

New Covenant Bible Church Constitution

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PREAMBLE

Declaring our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, and recognizing the right of each church to so govern its own affairs as in its opinion best promotes the Kingdom of our Lord and Christ, we hereby band ourselves together as a body of believers in Jesus Christ and adopt for our government in worship and business this Constitution. We hereby rescind all previous action contrary to that stated herein, understanding further that whenever it appears that other regulations may better serve the interests of our church, this Constitution may be revised or modified as hereinafter provided.

ARTICLE I - CHURCH NAME

This church shall be called "The New Covenant Bible Church." This church is subject to the control of no ecclesiastical body.

ARTICLE II - STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE

We, the members of New Covenant Bible Church, having carefully considered the teachings of the Scriptures, do herein set forth our convictions and beliefs.

A. The Scriptures

We believe the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, to be literally the Word of God, inspired and inerrant, in the original manuscripts. It is the only perfect rule and source of faith, creed and conduct. (II Timothy 3:16-17, II Peter 1:21, John 17:17, Matthew 5:18)

B. God

We believe God is the one infinite and eternal being. He is spiritual in essence, the supreme personal intelligence, the creator and preserver of all things and the perfect moral ruler of the universe. He alone is to be worshipped. He eternally exists as a tri-unity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons and yet the one God. (Genesis 1:1, Psalms 90:2, John 4:24, Isaiah 46:9-10, Psalms 24:1, Revelation 19:6, Matthew 28:18-19, II Corinthians 13:14)

1. *God the Father:* The Father is leader within the Godhead. He is sovereign in all that was, is, and shall come to pass. He is the author of election, through which He chooses a people for Himself, and is the sender of the Son. His love is forever bestowed on the Son, and on all true believers who are His children. (Isaiah 46:10, Job 9:6-9, Romans 11:25-29, Ephesians 4:6, John 3:16, Galatians 3:26, John 17: 20-26)

2. *God the Son:* We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Word (i.e., living communication of God) and only begotten Son of the Father. He eternally existed with the Father and Holy Spirit. He became man without ceasing to be God, and, therefore, is now continuing forever as both true God and true man, one person with two natures. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born to the virgin Mary in order that He might reveal God to man and redeem man from the penalty of sin. He paid with His death the penalty we deserved to pay for sin and rose the third day. We believe in the imminent return of Jesus Christ. (John 1:1, John 1:14, John 3:16, Philippians 2:5-8, Colossians 2:9, Luke 1: 30-35, Isaiah 7:14, I John 2:1-2, Titus 2:11-14, Acts 2:23-24, Romans 4:25, I Corinthians 15: 3-8)

3. *God the Holy Spirit:* The Holy Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son. He is third in the procession of authority within the Godhead and is committed to glorifying the Son. He convinces the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment; convicts and empowers, gives gifts, guides, and teaches all who come to Christ. (Matthew 28:19, John 15:26, John 16:7-11, John 3:5, John 14:16-17, I Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 4:30, Acts 1:8, I Corinthians 12:7, Romans 8:14, I John 2:27)

C. Angels, Fallen and Unfallen

We believe that God created an innumerable company of sinless, spiritual beings, known as angels. One of them, "Lucifer, son of the morning", the highest in rank, sinned through pride and thereby became Satan. A third of the created company of angels followed Satan in his rebellion and fall and are active with him today in their opposition to the Kingdom of God. We further believe that a great company of angels kept their holy estate and are before the throne of God, from whence they are sent forth as ministering spirits for those who are heirs of salvation. (Matthew 18:10, Matthew 26:53, Matthew 18:53, Job 38:6-7, Isaiah 14:12-17, Ezekiel 28:11-19, Ephesians 6:12, Hebrews 1:14, Hebrews 12:22, Revelation 7: 11-12, Revelation 12:4)

D. Man

We believe that man was directly created by God after His image and in His likeness, for fellowship and communion with Himself. Man was created without sin, and his purpose is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. He sinned voluntarily and now all men are under condemnation until they repent and trust in Jesus Christ. (Genesis 1:26-28, Genesis 2:7, Genesis 3:1-24, Genesis 5:3, John 3:16-18, Isaiah 64:6)

