

FBC CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS

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HISTORY OF FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH

In 1946, following a revival in Oskaloosa in which God wonderfully answered prayer and poured out His Spirit, several requested that Rev. I.E. Anderson lead a Bible study. Because of interest from individuals from several churches, it soon became an interdenominational Bible study meeting every week for two years at the old YWCA downtown. At that time there was no thought of this fellowship becoming a church but as the months passed, the group became aware of modernism creeping into their own churches. As they committed themselves to Bible reading (including "Through the Bible" study guides by Roper), prayer, study, and discussion, they grew strong in the Lord and began to possess a real burden for the unsaved. This burden and the need for a place where the Gospel could be clearly proclaimed kept increasing on the hearts of many and much prayer and consideration was given in the months that followed. However, they had no leader and no meeting place.

About the same time, Pastor Stan Benson had been sensing the pressure of modernism at his place of ministry. One evening while visiting some friends, he made the statement that if he had twelve tithing families, he would start a work in Oskaloosa. A mutual friend called Rev. I.E. Anderson telling him what had been said and Rev. Anderson contacted Pastor Benson. They found that they had the same burden upon their hearts. Pastor Stan was ready to answer any calling of the Lord and they made it a matter of prayer.

A few days later it was discovered that the Seventh Day Adventist Church building could be rented. A paper was circulated, and 18 individuals committed themselves to become members and support the work with their prayers and finances. Pastor Stan Benson was called as Pastor and further discussion resulted in the church being named The Fundamental Missionary Church.

On June 7, 1948, they met for the first time in their rented facilities that became known to them as the "Little Brown Church."

There was a great missionary emphasis in the church from the very beginning as missionaries came and went in an almost constant stream. Each left a fresh reminder of the tremendous task and unselfish sacrifice of the missionary heart. More than \$2,200 went to the mission fields that first year. Home missionary work also opened to the new church when the Light House Mission on High Avenue West found itself without a sponsor and the Fundamental Missionary Church was invited to sponsor this project. Sunday School was held in both places.

Just one year and one month after organizing, hopes for a building of their own became a reality. On July 3, 1949, a building fund got underway and a sum of \$7,000 was pledged with many praising God for His guidance and care. Many expressed the feeling and burden to expand the church's Gospel witness at the Annual Meeting held June 28, 1950 and the property at the corner of "A" Avenue West and North "I" Street was investigated and purchased. Later that year on October 11 it was officially moved that the Fundamental Missionary Church be dissolved and that the name of the Oskaloosa Gospel Tabernacle be adopted.

In the first part of 1951 consolidation of the church and mission work took place and all activities became centralized at the "Tabernacle House" at 115 North "I" Street.

The situation was not the best for convenience, but was ideal psychologically. The constant crowded conditions that prevailed in Sunday School and church kept everyone aware of the need for

the new Tabernacle building. At that time around 143 were being crowded into the seven rooms of the "Tabernacle House."

In October of 1952 building plans were completed, faith rose to smother fears, and with around \$1,000 in the building fund and a pile of blocks on the lot, a ground breaking service was held. Boys from the Junior Sunday School Class turned the first shovels of dirt since they had won the Sunday School fund campaign. The faithful crowd believed God and pledged themselves to a decision which would test their faith in repeated times of need through the many stresses and strains of building a church with voluntary labor.

Help came from miles around as the first truckload of concrete was poured. Every volunteer kept busy and even strangers were handed shovels and rakes as the deliveries of concrete arrived. One man was experienced in laying concrete blocks and several others soon learned after a few days of apprenticeship. Winter approached fast that year and on the last Friday in November work was terminated for the winter.

It was a long winter as the congregation looked out of the crowded rooms of the Tabernacle House on the snow-covered unfinished work. However, the building fund continued to grow during those months.

Early in the spring before work could be done outside, sills were made in the preacher's garage, the rafters were ordered and arrangements were made for several masons as soon as the weather opened up. As the summer progressed and as the deadline for the dedication drew near, five o'clock in the morning wasn't *too* early for many men who came and worked until they had to leave for their jobs. After work, they would return and labor into the night, working many nights until midnight and after. On December 6, 1953, the Tabernacle was dedicated.

The Tabernacle continued to grow and on October 16, 1966 a finished educational unit, parking lot, and a new parsonage were dedicated to the glory of God.

Three years later on March 23, 1969, Rev. Stan Benson who had served as the first pastor returned from California to help dedicate the enlarged and remodeled sanctuary and additional educational facilities.

