH OF CINCINNATI, OHIO**

*(Adopted April 18, 1982)  
(Revised April 20, 1997, January 13, 2013 & January 25, 2015)*

**ARTICLE I - NAME**

The name of this organization, incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio, is Tri-County Baptist Church of Cincinnati, Ohio.

**ARTICLE II - PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Bible-believing church shall be: the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that souls may be saved, the administration of the two ordinances of the New Testament, the promotion of the spiritual growth of its members through the teaching of God's Word, and the evangelization of the world.

**ARTICLE III - DECLARATION OF FAITH, COVENANT, POLICY, AND AFFILIATION**

**A. DECLARATION OF FAITH**

We believe:

1. the Bible is the complete, verbally inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God.  
(II Tim. 3:16-17; II Peter 1: 20-21)
2. in the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 10:33); and His:
  - Virgin Birth (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:35);
  - sinless life (Heb. 4:15; 7:25);
  - miracles (John 2:11);
  - vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14);
  - bodily resurrection (John 11:25);
  - ascension to the right hand of the Father (Acts 1:11); and,
  - personal, imminent, premillennial return in power and glory  
(1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 19:11-16).
3. there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:1; John 10:30; John 4:24; Isa. 48:16; 2 Cor. 13:14).
4. all men are sinful by nature and, as such, at enmity with God; therefore, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential to their salvation (Rom. 3:19).

5. men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ and that only by God's grace and through faith alone are we saved (Acts 13:33-39).
6. Satan is a person and that hell is a place of eternal conscious punishment of all unsaved (Job 1:6-7; Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:14-15).
7. the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, makes believers children of God through the new birth, assuring them of heaven and by His indwelling enables Christians to live a Godly life (John 16:8; I Cor. 3:16; I Cor. 12:13).
8. in the eternal security of the believer (John 10:28-29).
9. the local church is composed of regenerated, immersed believers, voluntarily united together for the purpose of glorifying God through worship of Him, fellowship, equipping believers for spiritual growth, and the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ throughout the world (Acts 2:41-42; Matt. 28:19-20).
10. our Baptist distinctives are scripturally sound. They include: the Bible as the supreme authority in all matters of faith and practice (II Tim. 3:16); the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:36; I Cor. 12:3; Col. 1:17-18); the competency of the individual soul in direct approach to God (I Tim. 2:1-2); the priesthood of all believers (I Pet. 2:5); a regenerate church membership (Acts 2:41-42); the symbolic ordinances of Believer's Baptism (Immersion) and the Lord's Supper (Acts 8:36-39; Rom. 6:3-5; I Cor. 11:23-32); the autonomy of the local church (congregational government) and its fellowship with the other churches of like faith and practice (Eph. 1:22-23; I Tim. 3:1-15); the solemn obligation to majority rule within the church; the absolute separation of church and state (II Cor. 1:24; Matt. 23:10); and a world-wide program of missionary endeavor in obedience to the final command of our Lord (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19-20).
11. in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; the saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29).
12. marriage has only one meaning and that is: marriage sanctioned by God, which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:24; Rom 7:2; I Cor. 7:10; Eph 5:22-23)
13. 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 and is not justified for any reason. (Job 3:16; Ps. 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44)
14. the Bible teaches that God existed before the universe and created all things in six sequential, 24-hour days. (Gen. 1-2; Ex. 20:11)

**B. AUTHORITY OF THE DECLARATION OF FAITH**

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

**C. CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led by the Holy Spirit of God to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and to confess Him as Lord, and on confession of this faith, having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully covenant with one another, as one body in Christ, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him.

We promise by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to forsake the ways of sin and to walk together in Christian love and in the paths of righteousness. With this in view, we engage to strive together for both the peace and purity of this church; to sustain its worship and steadfastly to cherish and hold its ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute as faithful stewards such as time, talent and money in the measure that God prospers each of us, that the responsibility for the work of the local church and the world-wide ministry of spreading the Gospel be faithfully and effectively discharged.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to teach the Bible to our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances by actively sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ; to be just in our dealings and faithful in our engagements; to be exemplary in our deportment; to avoid unkind words and unrighteous anger; to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage and from every form of evil; to combine zeal and knowledge in our efforts to advance the cause of our Savior; to make Christ first in all things both spiritual and temporal.

