***CONSTITUTION,***

***DECLARATION OF FAITH***

***AND BY-LAWS***

***RUSTBURG BAPTIST CHURCH***

***RUSTBURG, VIRGINIA***

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**CONSTITUTION, DECLARATION OF FAITH AND BY-LAWS OF**

**RUSTBURG BAPTIST CHURCH**

**PREAMBLE**

We, the members of Rustburg Baptist Church of Rustburg in the Commonwealth of Virginia do ordain and establish the following Articles to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

**ARTICLE I -- NAME**

The name of this assembly shall officially be the ***RUSTBURG BAPTIST CHURCH,*** located in the County of Campbell in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**ARTICLE II -- PURPOSE**

The primary purpose of this assembly is the glory of the God of Holy Scripture in promoting Hiswork among men that in all things He might have the preeminence. The purpose of this assembly will include:

**Section 1**

The maintenance of the regular public worship of the True and Living God, according to John 4:23-24, ***“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;”*** and Philippians 3:3, ***“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”***

**Section 2**

The feeding of the flock for the building up of the body of Christ by the teaching of God’s Holy Word and the practice of righteousness in daily living, according to 2 Timothy 2:16, ***“But shun profane and vain babbling; for they will increase unto more ungodliness;”*** and Romans 12:1-2, ***“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”***

**Section 3**

The proclaiming of God’s perfect Law and His glorious Gospel of Grace in Jesus Christ throughout the world, and the defending of ***“the faith once delivered unto the saints”*** (Jude 3).

1. We will engage in active work for the salvation of men as the high and holy mission of the local church.

2. We are to see that this is performed both:

a. By individual effort on the part of the members, and,

b. More generally, by union and cooperation of the members as a body sending the Gospel abroad **(Acts 13:1-3; 14:26-27; Philippians 4:10-18; 3 John 5-10; Romans 10:14-15; Ephesians 5:1-12; 1 Peter 3:15-16).**

**ARTICLE III -- ARTICLES OF FAITH**

The assembly now known as ***Rustburg Baptist Church*** does adopt as the expression of our faith, ***“The Baptist Faith and Message”*** as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention May 9, 1963 in Kansas City, Missouri. (We also recognize the earlier major Baptist Confessions of Faith as a fuller and more concise expression of our historic denominational heritage.) We accept the same not as an authorized rule or code of faith, whereby we are to be fettered, but as a confirmation in faith, a means of edification in righteousness, and as an assistance to us in controversy. ***“The Baptist Faith and Message,”*** in full, is as follows:

**I. THE SCRIPTURES**

The **Holy Bible** was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God’s revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It reveals the principles by which God judges us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ. **(Exodus, 23:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalm 19:7-10; 119:11, 89, 105, 140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16, 36; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff; 17-11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.)**

**II. GOD**

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the Universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

**A. God The Father**

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men. **(Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:llff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3, 15; 54:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Isaiah 43:3, 15:54: 8; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; I Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.)**

**B. God The Son**

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself the demands and necessities of human nature and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, partaking of the nature of God and of man, and in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever- present Lord. **(Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalm 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16, 27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6, 19; Mark 1:1; 3-11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18, 29; 10:30, 38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16, 28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20, 28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5, 20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-25; 5:6-21; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15, 24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.)**

**C. God The Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the assurance of God to bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service. **(Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 23:13; Psalm 51:11; 139:7; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10, 12; Luke 1:35; 4:1, 18-19; 113; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17, 26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17, 39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11, 14-16, 26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8, 14; 2 Peter 1-21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.)**

**III. Man**

Man was created by the special act of God, in His own image, and is the crowning work of His creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by His Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence; whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin, and as soon as they are capable of moral action become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore every man possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.  **(Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5, 7, 18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalm 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18, 23; 5:6, 12, 19, 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18, 29: 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19, 21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.)**

**IV. Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, sanctification, and glorification.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God’s grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior. Justification is God’s gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.

B. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God’s purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual perfection through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person’s life.

C. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed. **(Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 16:21-26; 27:22 to 28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14, 29; 3:3-21, 36; 5:24; 10:9, 28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:29-39; 10:9-10, 13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13: Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12; 8, 14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6 to 2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1 to 22:5.)**

**V. God’s Purpose Of Grace**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is a glorious display of God’s sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.  **(Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7, 19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45, 65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6; 12, 17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7, 26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10, 19; Hebrews 11:39 - 12:2; 1 Peter 1:2-5, 13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19: 3:2.)**

**VI. The Church**

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.

This church is an autonomous body, operating through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In such a congregation members are equally responsible. Its Scriptural officers are pastors and deacons.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages. **(Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42, 47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23, 27; 15:1-30; 15:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11; 21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 3:1-15; 4:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.)**

**VII. Baptism and The Lord’s Supper**

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer’s death to sin, the burial of the old life, and resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord’s Supper.