In 1966 the remodeled facilities were dedicated "...as a place where the Word of God may go forth in purity and power, where sinners may hear the blessed Gospel of Grace and accept Christ as Savior, where Saints may be 'built up in the most Holy Faith...' A church that will sound forth the Gospel to the ends of the Earth" ...and so it has continued to do so down through the years.

In 1984 a sloped roof was put over the educational wing to remedy the leaking problems caused by the flat roof.

In 1995, as a result of contemporary confusion surrounding the church's name, the Oskaloosa Gospel Tabernacle voted to change its name to Fellowship Bible Church.

Fellowship Bible Church
ARTICLES OF FAITH

ARTICLE I
The BIBLE

We believe that the Bible – both the Old and the New Testaments – are the verbally inspired Word of God, and supreme and 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

ARTICLE II
GOD

We believe in the Triune God, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, co-eternal in being, equal in every divine attribute and perfection; that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.
Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14

ARTICLE III
The PERSON and WORK of CHRIST

1. 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 to the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man.
John 1:1,2,14; Luke 1:35; Hebrews 2:15; Philippians 2:5-8
2. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice and that our justification is made sure by His literal physical resurrection from the dead.
Isaiah 53:5, 6; Romans 3:24-25; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18
3. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and now is exalted at the right hand of God as our High Priest. He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor and Advocate. Acts 1:9, 10; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; Romans 8:34; 1 John 2:12

ARTICLE IV
The PERSON and WORK of the HOLY SPIRIT

1. We believe that the Holy Spirit – who is co-equal with God the Father and God the Son, is a Person and is personal – 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, sanctifying, and sealing them unto the day of redemption.
John 16:8-11; 1 Cor. 12:11, 13; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14

2. We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who guides believers into all truth and that it is the privilege and duty of and command to all the saved to be filled with the Spirit.
John 16:13; 1 John 2:20-27; Ephesians 5:18

ARTICLE V The FALL of MAN

We believe that man was created in the image of God, was morally innocent, but by voluntary transgression (that is by choosing to disobey God), fell into the state known as “original sin.” Because of The Fall, the whole human race became sinful; consequently, all are sinners (by nature and by choice) and all are under God’s just condemnation; all are without defense and all are without excuse. Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 1:18-21; Romans 3:10-23; 5:10-19

ARTICLE VI SALVATION

We believe that salvation is the free gift of God to mankind through God’s grace alone and received by personal faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of sins. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We believe that *“whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:12; 14:6; Acts 4:12; 16:30; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Romans 10:13

ARTICLE VII The ASSURANCE of SALVATION

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 prohibits the use of such assurance as permission or justification to sin.

John 10:27-29; Romans 6:1-2; 8:31-39; Phil. 1:6; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15

ARTICLE VIII GODLY LIVING

We believe that all those who have a personal relationship with God should live in such a manner as to glorify God and enhance His reputation by godly living and Christlikeness. In doing so, each believer, by the help of the Holy Spirit, is accountable to God’s Word and to one another, must intentionally avoid and guard against all religious apostasy, and all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations as commanded by God; that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions; and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ.

2 Tim. 3:15; Rom. 12:1-2; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 7:1

ARTICLE IX **The CHURCH**

1. We believe the local church is a congregation of believers, associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, willingly submitting to His Word; exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in the church by His Word, that its officers are as stated in the Constitution, that it has the absolute right of self-government directed by the Holy Spirit; it is answerable only to Christ as Head of the Church, and that the true mission of the Church is honoring God by making more disciples for Jesus Christ.
2. We believe that the local Church may have fellowship with other groups as it desires, subject only to the commands of the Word and the direction of the Holy Spirit. Such fellowship cannot control or coerce the local Church and may be terminated at anytime by the will of the Church for reasons sufficient unto itself. We believe in the universal Church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the Head and all regenerated persons are members (locally and worldwide). Matthew 16:18-19; 18:15-17; Acts 5:29; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Timothy 3:1-15; Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18

ARTICLE X **The ORDINANCES**

We believe that there are two Church ordinances: **Baptism** and the **Lord's Supper**.

1. **Baptism:**
We recognize water baptism as an outward sign of the inner work of grace accomplished in regeneration through faith of the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ; identifying with His death, burial, and resurrection. Since Baptism is commanded of all Christians, FBC exhorts and encourages every believer to participate in baptism by immersion, not as a means of salvation, for we are saved by faith (see Article VI). We believe that baptism is one way in which a believer makes a public profession of Faith (the others being verbal testimony, verbal witness, and lifestyle). We do not consider water baptism essential to salvation and do not insist upon it as a qualification for church membership.
Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:48; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12
2. **Lord's Supper (*Communion*):**
We observe the Lord's Supper; sharing and partaking of the bread and cup; believing that the bread and cup are symbols of Christ's body and blood. The Lord's Supper is observed in commemoration of His death until He comes. Participating in observing the Lord's Supper strengthens our continual fellowship with Him and should always be preceded by careful self-examination. We practice "open communion" among fellow believers of like Faith. 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