E. Salvation

We believe that salvation from the eternal result of sin is possible only when we repent and personally place our faith in Jesus Christ, trusting Him alone to save us. Salvation is by grace through faith alone and not by any works that we can do. Once we truly accept Him we are eternally secure as a child belonging to God. (Romans 6:23, Acts 16:31, Acts 4:12, John 14:6, Ephesians 2:8-10, John 10:28, Romans 8:38-39, Hebrews 7:25)

F. Church

1. *Universal*: We believe that the universal Church, the Body and Bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism, made up of all born again Christians. The Church began at Pentecost (Acts 2) and a believer is placed into the Church by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit. We believe the Church to be distinct from Israel in the plan and purpose of God. (Ephesians 4:4, Ephesians 4:16, Acts 2:42-47, I Corinthians 12:13, Romans 11:1-2, Romans 11:24-27)
2. *Local*: We believe that the local church is an assembly of professing believers in Jesus Christ who are voluntarily joined together in one locality to worship God, to minister to one another, and to evangelize. (Acts 2: 42-47, Ephesians 4:11-16)

G. The Ordinances

We believe that Christ instituted the ordinances of water baptism and communion, which are to be observed by believers until He returns. (Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 8:36-38, Acts 10:46-48, I Corinthians 11:23-30, Luke 22:17-20).

1. **Baptism**: By participating in water baptism believers are giving an outward sign of the inward reality that the Holy Spirit has baptized them into Christ. It is a public identification with Jesus Christ as Savior.
2. **Communion**: By celebrating communion believers memorialize Christ's death and give witness to their belief in the voluntary self-giving of Christ and the effectiveness of His shed blood for the remission of sin.

ARTICLE III - MISSION

The mission of New Covenant Bible Church is to honor God as a family of growing disciples who are becoming wholehearted worshippers, faithful witnesses, caring community members, Christlike models and equipped servants.

ARTICLE IV - CHURCH OFFICERS

The government of the church shall be vested in elected officers of the church; primarily the Board of Elders. The affairs of the church shall be administered by the following elected officers:

A. Board of Elders

1. Purpose: The overseeing of the church shall be the responsibility of the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders shall shepherd the church, oversee the general ministries, establish governing policies and serve as an example to all members of the church family.
2. Constituency: The Elders shall be elected from the membership in accordance with the qualifications of Elders as described in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The Board of Elders shall be comprised of no fewer than seven (7) men. This shall include the Senior Pastor who is a permanent voting member, and at least six (6) men elected from the membership. The Executive Pastor serves as a permanent non-voting member, except in the absence of the Senior Pastor, when he shall exercise the Senior Pastor's voting privilege. The Elders shall be elected for terms of three (3) years, with approximately one-third of the Elders elected each year. Any elder serving two consecutive terms must wait a period of at least one year before serving as an elder again. A partial term shall not count toward term limits. In the event of a vacancy, the Board of Elders may appoint a qualified man to fill the vacancy. A vote to approve the appointee shall be held at the next congregational meeting in accordance with Article X of this constitution. The Board of Elders shall elect from its membership a Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
3. Responsibilities: The Board of Elders shall be guided in their responsibilities by scriptural principles and by the church Constitution. Generally, the Board of Elders responsibilities shall include:
 - a. Overseer of the church. In this role the Board of Elders shall oversee in the areas of doctrine, governing policies and ministry priorities.
 - b. Shepherd of the church. In this role the Board of Elders shall minister through teaching, praying, discipling, counseling, evangelizing, personal care of the church family, and in the administration of ordinances. The Board of Elders shall also minister in the area of church discipline by protecting the church and resolving spiritual and doctrinal disputes.