We recognize our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and that we are servants of the Lord, and we, therefore, covenant to abide by the Bible's statements on all matters (such as faithfulness to church, personal and moral purity, marriage, and the home) and will do all we can to bring honor to our Lord through our fellowship in this church. We further promise to abstain from the practice or promotion in our church of the "sign gifts" (such as the gift of healing, speaking in or interpreting tongues, the gift of miracles.) We specifically promise to avoid the modern-day tongues movement in that it confuses Christians and divides churches by some claiming tongues are the evidence of the Holy Spirit's filling.

We further engage to give and receive admonition with meekness and affection; to remember each other in prayer, and to aid each other in case of sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and, mindful of the Scriptures, to seek it without delay; to encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return.

We moreover engage that if we should move from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some local church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of the Word of God.

C. POLICY

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose its membership. It is independent and autonomous, self-governing and self-propagating, and is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligation of mutual conviction, counsel, and cooperation which are common among evangelical Baptist churches.

D. AFFILIATION

This church is an independent Baptist church and is not governed or controlled by any convention or association, but maintains the right to fellowship with those of like faith and practice.

## ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

A. ADMISSION OF MEMBERS

Any person who:

- Professes faith in Christ as Savior and Lord; and,
- Gives evidence of a change of heart; and,
- Adopts the views of faith and practice held by this church; and,
- Completes the procedures for membership as set by the pastors and deacons; and,
- Has been baptized by immersion as a testimony of their faith in Christ's redeeming work (or is presenting themselves for baptism by the church)

...may be received into membership by a majority vote of the church. If the applicant is a member of another church, a letter shall be sent to that church informing them of the member's decision to unite with this church.

B. ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Recognizing that college students away from home, military members and missionaries on furlough or deputation, or those on extended trips up to six consecutive months, may desire fellowship with the church and to serve as ushers, teachers, or in some other capacity, requests can be made for associate privileges and responsibilities. Such qualifying individuals must meet the same requirements and follow the same procedures as would an individual desiring full membership. They will not be eligible to be elected to an office nor have voting privileges. When an associate member makes a permanent move from the area, they are automatically removed from our associate roll.

Members of Tri-County Baptist Church may hold an Associate Membership in another church of like faith and practice (e.g. college students away from home), but may not hold full membership in another church (see Termination of Membership).

**C. DUTIES OF MEMBERS**

1. The duties of members are set forth in general terms in the Church Covenant (Article III C).
2. Membership in a local church as expressed in the New Testament is deeply significant. Our Lord Jesus Christ deserves the very best use of the gifts He has entrusted to us. All happenings of life work for the express purpose of making us more like Christ in our daily lives as we already are on the account books of heaven.

Members, therefore, are expected to:

- a. Grow in the likeness of the character qualities of Christ in thought, attitude, speech, and action.
- b. Abstain from all appearance of evil in word and deed.
- c. Lovingly respect and cooperate with the pastors and officers of the church for the advancement of the work.
- d. Faithfully attend the services of the church and provide for its financial needs. (Except for shut-ins, travel no longer than six consecutive months, missionaries, college students and those serving in the military)
- e. Agree with and abide by the Constitution and by-laws of the church.
- f. Submit to, participate in and abide by the discipline process of the church.

**D. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP**

1. Letters of transfer may be granted to any member in good and regular standing. Such letters must be addressed to some particular church of like faith and practice and sent to the pastor or clerk of the church to which the member is being transferred. No letter of transfer or standing may be given directly to a private individual.
2. Members desiring to unite with a church not of like faith and practice will not be given letters of transfer, but will be granted letters of standing.