ARTICLE XI
The PERSONALITY of SATAN

We believe that Satan is a created being; he has fallen, and by virtue of his personal forcefulness and permission of God has become the leader of the anarchic forces of wickedness. As a free being, he has directed his life to evil and has become altogether and hopelessly evil. The Bible describes him as the “evil one”; the one whose nature and will are given to evil; he is the open and declared enemy of God and man and shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matt. 4:2-11; Matt. 13:19, 38; John 8:44; Revelation 20:10

ARTICLE XII
The SECOND COMING of CHRIST

We believe in the bodily, personal, pre-millennium return of Jesus Christ, that He will return before the seven (7) years of Tribulation period to take His Church and that He will return with His Church at the close of the Tribulation to judge the living nations and to set up His Kingdom. Matthew 25:31-45; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 19:11-21

ARTICLE XIII
The ETERNAL STATE

1. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all mankind, 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
2. 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; appearing before the Judgment Seat of Christ; glorified forever with the Lord. Luke 23:43; Rev. 20:4-6; 2 Cor. 5:8, 10; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; Rom. 14:10
3. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious misery until the Second Resurrection, when the spirit, soul, and body reunite; they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment to suffer everlasting conscious punishment.
Matt. 25:1-26; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 10:19-26; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6, 7; Rev. 20:11-15

ARTICLES XIV
The MINISTRY and SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. We believe that God graciously and sovereignly gives a spiritual gift (or gifts) to each believer for works of service to build up the Church (the Body of Christ). We believe that the “sign” gifts (speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, healing, etc.) were intended to authenticate the work of God in the early Church (Acts 2) and therefore not normative for today. Romans 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10-11

2. We believe that God does answer prayers of faith according to His will, for the sick and afflicted. John 15:7; James 5:14-16; 1 John 5:14-15

**ARTICLE XV
of CIVIL GOVERNMENT**

We believe that civil government is a Divine appointment for the interests and good of human society; that civic leaders are to be prayed for, honored and obeyed, except in things that oppose the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. Exodus 18:21, 22; 2 Sam. 23:3; Daniel 3:17, 18; Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-7; Acts 4:19, 20; 5:20; 23:5

**CONSTITUTION OF FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH
Oskaloosa, Iowa**

**ARTICLE I
NAME**

The name of this church shall be the Fellowship Bible Church of Oskaloosa, Iowa.

**ARTICLE II
PLACE OF MINISTRY**

The principle place of ministry of the corporation shall be Oskaloosa, Mahaska County, state of Iowa.

**ARTICLE III
PURPOSE**

1. To maintain a testimony for Jesus Christ in the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, to seek the salvation of non-believers, and the growth and maturity of believers; locally, nationally, and worldwide.
2. To administer the ordinances of communion and baptism.
3. To promote the ministry of the Word of God (evangelism and service) locally, nationally, and worldwide.
4. To encourage and instruct believers in the use of their spiritual gifts and abilities as they serve God; to nurture growth and accountability in their relationship with Jesus Christ as they love one another.

5. To encourage and instruct believers to love one another and live godly lives and thereby glorify God, providing an environment that encourages others to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE IV AUTONOMY

This church shall be independent, strictly self-governing in all matters and shall not be under the direction or control of any church, denomination, or federation.

ARTICLE V MEMBERSHIP

1. **RECEPTION of MEMBERS.** Candidates applying for membership in this Church shall give testimony to the Elders or/and Pastor as to their personal salvation, assurance of salvation, and shall agree to the Fellowship Bible Church Articles of Faith, Constitution, and Bylaws. All candidates will attend a Membership Seminar and be willing to abide by the Membership Covenant. Upon approval by Elder vote, the candidate shall be welcomed into membership at a worship service.
2. **TYPES of MEMBERSHIP.** There shall be two types of membership.
 - a. An adult member is a person 18 years of age or over.
 - b. A junior member is a person under 18 years of age. A junior member automatically becomes an adult member at the age of 18.
3. **DUTIES and RESPONSIBILITIES of MEMBERS.**
 - a. **PERSONAL** - To cultivate godliness through spiritual disciplines including Bible study, reading, memorization, and meditation. To be accountable to other Christians; committed to spiritual growth and maturity.
 - b. **TO THE CHURCH** - To be faithful in attending and participation in the worship services, scheduled and called business meetings, and various ministries of the Church. To discover and use their spiritual gift(s) in service to the Lord, for the building up and strengthening of the Body. To faithfully, systematically, and cheerfully support the ministries of the church financially.
Hebrews 10:25; 2 Cor. 8:1, 9:15
 - c. **TO ONE ANOTHER** – To love one another, not in word only, but in deed and truth. In case of personal offense, to follow without deviation the course directed by our Savior in Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-11. To pray for and with one another. To practice all the “one another” commands of Scripture.