B. Board of Deacons

1. Purpose: The Board of Deacons shall assist the Board of Elders and staff in caring for the spiritual and physical needs of the church. They shall serve as an example to all members of the church family.
2. Constituency: Deacons shall be elected from the membership in accordance with the qualifications of Deacons as described in I Timothy 3:8-13. The Deacons, including the Chairman, shall be nominated for specific positions (Chairman or other areas of ministry) and elected from the membership for terms of two (2) years. In addition, the Board of Elders shall

appoint a member of the Pastoral staff as a voting member. The number of Deacons shall be determined by the Board of Elders. Approximately one-half of the Deacons shall be elected each year. Any deacon serving three consecutive terms must wait a period of at least one year before serving as a deacon again. A partial term shall not count toward term limits. In the event of a vacancy, the Board of Elders may appoint a qualified person to fill the vacancy. A vote to approve the appointee shall be held at the next congregational meeting in accordance with Article X of this Constitution. The Board of Deacons shall elect from its membership a Vice-Chairman.

3. Responsibilities: The Board of Deacons shall be guided in their responsibilities by scriptural principles, the Board of Elders, the church ministry plan, governing policies and this Constitution. The Deacons' responsibilities shall be coordinated with the appropriate staff. Specific responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a. Oversee the collection and distribution of the funds of the church.
- b. Assist with the coordination and execution of the church's ministry plan.
- c. Serve in specific areas of ministry. The following are examples:

Evangelism	Treasury
Membership	Worship
Missions	Youth
Property	

ARTICLE V - CHURCH ORGANIZATION

A. Standing Committees

Standing Committees are responsible for the execution of a specific ongoing task. Each Standing Committee shall select its own Chairman. The Standing Committees of the church are as follows:

1. Administrative Committee: This committee shall oversee all financial, facility and property functions of the church. This committee shall consist of no fewer than five people and membership shall be determined by the Board of Elders. It shall always include one representative from the Board of Elders, the Chairman of the Board of Deacons, and other members as deemed appropriate. The committee shall be accountable to the Board of Elders for the proper execution of its purpose.
2. Trustee Committee: This committee shall administer all legal aspects of the church. It shall consist of the Deacon of Property, Chairman of the Board of Deacons, and Chairman of the Board of Elders.

Responsibilities of the Trustee Committee shall include the signing of all legal documents relative to the holding of church property and the purchase or sale of property as authorized by vote of the church membership.

3. Audit Committee: This committee shall conduct all internal financial audits of the church. The Audit Committee shall consist of a minimum of two (2) members of the church who are not responsible for any of the accounts to be audited. The committee shall be appointed by the Board of Elders and shall be approved by the church membership. They shall serve for the fiscal year following their appointment.

Responsibilities of the Audit Committee shall include establishing annual audit procedures on the financial records and review of the internal controls of the church as deemed necessary and appropriate or as directed by the Board of Elders. They shall submit a written report as to their accuracy and completeness and shall make any recommendations for improvement to the Board of Elders and the Administrative Committee by August 31. They shall conduct periodic audits as directed by the Board of Elders. They shall also be responsible for recommending possible outside auditors when directed by the Board of Elders.

4. Nominating Committee: This committee shall recommend to the Board of Elders, members whom they determine to be qualified for elected office and positions as described in this Constitution. This committee shall be appointed annually by the Board of Elders, shall be chaired by an Elder and shall consist of the Senior Pastor or his designee from the Pastoral staff, a Deacon, and two members of the church approved by the church membership. They shall serve for the fiscal year following their appointment. The Elder and Deacon assigned to this committee shall be individuals who are not up for re-election that year.

Responsibilities of the Nominating Committee shall include the identification of members who conform to the biblical qualifications for and constitutional requirements of their respective offices. The committee shall solicit recommendations from the church membership and shall obtain the consent of all nominees prior to recommendation to the Board of Elders. They shall examine all candidates as to their Christian conduct, especially their willingness and ability to live in accordance with biblical principals, their qualification for election to office, and their endorsement of this Constitution.

Following the Nominating Committee's recommendation to the Board of Elders regarding members qualified for elected office, that Board, following due consideration, shall present selected nominees to the church membership for election.