**E. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS**

1. Discipline Committee  
The deacons with the pastor shall constitute the discipline committee of the church and have sole charge in determining covenant violations and discipline.

2. Restoration or Discipline of Members

a. Responsibilities

- i. Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another (I John 3:16; John 13:34, 35). When a member becomes knowledgeable of an offense of the magnitude to hinder spiritual growth and testimony, he has the responsibility to work to resolve the offense and restore the offender to full fellowship with Christ.
- ii. The pastors and deacons must safeguard the purity and peace of the church and move promptly to address issues.

b. Process

- i. After prayerful self-examination and rectification (Matthew 7:3) the member is to go alone to the offending party only. This is done always in a spirit of humility and with a goal of restoration (Matthew 18:15-18; Galatians 6:1). As specified in our covenant, each member is to endeavor to make reconciliation quickly (Matthew 5:23-25a; Ephesians 4:29-32).
- ii. If reconciliation is not reached, a second member, usually a deacon or pastor is to accompany after following the same procedure of self-examination and in a spirit of humility and restoration.
- iii. If still unresolved, the pastors and deacons (as elected representatives biblically responsible to put down murmuring) must hear the matter and render a decision.
- iv. If the matter remains unresolved, the pastors and deacons must bring the matter to the church. The church shall first conduct prayerful examination of our own lives and then make prayerful effort to restore the offending member. If the matter is still unresolved, the church, by majority vote shall exclude such members who refuse to be restored and abide by the decisions of the church.

c. Procedures for hearing by deacons and/or church body

- i. No matter or offense may be heard unless previous biblical steps have been followed, except in the case of a public offense, such as Galatians 2:11-15.
- ii. No information concerning parties not under discussion may be heard.
- iii. No member may be excluded where there is genuine fruit of repentance evidenced.

d. Relationship with Excluded Members

When the unrepentant offending party is excluded from the membership and the Lord's table, all relationship with him from that point is only for the purpose of restoration (except for family members) (Matthew 18:17; I Corinthians. 5:11; II Thessalonians 3:15). The entire church body should recognize a responsibility to "say the same thing" in loving effort to restore the offending one and to maintain the church's testimony and harmony.

e. Restoration

Any individual who has been removed from the church by discipline may be brought back into fellowship through the process of membership after having been examined by the pastors and/or deacons for confession and repentance and after having expressed such confession and repentance at a regular worship service of the church.

F. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

1. If any individual member has not attended a regular worship service of the church in the preceding six (6) months (Other than the exceptions listed in "Duties of Members").
  - a. The pastors and/or deacons of the church will make reasonable efforts to contact the individual so as to ascertain the reason for absence and to encourage the individual's participation in the regular worship of the church.
  - b. If there is no valid reason for the absence or they cannot be contacted, the individual shall be removed from the membership roll of the church by majority vote at a regular or special business meeting.
2. No member of Tri-County Baptist Church may hold full membership in another church. The membership of any individual shall automatically terminate without notice if the member unites with another church without a request of transfer or letter of standing.
3. The membership of any individual member shall automatically terminate without notice if the member files a lawsuit against the church.
4. Any member may resign at any time, but no letter of transfer or letter of standing will be issued after such resignation.

**ARTICLE V - OFFICERS AND DUTIES**

A. CHURCH OFFICERS

The work of the church shall be carried on by and under the supervision of the officers listed below:

1. Pastor
2. Board of Deacons (of whom three shall be legal trustees)
3. Church Clerk
4. Church Treasurer
5. Financial Secretary
6. Sunday School Superintendent
7. Other such officers as the church shall deem necessary to elect

B. QUALIFICATION AND PRIVILEGES OF CHURCH OFFICERS

1. All officers of the church shall be members of the same.
2. All officers shall be in full agreement with the Constitution of this church, including the Declaration of Faith, Church Covenant, Policy, (Article III) and shall be endeavoring to live an exemplary life.