- d. **TO THE PASTOR** – To esteem him highly in love for his work’s sake, and to pray for him regularly. To receive his instructions and leadership, not critically, but with an attentive and tender spirit, together seeking God’s will for His Church.
Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13
 - e. **TO THE ELDERS** – To pray for and submit to the authority of the Elders as they manage and lead the church family of God according to the Scriptures.
Hebrews 13:7, 17
 - f. **TO THE FAMILY** – Parents are to commit themselves to raise their child(ren) in the training and instruction of the Lord; giving instruction in godly living; committing themselves and their family to regular church attendance, as well as serving the Lord through the various ministries.
 - g. **TO THE WORLD** – Give personal witness by word and by life to the unsaved, and especially to those with whom we are related or acquainted, that God by His grace may bring faith to them in our Lord Jesus Christ.
4. **TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP.** A letter of transfer (to another church) may be granted any member in good standing by the Elders. This letter must be addressed to some particular church of like faith and mailed by the leadership of Fellowship Bible Church to the Pastor or Clerk of the church to which the member is transferred.
5. **DISCIPLINE of MEMBERS**
- a. When church discipline is necessary, reconciliation and restoration is always the objective. Church discipline shall be the responsibility of the elders assisted by the Pastor(s). In cases of expulsion from membership, the Elders must take final action. The Pastor(s) and Elders shall safeguard the purity and peace of the Church, and deal scripturally with anyone who is hindering the ministry (Galatians 1:8-9; 6:1, Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 5:11-13). No member shall be expelled until every effort has been made, including, if physically possible, personal visits to restore him (or her) for Christ, and when necessary, reconciliation to others. See FBC Church Discipline Policy (separate document) for detailed procedure.
 - b. Members failing to support the Church by their attendance within a period of one year without legitimate excuse may be dropped from membership or placed on passive membership. Persons on a passive roll shall not be entitled to hold office or vote on church matters. Persons on a passive roll may be restored to full membership standing by action of the Elders.

ARTICLE VI GOVERNMENT

- 1. The government of the Church, and the conduct of its business, the management and control of all its property, the supervision of employees of the church, and the supervision of the work of the church and of its many and varied ministries shall be vested in the Elders except as specifically limited by the Articles of Incorporation or by other sections of these Bylaws.

2. The Official Board is to consist of the Senior Pastor and Elders. Other pastoral staff members are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Board of Elders.
3. An Elder may be removed upon the recommendation of the Elders, and confirmed by the congregation by a majority vote, taken by secret ballot.
4. The Elders shall handle and consider suggestions, recommendations, and grievances upon the part of any member or organization affiliated with the Church.
5. The deciding factor in any vote taken in an Official Elder meeting shall be a majority vote of the members present. No business shall be transacted unless two-thirds of the members are present. Since the purpose of the Elders is to discern the Lord's will and oversee the ministries of the Church for the congregation, they shall work toward unanimity in spirit and consensus in decision. Eph. 4:2-6; Phil. 1:27

ARTICLE VII THE MINISTRY SYSTEM

1. PURPOSE/PHILOSOPHY

The Ministry System is an organizational style designed to enhance the involvement of the congregation in the ministries of the Church. The Ministry System does away with the idea that only those who are paid or elected to a leadership position are ministers. The truth is we are all ministers, differing only in our function. We see in Ephesians 4 that Christ created the leadership ministries to train and equip the saints, so that we all can fulfill the purpose to which God has called us.

In 1 Corinthians 12 the apostle Paul compares the Church to a human body, calling it the Body of Christ. If several parts of the human body were not functional, it would be considered crippled. The same is true of the Body of Christ, or the Church. If members are not working (involved in the life of the Church), the body is crippled. As more and more members recognize and serve in ministry, the healthier the body will become.

2. SYSTEM STRUCTURE

Under the Ministry System, the structure of the church organization is different from the traditional style. Instead of a board, committees, and departments; there are ELDERS, DEACONS, (MINISTRY LEADERS), LEADERSHIP TEAMS, MINISTRY TEAMS, and TASK FORCES.