5. Scholarship Committee: The Scholarship Committee shall administer the Scholarship Fund of the church. This committee shall also oversee any other funds or scholarships that have similar purposes. The Scholarship Committee shall be chaired by an Elder and shall consist of the Deacon responsible for Missions, the Deacon responsible for Youth, a member of the congregation and a member of the Pastoral staff. The Scholarship Committee has been established to encourage members to attend Bible colleges, seminaries and other educational institutions in preparation for Christian service ministries. This committee shall be appointed annually by the Board of Elders.

B. Other Committees

Other committees, such as Missions, Transportation and Worship, may be established as needed to carry out the mission of the church. Scope and membership of these committees shall be subject to oversight by the Elder, Deacon or staff member responsible for the respective area of ministry.

ARTICLE VI - THE PASTORATE

This church shall call and install in its ministry as pastors, only such men as have evidenced their regenerating faith in Christ and in the Word of God, and who wholly embrace the Statement of Doctrine contained in Article II of this Constitution. All pastors of the church shall meet the scriptural qualifications as set forth in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The Board of Elders will determine whether a position is a pastoral position. The pastoral relationships shall be governed in accordance with the following paragraphs:

A. Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall be primarily responsible for the spiritual equipping of the church membership and building up of the Body for the ministry of God to which it has been called. This ministry shall consist of the preaching and teaching of God's Word, with the freedom of the pulpit under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; visiting the sick and needy, and those in need of spiritual assistance; the administering of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; and the performance of those other duties ordinarily incumbent upon the office. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex officio member of all committees and shall be a voting member of the Board of Elders.

The Senior Pastor shall be responsible for the church staff and the implementation of New Covenant's mission, vision and values. The Executive Pastor and Worship Pastor shall report to him and shall assist him in their delegated areas of responsibility as outlined in their job descriptions. The Senior Pastor shall report directly to the Board of Elders and shall be accountable to it for the proper execution of his assigned duties as outlined in his job description.

B. Executive Pastor

The Executive Pastor shall work closely with the Senior Pastor to implement New Covenant's mission, vision and values. Under the guidance of the Senior Pastor, he shall lead the staff in the development, implementation and coordination of ministry plans, church calendar, budget, and pastoral care. The Executive Pastor shall mentor and develop the staff and assist them in their ministry responsibilities. He shall report directly to the Senior Pastor and shall be accountable to him for the proper execution of his assigned duties as outlined in his job description.

C. Associate Pastors

The Associate Pastors shall include pastors other than the Senior Pastor and Executive Pastor who are responsible for equipping ministries. Associate Pastors shall carry out specific areas of ministry under the direction of the Senior Pastor or Executive Pastor as outlined in their job descriptions. Associate Pastors shall equip the saints for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:12).

D. Search & Dismissal

1. External Search

The Search Committee for a pastor shall have at least seven members of the church appointed by the Board of Elders. Two members shall be from the Board of Elders. The Senior Pastor or his

designee from the Pastoral staff shall serve as one of the Elders on the Search Committee for an Executive Pastor or Associate Pastor. The Chairman of this committee shall be appointed by the Board of Elders. The Elders may continue to serve even though their terms of office may expire during the period the committee is searching for a pastor. A Search Committee shall disband upon the acceptance of the call by the candidate.

In the event of a vacancy in the pastorate or the creation of a new position by the Board of Elders, the Search Committee shall screen, evaluate and select a possible candidate. Upon approval by the Board of Elders, the candidate shall be invited to go through the candidating process. The Board of Elders shall make a recommendation to the congregation at a business meeting to issue or not issue a call and to present the specific terms of the call to the candidate. Notice of this meeting will be published in an official church publication and announced to the congregation on three (3) consecutive weeks preceding the meeting. Election of a pastor by the church membership shall be by individual secret ballot. An affirmative vote of at least 75% of those members voting shall be necessary to call a pastor.

2. Internal Search

Except in the case of a Senior Pastor, the Board of Elders may change the ministry assignment(s) and/or ministry title(s) of a pastor who is already on staff without going through a search process, or they may modify the search process. The Board of Elders shall consider factors such as education and experience, the candidate's tenure at New Covenant and the specific requirements of the new responsibilities in making that decision. A search method as provided in Article VI, Section D(1) shall always be required when hiring a Senior Pastor.