The Lord’s Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.  **(Matthew 3:13-17; 26:25-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; Acts 2:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.)**

**VIII. The Lord’s Day**

The first day of the week is the Lord’s Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, and by refraining from worldly amusements, and resting from secular employments, work of necessity and mercy only being excepted. **(Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3, 33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1, 19-28; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.)**

**IX. The Kingdom**

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God’s will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age. **(Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10; 23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10, 16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6, 9; 5:10; 21-22.)**

**X. Last Things**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord. **(Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27, 30, 36, 44; 25:31-46; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40, 48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28, 35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1 to 22:13.)**

**XI. Evangelism and Missions**

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man’s spirit by God’s Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ. **(Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8, 16; 7:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8, 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39 to 12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.)**

**XII. Education**

The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian schools is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ’s people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the preeminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists. **(Deuteronomy 4:1, 5, 9, 14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalm 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7; 11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3; 8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12 to 6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.)**

**XIII. Stewardship**

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtor ship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer’s cause on earth. **(Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4, 19-21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21, 42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.)**

**XIV. Cooperation**

Christ’s people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ’s Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ’s people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament. **(Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.)**

**XV. The Christian and The Social Order**

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his own life and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. The Christian should oppose in the spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness, and vice. He should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth. **(Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16, 43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12:14; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23 to 11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.)**

**XVI. Peace and War**

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. **(Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9, 38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36, 38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.)**

**XVII. Religious Liberty**

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its word. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power. **(Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7, 24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1, 13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.)**

**ARTICLE IV--CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

**Section I--Admission of Members**

Any person who desires to unite with this assembly may present himself as a candidate for membership during any scheduled church service. Acceptance of membership occurs at the time of decision by a majority vote of church members present. Candidates will be provided training classes/courses.

A. For believer’s baptism by immersion as the public profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in identification with His redemptive work. After being counseled by the Pastor and/or the Deacon Team regarding his/her conversion, Christian experience and his agreement with this Constitution, he will be baptized within a reasonable time frame.

B. By transfer of letter from another Baptist church of like faith and order. This letter indicates that the candidate is a member in good standing.

C. By statement of Christian experience. This includes believer’s baptism by immersion and a satisfactory statement of experience and faith in Christ in accordance with the foregoing guidelines;

D. By restoration: the restoring to active fellowship of a former member who has previously lost his/her membership and standing in this church. In all such cases the church must be satisfied as to the repentance of the applicant.

**Section 2 -- Dismissal of Members**

A. Church Letter: If a member desires to unite with another Baptist Church of like faith and order, he/she shall present himself/herself to that church. Upon receipt of the request of that church, a letter of transfer and recommendation will be granted in the next regular church business session; provided that the member is in good standing and not under the discipline of the church at the time of application.

B. Erasure: If a member unites with a church of another denomination or withdraws from our fellowship, the clerk will inform the other church or the individual that membership has been terminated.

C. Exclusion: Membership may be terminated by exclusion if a member:

1. becomes an offense to the church by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct or heretical doctrine which is contrary to the churches standard of life and doctrine;

2. removes from the community and fails to attend or support the church for a period of two years; however, no actions will be taken until the matter is considered by the Pastor and Deacon Team, and there is an attempt to contact and encourage member to renew fellowship with the Church.

**ARTICLE V -- ORGANIZATION**

Under pastoral oversight and leadership the activities of this church will be carried on through lay members and lay groups. These members receive their authority from the Church and are in return, responsible to the Church. However, they have further responsibility of working in fellowship and harmony with all of its members.

Anyone who feels called to serve on a team can volunteer at the Team Fair in December. Also new members can serve on a team upon completion of the new member orientation class. Members will volunteer for a period of one year and may succeed themselves. Teams contain some members who are members by virtue of their office and therefore, are termed “ex-officio” members. When such a member ceases to hold the office his/her membership on the team terminates automatically. An ex-officio member will have the right to vote, and there is no distinction between him and other members except that he should not be counted as a member in determining a quorum. It is the intention of the Church to permit, not to require, the Pastor to act as a member of the various teams of the Church. A majority of the members on a team will constitute a quorum. Minutes of all team meetings will be kept and a copy will be given to the Church Secretary to be made a permanent record.

Team volunteers are expected to serve faithfully.

**Section 1 -- Officers**

A. **PASTOR**

The Biblical function of Pastor-Teacher is explained in I Timothy 3, Titus 1, and Ephesians 4. These passages along with others provide qualifications and responsibilities of the minister of Christ. His responsibilities include:

1. Ministry to the spiritual needs of the church as the under shepherd of Christ;
2. Be responsible for the efficient accomplishment of God’s purposes through His Church. Provide leadership and vision for spiritual growth, discipleship and Evangelism;
3. Conduct the public services of worship;
4. Secure pulpit supply in his absence and for other special services or meetings, etc. as discerned necessary in conjunction with the church leadership;
5. Oversees the editing of the church bulletin, newsletter and any other printed materials that are distributed.
6. Serve as an ex-officio member of all boards and teams.
7. Fifty (50) percent of the average Church attendance (for the last year) will constitute a quorum for the Call and/or Dismissal of a Pastor with 75% of quorum for motion. (Refer to Article VI, Section 3C)

B. **MODERATOR**

The Pastor will serve as Moderator. He will:

1. Preside at all business meetings of the church, in his absence the Chairman of the Deacon Team will preside;
2. Prepare an agenda for all meetings;
3. See that new business is referred to and cleared through the appropriate officer or Team Captain;
4. Have the authority to appoint special teams as the need arises, such appointments are to be made at any regular or called business meeting of the church;
5. The Moderator will appoint the Clerk as needed.