The difference in terminology is significant because it represents a philosophy of active service rather than passive decision-making. To put it more plainly, instead of having a board or committee who are not active in ministry gather together to make decisions about those who are, the ministry system recognizes that those who serve should participate in the decision-making process.

a. THE ELDERS

The role of the Elder is a Biblical one and the qualifications for this position are outlined in the book of 1 Timothy 3. Another words used to describe the ministry of an Elder is, “*overseer*,” or one who watches over. The Elders watch over all the ministries of the Church, prayerfully discerning the Lord’s will, evaluating the needs of the congregation, and working together with the Pastor and ministry leaders to assure that the ministries are functioning properly. Unless there is a shortage of personnel, the Elders will not be involved in the leadership of a particular ministry since that is the role of the ministry leader (Deacon).

b. THE PASTORAL STAFF

The Senior Pastor provides leadership over broad areas and works as facilitator with the Elders and Ministry Team Leaders (Deacons), providing communication, coordination, training, encouragement, and assistance. Other Pastoral staff members function in the areas assigned by the Board and Senior Pastor.

c. THE DEACONS

The Deacons are appointed by the Elders to fill the leadership role of a particular ministry. Each Deacon works together with the Pastor(s), Elders, and other Deacons to identify the needs which their ministry endeavors to meet and determine the goals, direction, and coordination necessary to achieve the desired results. It is important for the Deacon to remember that his function is to coordinate the activities of the ministry, not do all the work himself. This means that there is a shared commitment to involve others! A Deacon will be encouraged to limit their ministry one area of primary leadership.

d. THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Leadership Team consists of FBC members recruited by each Deacon (in cooperation with Pastor and Elders) who serve in a particular area of ministry. The Leadership Team members assist the Deacon in doing the work of ministry, serving according to their spiritual gift(s) in order to accomplish various ministries and thus build up the Body of Christ. Membership is required for those who serve on the Leadership Team.

e. THE MINISTRY TEAM

The Ministry Team is the designation of all those who volunteer to serve the Lord through the ministries of FBC under the guidance and supervision of the Leadership Team (2c above). The Ministry Team members assist the Deacon and Leadership Team in doing the work of ministry, serving according to their spiritual gift(s) in order to accomplish various ministries and thus build up the Body of Christ. It is strongly recommended that Ministry Team members be members of the Church (On a limited and case-by-case basis, the Elders may affirm a regular attender who is not yet a member) to serve on a Ministry Team.

f. TASK FORCES

Instead of adding work to an existing ministry, a Task Force may be organized at the direction of the Elders and is the means by which specific projects can be defined, addressed, and prepared for review and approval.

3. OTHER FUNCTIONS OF THE MINISTRY TEAM

a. INVOLVING MEMBERS IN MINISTRY

The involvement of members should be done cooperatively between the Pastor and the Deacon who needs volunteers. There should always be communication between these individuals before a vacant position *is* filled. Deacons are encouraged to include new regular attenders in ministry.

b. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

(1) All decisions regarding Church ministries are made using an interwoven three part criteria:

- * *What is the Lord's will?*
- * *What are the perceived and actual needs?*
- * *What is the most effective way to meet those needs?*

Every effort is made to resist an often heard objection to new ideas namely, "We haven't done it that way before." The Lord is creative and the ministry system allows for creativity in the operation of the ministries of the Church.

- (2) The Elders are responsible to make the decisions that affect the Church as a whole. These decisions are made after consultation with the Deacons. Major decisions (major financial or governance changes, building projects, calling a Senior Pastor, for example) will be brought before the congregation.
- (3) Decisions about the ongoing functions of an individual ministry are made by the Deacon of that ministry in cooperation with Ministry Team members and, as necessary and appropriate, the Senior Pastor.

ARTICLE VIII ELDERS

The Elders shall oversee and promote the spiritual growth and the overall ministry of the Church, including in their responsibilities oversight of the business affairs of the Church.

1. The Elders shall consist of a minimum of three men and as many as the Elders deem necessary. The **TERM** of Office for Elders shall be three years. Election by the congregation at the Annual Meeting shall be held in such a way that approximately one-third of the positions shall be filled annually. Elders shall be limited to two consecutive three year terms for a total of six years. Any Elder who has served the maximum of six

consecutive years (two consecutive terms) may not again become eligible for re-election until he has been off the Board for one year.