C. ELECTION AND TERMS OF OFFICE

1. All officers, with the exception of the pastors and deacons, shall serve for one year.
2. Vacancies
  - a. Pastor

In the event of vacancy caused by death, resignation or removal of the pastor, the Board of Deacons shall recommend to the church a pulpit committee of five persons comprised of two deacons, one of whom shall be chairman) to investigate and recommend a man for the position of pastor. Only one candidate for the office of pastor shall be considered by the church at one time, each candidate is to be voted upon before another is asked to candidate. This committee shall provide pulpit supply during this interim and shall terminate their duties with the calling and arrival of a pastor chosen by the church.
  - b. In the event of vacancies of other church officers caused by death, resignation or removal, the vacancy may be filled at any regular or special business meeting of the church with the nomination presented by the nominating committee.
3. Pastor
  - a. Election
    - i. The pastor shall be a regularly ordained Baptist minister of the Gospel who fulfills the scriptural requirements of God's Word, in particular, I Timothy 3:1-7.
    - ii. The pastor shall be elected by the church, by secret ballot, after consideration of the recommendation of the pulpit committee (see Article V.C. 2a.)
    - iii. Ten days' notice, including two Sundays, shall be given publicly of a meeting called to extend a call to a pastor and a three-fourths vote of the members present and voting at such meeting shall be necessary for the election of a pastor.
    - iv. Ten days' notice, including two Sundays, shall be given publicly of a meeting called to dismiss a pastor and a three-fourths vote of the members present and voting at such meeting shall be necessary for the dismissal of a pastor.
  - b. Terms of Office
    - i. The pastor, when called, shall be elected for an indefinite period.
    - ii. The terms of the call of the pastor shall be recommended by the pulpit committee for approval by the church.
    - iii. The pastor shall have at least two full weeks of vacation with pay each year.
    - iv. The pastor, after prayerful consideration, shall give the church sixty (60) days written notice of his decision to relinquish the pastorate, and, if after prayerful consideration, the church for any reason relieves him of his duties, he shall receive two (2) months' salary at his regular rate.

c. Duties

The pastor shall be recognized as the under-shepherd, overseer, and leader of all the work of the church and thus his duties shall be:

- i. To regularly preach the Gospel under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and conduct the worship services of the church;
- ii. To administer the two ordinances of Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper;
- iii. To supervise the teaching ministry of the church;
- iv. To faithfully perform the scriptural pastoral duties among members and prospects;
- v. To act as moderator of the church;
- vi. To be ex-officio member of all boards and committees of the church and its organizations;
- vii. To call regular and special business meetings of the church;
- viii. To appoint, in cooperation with the Board of Deacons, various committees of the church.

4. Deacons and Legal Trustees

a. Election

- i. The church shall elect active, spiritual men who fulfill the scriptural requirements of God's Word for leadership, in particular I Timothy 3:8-13.
- ii. Their names shall be presented to the church at the regular annual election meeting after prayerful consideration by the nominating committee (according to the procedure of Article VI B.)

b. Terms of Office

- i. The term of office shall be three years.
- ii. Deacons having completed six years of service (two full terms) shall not be eligible for re-election to the board until one year has elapsed.
- iii. Three of these elected deacons shall be designated by the nominating committee to serve as legal trustees for a term of three years, one being elected each year.

c. Organization

- i. The Board shall regularly meet with the pastor to discuss spiritual and business matters of the church.
- ii. The Board shall annually elect its own chairman and secretary.
- iii. Two-thirds of the Board members shall constitute a quorum for business.
- iv. The Board shall maintain permanent records of all business transactions.

d. Duties

The deacons' duties are prescribed by the Scriptures (Acts 6:1-7 and I Timothy 3:8-13.)

5. Church Clerk

The church clerk shall keep an accurate and permanent record of proceedings of all regular and special meetings; shall keep an accurate registry of membership, reporting quarterly and annually on the status of the church membership; shall issue letters of dismissal and certificates of standing as directed by the church; shall be responsible for the records of the church, and shall keep an official copy of the Constitution as amended in a book to be used solely for that purpose.