3. Dismissal

a. Senior Pastor

The church may consider the dismissal of a Senior Pastor only upon recommendation of the Board of Elders. The voting and quorum procedure for dismissing a Senior Pastor is the same as for calling a Senior Pastor (See Article VI, Section D(1); Article X, Section B). The vote shall take place at a congregational meeting, which shall be published in an official church publication and announced to the congregation on three (3) consecutive weeks preceding the meeting. The Board of Elders shall determine the terms of the dismissal, including the effective date.

In the case of substantiated moral misconduct by the Senior Pastor, the Board of Elders shall immediately suspend him. In such cases, the Board of Elders shall inform the congregation of the suspension and also recommend to them the terms of suspension.

If a Senior Pastor voluntarily terminates his employment, the Senior Pastor is requested to provide at least thirty (30) days notice.

b. Executive and Associate Pastor

The Board of Elders may dismiss an Executive Pastor or Associate Pastor. The Board of Elders shall determine the terms of dismissal, including the effective date.

ARTICLE VII – NON-PASTORAL STAFF

Under the direction of the Board of Elders and within the parameters of the Annual Budget, other staff shall be hired or dismissed as needed. The duties and responsibilities of each position shall be outlined in a written job description.

ARTICLE VIII- MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this church shall be open to anyone who is trusting in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sin and hope of eternal salvation. Substantial agreement with the Statement of Doctrine of this Constitution is a requirement for membership. The Deacon responsible for membership shall be responsible for providing prospective members a written means for initiating the membership process. The Board of Elders shall determine compliance with membership requirements prior to acceptance into the church family.

Attendance at the "New Member's Class" is required to familiarize prospective members with the doctrine, government and ministries of the church. Upon completion of this class and approval by the Board of Elders, the person shall be received into membership of the church. New members shall be welcomed into the fellowship at the earliest convenience. A new pastor and his wife shall automatically be accepted into the membership of the church.

The following pledge shall be publicly affirmed by new members: "Having faith in Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and acknowledging Him as my Lord and Master, I desire to unite with this church for personal spiritual growth, for Christian fellowship and as a channel of service. I promise by the help of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love, pray for the advancement of this church in holiness and knowledge, promote its prosperity and spirituality, sustain its worship, doctrines and discipline, and contribute cheerfully to the support of its ministry and activities."

- A. Rights of Membership: All members of this church shall enjoy the freedom of expression and the right to attend all open Board meetings. Congregational voting rights are limited to active members of legal voting age for national elections. The Board of Elders shall be responsible for reviewing membership roles for completeness and accuracy on an annual basis.
1. Active Members: Members shall consider the responsibilities and obligations placed upon them by the Word of God and the church. Members shall in all things conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner. Members shall be considerate of fellow-members and by word and deed encourage them. As God has gifted them, members are expected to pray, learn, give, worship, witness and serve.
 2. Inactive Members: Members who fail to observe the terms of membership by non-attendance at services and who fail to support the work of Christ through the ministries of the church for a period of six (6) months, shall be put on the inactive roll. Any exceptions shall be made by the Board of Elders. Inactive members shall not be counted in statistical data nor shall they have voting rights unless they are restored to the active roll.
 3. Reinstatement of Inactive Members: Reinstatement to the active membership shall result from the member's presence in church services followed by a written request to the Board of Elders to be reinstated on the active membership roll. A reaffirmation of the membership pledge must be made to the Board of Elders.