2. **BIBLICAL QUALIFICATIONS** – Elders (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

The Elder is to be an active member of the Church and is to evidence the fruit of the Spirit in his life. According to the Scriptures, these qualifications are:

- a. “above reproach”
- b. “Husband of one wife”
- c. “Temperate”
- d. “self-controlled”
- e. “respectable”
- f. “hospitable”
- g. “able to teach”
- h. “not given to drunkenness”
- i. “Not violent”
- j. “gentle”
- k. “not quarrelsome”
- l. “not a lover of money”
- m. “He must manage his family well”
- n. “He must not be a recent convert”
- o. “He must have a good reputation with outsiders”

3. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

(a) The leadership of the Church by the Elders includes devotion to prayer and to the ministry of God’s Word (Acts:6:4). In discharging this responsibility the Elders shall:

- (1) Spend time, individually and together, in prayer and the reading and study of God’s Word;
- (2) Keep informed of the needs of the Church family, remembering those needs in prayer and communicating them, when appropriate, to the congregation of the church.
- (3) Ensure that every aspect of the church’s ministry is characterized by a faithful proclamation of the Word of God.
- (4) Provide, through the Senior Pastor, for the conduct of worship services including the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
- (5) Pray for the sick in accordance with James 5:14-15.

(b) The oversight of the Church by the Elders includes the shepherding of God’s flock (Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2). In discharge of this responsibility the Elders shall:

- (1) Recognize the authority of the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ, and minister as good examples (1 Peter 5:3-4);
- (2) Assume responsibility for the spiritual warfare of the church, corporately and individually;

- (3) Assume responsibility for the counseling and admonition of the church family, including the refutation of false doctrines and the rebuke of inappropriate conduct and the administration of church discipline.
 - (4) Encourage the sick and help the needy.
 - (5) Give support and encouragement to the pastoral staff.
 - (6) The Elders are mutually accountable to provide special encouragement to each other in their ministry and in their individual lives.
- (c) The oversight of the church by the Elders includes the ministry of managing the church as one would manage his own household (1 Timothy 3:5). In discharge of this responsibility, the Elders shall perform or delegate as appropriate the following:
- (1) Elect at the February Elders meeting from among their number a Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. No individual may serve more than three years in succession as Chairman.
 - (2) Approval of Ministry Leadership Team members as submitted by each Deacon. Authorize the opening and maintaining of such bank accounts and renting such safe deposit boxes, on behalf of the church, as they shall deem appropriate, and designating the persons authorized to draw thereon or enter there into.
 - (3) Review annually at the November meeting salaried and unsalaried positions to assess the need of Staff expansion or reduction, as to workload and responsibilities and evaluate the job performance of the Senior Pastor. Any Pastoral Staff expansion must be recommended by the Elders and approved by Congregational Vote.
 - (4) Keep accurate records of the proceedings and decisions at all Elders' meetings, such records to be approved at the next meeting.
 - (5) Oversee the receipt and disbursement of all church funds, maintaining appropriate records, providing fiscal control, and submitting documental financial status to the congregation at each regular congregational meeting.
 - (6) Require job descriptions for all paid positions associated with the church operation, and annual reviews and assessment of employee performance and job satisfaction through the appropriate staff lines of authority headed by the Senior Pastor.
 - (7) Present the Elders annual written report to the congregation at the annual congregational meeting. The report of the Elders shall include both a review of the preceding year and a preview of the forthcoming year.
 - (8) Fulfill the requirements of state law required by having the responsibility of performing the duties of "Trustees."
 - (9) It shall be the duty of the Elders to hold the title of the properties of the church and to represent the church in all matters pertaining to civil law.

ARTICLE IX DEACON

The office of Deacon is a sacred trust from God and He has carefully prescribed the caliber of men to hold this position. The Deacons have been committed to the oversight of the mechanical needs of the family of God and also to the care and oversight of the ministries of the Church.

1. TERM

- (a) The Deacons shall be appointed by the Elders after the Annual Meeting to a two-year term and shall assume office on the 1st of March.
- (b) The number of Deacons shall be determined by the Elders based on their perception of the needs of the ministry.
- (c) The term of office for a Deacon shall be two- years. Deacons shall be limited to three consecutive two-year terms for a total of six years. Any Deacon who has served the maximum of six consecutive years will not become eligible for re-appointment until he has been off the Deacon Board for one year. Any exception to this guideline may be considered by the Elders.

2. QUALIFICATIONS for Deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

The Deacon is to be an active member of the Church and is to evidence the fruit of the Spirit in his life. According to the Scriptures, these qualifications are:

- (a) “worthy of respect”
- (b) “sincere”
- (c) “not indulging in much wine”
- (d) “not pursuing dishonest gain”
- (e) “must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience”
- (f) “first be tested” (found faithful)
- (g) “there is nothing against them”
- (h) “Husbands of one wife”
- (i) “manage his children and household well”

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Each Deacon shall perform the responsibilities of a specific ministry as determined by the Elders.