6. Treasurer

The treasurer shall keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements of the church; shall hold in an approved bank and disburse by check all expenditures provided in the annual budget or special authorization by the church; shall make quarterly and annual reports to the church. He shall be a member of the finance committee.

7. Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall keep accurate records of the members' contributions and shall provide the members with an annual statement of their giving.

8. Sunday School Superintendent

The Sunday School Superintendent shall work with the pastor(s) to maintain a quality Sunday School program.

9. Other officers

The duties of other officers elected by the church shall be made by the Board of Deacons and approved by the church.

## **ARTICLE VI - COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONS - DUTIES**

A. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

A nominating committee of five members shall be appointed by the Board of Deacons and approved by the church to serve for one year. No person can serve on the committee twice in succession. It shall be the duty of this committee, after prayer, to suggest the names of one or more persons for each elective office. The permission of each nominee must be secured before the name can be presented. The report of the committee shall be posted one month previous to an election except in the case of vacancies.

B. FINANCE COMMITTEE

A finance committee shall consist of at least five members. They shall meet annually to plan and submit the church's annual budget.

C. OTHER COMMITTEES

Other committees (such as planning, missions and evangelism, church service and Christian education) shall be selected by the deacons and approved by the church as deemed necessary.

D. ORGANIZATIONS

All organizations must meet with approval of the church and must conform to the practices of our church.

## ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

A. FOR WORSHIP

1. The stated regular services of the church for public worship shall be held Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and with a weekly prayer meeting.
2. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be commemorated at such times as the pastor and Board of Deacons may determine.
3. No groups or committees of any kind shall meet during the stated regular services of the church except as approved by the pastor in agreement with the Board of Deacons.

B. FOR BUSINESS

1. Regular quarterly business meetings shall be held.
2. Special business meetings of the church may be called by the pastor, by the Board of Deacons, or by the written request of ten percent of eligible members through the Board of Deacons. Ten days' notice, including two Sundays, must be given publicly for every special meeting with the purpose clearly indicated in the notice.
3. The annual business meeting of the church, at which the church clerk and church treasurer shall submit annual written reports, shall be held in January in connection with the quarterly meeting.
4. The meeting for the annual election of officers and the adoption of the new fiscal year's budget shall be held on a date prior to the annual business meeting.
5. Only members sixteen years of age or over shall be entitled to vote or to be a church officer.
6. A majority vote of eligible members present and voting shall be required for the passage of any motion, resolution or transaction of any business, except as otherwise herein specified.
7. Any new financial transaction shall first be brought to the Board of Deacons for discussion and review in relation to the church fiscal program prior to being submitted at a business meeting.
8. In cases in which the procedure is not specifically set forth herein, the Robert's Rules of Order shall apply.

## ARTICLE VIII - MISCELLANEOUS

### A. THE CHURCH FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the church shall begin on January 1 and end on the following December 31.

### B. FINANCIAL POLICY OF THE CHURCH

1. The financial needs of the church shall be met by the voluntary tithes, offerings, and contributions of its members and friends. No entertainments, suppers, bazaars, rummage sales, etc. shall be given by the church or auxiliary organizations for raising funds.
2. By approval of the Board of Deacons, free-will offerings may be taken when they are deemed necessary or advisable.

### C. DISSOLUTION

In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocable, designated by corporate vote, prior to dissolution, to one or more independent Baptist non-profit corporations such as churches, schools, missions, or associations, in conformity with the requirements of the United States Internal Revenue Service Code of 1954.

## ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be revised or amended at any regular business meeting of the church by a three-fourths vote of the members present and voting, providing that the proposed change has been submitted in writing and announced at a previous quarterly meeting. No change shall be made in Article III, except at an annual meeting, and then by a three-fourths vote of the members present and voting; said proposed change having been submitted and announced at a previous quarterly meeting. The church clerk shall record all amendments in a book to be used solely for this purpose.