4. Letters of Transfer: Letters of Transfer, including the basis of membership in New Covenant Bible Church may be sent at the member's request so that the individual may unite with another church.
 5. Non-Resident Membership: Members who are not able to take an active part due to a non-resident status, such as college or military service, shall be considered non-resident members. If an individual non-resident situation permits an active participation in church functions, the individual may send a letter to the Board of Elders requesting active member status. Notification of active member status shall be made by letter upon recommendation of the Board of Elders.
 6. Individual Request: Membership in the church may be relinquished at the individual's request.
- B. Discipline of Erring Members: If a member errs in doctrine or conduct, it is the duty of the member who has that knowledge to pray for the erring one and to admonish him or her through the Word of God. If the erring member does not heed the Word of God, the other member shall take another member to admonish the erring one to repent. If the member in error still continues to err, the Board of Elders shall be notified, investigate the matter and if it be found true, the Board of Elders shall admonish the one in error to repent. If the erring one still continues in the same course, the Board of Elders shall enact church discipline which may include revocation of church membership and may inform the membership of this action.

ARTICLE IX - CHURCH PROPERTY

In the event it becomes necessary to dissolve or terminate the New Covenant Bible Church of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the Trustee Committee shall distribute all remaining assets, if any, after all just expenses have been paid. The distribution shall be to one or more organizations organized and operated for one or more of the exempt purposes described in the then current version of the United States Internal Revenue Code with purposes similar to Article III of this Constitution.

ARTICLE X - MEETINGS AND QUORUMS

A. Meetings:

The Annual Meeting shall be held during the month of April or May. The date of the Annual Meeting shall be determined by the Board of Elders and published in an official church publication and announced to the congregation on three (3) consecutive weeks preceding the meeting. Business to be conducted at the Annual Meeting shall include, but is not limited to:

- Report on the activities and financial condition of the church
- Approval of the budget for the next fiscal year
- Election of Elders and Deacons
- Election of members of the Nominating Committee
- Election of members of the Audit Committee

Not less than three (3) weeks prior to that date, the Board of Elders shall make available to the congregation copies of the proposed fiscal year budget. A list of all nominees for specific elected positions shall be published in an official church publication on three (3) consecutive weeks preceding the meeting. Newly elected officials shall take office effective June 1.

The Board of Elders shall call a Special Business Meeting at any time it determines a need or upon the written request of at least ten percent (10%) of the active members. The purpose and

date of all Special Business Meetings shall be announced to the congregation at the worship services at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting or by first class mail at least four (4) days in advance of said meeting.

All business meetings shall be presided over by the Chairman of the Board of Elders, or his alternate as directed by the Board of Elders. The business meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

The Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons shall meet as needed to transact the business of the church.

- B. Quorums: One-fifth (1/5) of the active membership shall constitute a quorum at any Annual or Special Business Meeting of the church. One-fourth (1/4) of the active membership shall constitute a quorum for the calling or dismissal of a pastor. Two-thirds (2/3) of the membership of the Board of Elders and the Board of Deacons shall constitute a quorum for meetings of these Boards.

Except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, the affirmative vote of a majority of the votes, which affirmative votes also constitute a majority of the required quorum, shall be required for the election of officers or to render final decisions in any matter under consideration.

- C. Absentee ballots: Absentee ballots may be allowed and may count toward a quorum at the discretion of the Board of Elders.

- D. Fiscal Year: The fiscal year of this church shall end on May 31.

- E. Annual Report: The Annual Report shall be made available to the congregation within two months of the end of the fiscal year. It shall include the year-end financial report and reports from staff, Chairman of the Board of Elders, Chairman of the Board of Deacons, church leadership, Audit Committee (prior year report) and other areas of ministry.

ARTICLE XI - CONSTITUTIONAL REVISIONS

The Board of Elders will review the constitution at least once every three years. If needed, the board shall appoint a Constitutional Revision Committee to assist with that review. A Constitutional Revision Committee shall consist of six (6) church members recommended by the Board of Elders and approved by the church membership.

The proposed revised Constitution, or the parts being revised, must be presented in written form to a meeting of the Board of Elders. The proposed changes must have been approved by the Board of Elders and mailed or made available to the entire active membership not less than three weeks prior to the time of the proposed action.

Revisions to this Constitution shall be adopted only by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the vote taken at a business meeting, the purpose being stated in the call. The date of the meeting shall be determined by the Board of Elders and published and announced to the congregation on three (3) consecutive weeks preceding the meeting.