- (a) Each Deacon shall select a Ministry Leadership Team that shall serve a one-year term. The size and names of the Ministry Leadership Team shall be submitted to the Elders for approval by the March Elders’ meeting.

ARTICLE X DEACONESS

The first and only mention of a Deaconess is found in Romans 16:1,2 where it is stated, “*I commend unto you Phoebe, our sister, who is a servant (deaconess) of the Church which is at Cenchrea.*” She was undoubtedly a woman of real spiritual stature and a true servant of the Lord. (Notice her unselfish service for Christ given in verse 2.)

Although the word “deaconess” is found in the Scriptures, there does not seem to be indication that it was an office or position of formal leadership. There are no responsibilities or qualifications specifically recorded, as is the case with Elder and Deacon. Because we want to minister to all of our people, both male and female as effectively as possible and because we want women to utilize their gifts to the fullest; we have created the position of Deaconess. However, because our authority is the Word of God, we want to be careful not to put women in a position that violates the Scriptural principles in 1 Timothy 2:12,13 *“I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man;”* (that is, Scripture prohibits women to serve in a position of leadership and authority over men).

1. TERM

- (a) The number of Deaconess shall be determined and appointed by the Elders based on their perception of the needs of the ministry.
- (b) The term of office for a Deaconess shall be three years. The Deaconess shall be limited to two consecutive three-year terms for a total of six years. Any Deaconess who has served the maximum of six consecutive years will not become eligible for re-appointment until she has been off the Deaconess Team for one year.

2. QUALIFICATIONS (1 Timothy 3:11)

- (a) “Worthy of respect”; (b) “Not malicious talkers”; (c) “Temperate”; (d) “Trustworthy in everything.”

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The basis of ministry for the Deaconess (and other women) is drawn from Titus 2:3-5, *“...they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the Word of God.”*

- (a) The Deaconess’ responsibilities shall be specific spiritual ministries delineated by the Elders and may include counseling, discipling, evangelism, teaching, or other women’s ministries;
- (b) The Deaconess’ shall work with the Elders, be accountable to the Elders, and shall meet with them as needed;
- (c) The Deaconess’ shall provide the vision for effective women’s ministries and outreach.

LEADERSHIP SUMMARY

The following words summarize the expected personal qualifications of any and all who would so serve the Lord in leadership positions at the Fellowship Bible Church. He or she must be:

- 1. Exemplary in Spiritual Life – A person who loves God and His Word; who desires personal Holy living; who possesses a passion for the lost; who honors God, maintains unity of spirit in the bond of love;

2. A member in Good Standing – One who has been an active member of the Church [for at least a year];
3. Willing to assume responsibility and to unselfishly give of his or her strength, time, and resources.

ARTICLE XI SENIOR PASTOR

1. QUALIFICATIONS

He shall be a man of established and true Christian character, and qualified to preach and teach the Word of God, as described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 4:12-15; 2 Timothy 2:15; and Titus 1:5-9. He must be qualified to be an Elder of this church. He must be in full agreement with the Church's Statement of Faith and must be willing to perform his duties as designated below.

2. DUTIES

He shall preach and teach the Word of God in complete agreement with the Statement of Faith, lead the church in accomplishing its objectives, and manage the staff as together, they with the Elders and Deacons, support and guide the Church in accomplishing its objectives. The Senior Pastor shall be a member of the Elders, Leadership Teams and Task Forces (it is not always necessary for him to serve on Leadership Teams and Task Forces). He shall provide the Elders with an annual evaluation of the staff that report to him, making necessary recommendations or changes in job descriptions, including additions to those staff and termination of those staff. His primary task is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry and to build up the family of God (Eph. 4:11-12). A formal ministry description is on file at the church office.

3. AUTHORITY and ACCOUNTABILITY

The authority of the Senior Pastor rests in the office, as he is a steward of the Word of God. Hence, pastoral authority is not that of a person, but the teaching authority of the Scripture (2 Timothy 4:1-2). He is accountable to the Elders. He shall report to the Elders at their meetings. He shall submit a comprehensive written report for the annual congregational meeting of the Church.

4. SELECTION

Whenever a Senior Pastor vacancy occurs, a Pastoral Search Task Force shall be assembled. It shall consist of six members; three Elders, including the Chairman of the Elders plus three members at large selected by the Elders. The Chairman of the Elders shall serve as Chairman of this Task Force. It shall function until a new Senior Pastor is installed, and shall follow the procedure recommended by the Elders for the presentation of the candidate. Only one candidate shall be presented to the congregation for selection at a time. Election and calling of the Senior Pastor shall be decided by secret ballot at a congregational meeting of the church; an affirmative vote of eighty percent of those members present shall be required.

5. TERMINATION

If and when a pastor resigns, he must give at least thirty (30) days notice of his resignation. The Senior Pastor's resignation must be submitted in writing to the Chairman of the Elders. Pastoral staff will submit a written resignation to the Senior Pastor. Dismissal action may be initiated only by a recommendation from Elders at a congregational meeting of the Church called for that purpose. The termination of the Senior Pastor's ministry by dismissal shall require an affirmative vote by secret ballot of a majority of those members present at a congregational meeting of the Church. If the congregation votes to terminate his ministry, notice of termination shall be given the Pastor in writing, and thirty days salary shall be given from the date of the vote termination – unless waived by recommendation of the Elders and approved by the congregation.

6. INTERIM PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

The Elders will be responsible for pulpit supply and the continuance of other pastoral ministries during the interim period when a new pastor is being called and when the Senior Pastor is unable to be responsible for filling the pulpit or carrying out his other ministerial responsibilities.

ARTICLE XII MEETINGS

1. The **FISCAL YEAR** of this Church shall end on the last day of December and the **ANNUAL MEETING** shall be held by the end of February at a time to be determined by the Elders, and it is to be announced accordingly at two preceding regular services.
2. **AT THE ANNUAL MEETING** the minutes of the preceding Annual Meeting and the report of the Secretary of the Elders shall be read, and the Church's yearly financial report rendered, and the report from the Nominating Task Force submitted to the membership for action. Because the Annual Meeting is not the place to discuss the character of a man, no nominations will be received from the floor. Also such other business as may be necessary shall be transacted provided such business has been submitted to the Elders, for approval and placement on the agenda, at least one week in advance of the called meeting.
3. Any regular or called meeting of the congregation may be a **CONSTITUTED MEETING** for the transaction of business, provided announcement of said meeting be given from the pulpit at two consecutive Sunday morning worship services including the Sunday preceding the said meeting.
4. A **MAJORITY VOTE** of the voting members present at any constitutionally called congregational business meeting shall be required for the election of Elders or to render financial decisions in any matter under consideration, except calling a Pastor or amending this Constitution.
5. The voting members present at any business meeting called in accordance with the requirements of this Constitution shall be considered a **QUORUM** for the transaction of business.
6. In the conduct of business meetings any **Parliamentary Questions** not covered by this Constitution shall be decided by the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

7. **ALL VOTING**, other than regular business, will be by ballot and the Chairman of the Elders shall decide all ties.

ARTICLE XIII NOMINATING TASK FORCE

The Nominating Task Force is responsible to nominate potential Elders. This task force shall consist of the Senior Pastor, three Elders and three members selected from the congregation by the Elders.

1. In October, the Elders shall select three from their membership to serve on the Nominating Task Force. One shall be designated as the Chairman. An Elder who is eligible for re-election shall not be eligible to serve on this Task Force.
2. People selected to serve on the Nominating Task Force shall be members in highest regard. They shall have served in several leadership capacities in the Church and demonstrated their commitment, leadership, and knowledge of the congregation.
3. The Nominating Task Force shall request from the congregation names they feel could best fill the vacancies.
4. The Nominating Task Force will not be limited to these names, but will use them as a guide in helping them choose the ones whom God would have placed in office.
5. The Nominating Task Force shall then prepare a list of names from the active membership of the Church.
6. The Nominating Task Force shall thoroughly review the qualifications and capabilities of every man considered for an office.
7. These names shall be posted in the Church at least one week before the election is to be held.
8. The Nominating Task Force shall have prepared ballots for use at the election.

ARTICLE XIV FINANCIAL POLICY

The financial support for the Church and its various activities shall be raised by the Biblical plan of tithes and offerings. This Church will under no circumstances consent to the collection of monies through bazaars, suppers, entertainment, or any like method.

**ARTICLE XV
ORDINATION**

1. When, in the judgment of the Elders, a man is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of the Elders to call and conduct a Council for Ordination.
2. The Ordaining Council shall thoroughly examine all applicants for Ordination as to their call to the Christian Ministry, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal belief, knowledge of the Bible, and demonstrated efficiency in Christian service.

**ARTICLE XVI
DISSOLUTION**

In the event of the dissolution of the corporation (church), no donor, member, director, officer of the Corporation, or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any Corporate assets. Upon dissolution, any assets of the Corporation must be distributed – upon approval by the membership – to one or more Bible-believing organizations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service.

**ARTICLE XVII
AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at any regular or special meeting provided the proposed amendment has been read to the congregation at each regular Church service for the two (2) Sundays preceding said meeting, and provided an exact copy of the proposed amendment has been conspicuously posted in the Church of the four Sundays immediately preceding said meeting.