C.  **CLERK**

The duties are to:

1. Keep a correct record of the proceedings of the church business meetings;
2. Report to the church the gains and losses in membership;
3. Make annual reports to appropriate denominational agencies, associations and conventions.

D.  **TREASURER**

This officer will:

1. Receive all records of monies collected and deposited by the church;
2. Pay out of church funds the salaries, fixed charges and approved budgeted items, all non-budgeted items authorized by the church, and all non-budgeted items authorized by the Finance Team Captain;
3. Reconcile monthly bank statements with records;
4. Maintain a detailed record of cash receipts and expenses in permanent form;
5. Prepare a summary of cash receipts and disbursements for presentation at regular business meetings of the church;
6. Perform other duties as the Finance Team may direct;
7. Serve as a member of the Finance Team.

**Section 2 – Ministry Teams**

(A) **DUTIES OF TEAMS**

This ministry of the church rests heavily upon the ability, devotion, experience, maturity, and zeal of its team members. Election of church members to committee service is a signal of honor which offers exceptional opportunity for dedicated service. Each team is expected to:

(1) Obtain an adequate and working knowledge of proper procedure, practices and understanding in its field of service;

(2) Exercise prompt and faithful discharge of its duties;

(3) Elect a Team Captain;

(4) Observe regular meetings for appropriate business and fellowship;

(5) Exercise authority as delegated by the church.

(6) Volunteering on a Team implies a determination on his/her part to be active in the work of that Team.

(B) **GENERAL RULES FOR TEAM CAPTAINS**

(1) Call and hold meetings when necessary and request the Vice-Captain to serve in his absence;

(2) Convene this team within one month of the start of the year for the purpose of organization informing the team of its duties in accomplishing the objectives, program and operations of the church;

(3) See that the team plans an overall program; prepare the agenda for and preside at the meetings of the team;

(4) Take the initiative in consulting with the Pastor and officers of the Church regarding his/her team’s part in carrying out the program of the church;

(5) Systematically delegate responsibilities and duties to members of his/her team;

(6) Cooperate with other team Captain and officers in the effective discharge of their duties;

(7) Submit appropriate reports of team activity and items of business to the Church;

(8) Submit a report of financial requirements to carry out the team’s responsibilities (this must be submitted to the Finance Team by September 15 of each year.)

**Section 3 – Ministry Team Listing**

A **DEACON TEAM**

The Biblical function of Deacons is outlined in the New Testament primarily in Acts 6:1-8 and I Timothy 3:8-13, and these passages provide guidelines for qualification and duties of all who serve in this position.

1. The Deacon Team will consist of men who shall hold office for a term of three years or longer as the need arises.
2. The number of members on the team will be determined by the needs of the church, with the Pastor and the team itself fixing this number.
3. The Deacon Team will elect its own chairman, vice-chairman and secretary at the last meeting prior to the beginning of a new fiscal year. New members will attend this meeting with voting privileges.
4. Members of the team who render long and outstanding service to the church may be designated by the team as Honorary Life Deacons. They will be privileged to attend all meetings and have the power of voting if they so desire; however, they must be present to vote.
5. The duties of the Deacon Team include the following:
   1. With the Pastor, be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the congregation and to visit personally;
   2. Assist the Pastor in arranging for visiting preachers when it is necessary for the Pastor to be absent from the pulpit;
   3. Assist the Pastor in the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper;
   4. Along with the Pastor to formulate plans for the extension and growth of The Kingdom of God;
   5. Encourage the officers and team members of the church in their areas of service;
   6. Act as mediator in instances where team responsibility is not clear and, to the best of its ability, locate such responsibility in the proper team;
   7. Assist the Pastor in efforts toward conflict management;
   8. With the Pastor serve as a standing team on church discipline;
   9. Meet at least monthly for appropriate business and fellowship;
   10. With the Pastor, assimilate new members into the life of the Church;
   11. Serve on the Benevolent Team and be responsible for welfare service of the church to persons who, upon investigation, are found to be in need and not adequately provided for otherwise;
   12. Receive and dispense items of necessity and leading in other acts of Christian helpfulness;
   13. Provide information and leadership for and on behalf of the church in local welfare programs which the church desires to participate in.

B. **TRUSTEE TEAM**

This team will:

1. Be composed of at least three members elected by the church;
2. Not contain membership on a rotating basis, but will serve until death, chronic illness that hinders quality service, removal from the community or other sufficient reason their service to the church ceases to be of the highest value;
3. Hold in trust the property of the church;
   1. They will have no power to sell, buy, lease, rent, mortgage or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church’s authorization of such action;
   2. They will have no control over the use of the church property except by voteof the church;
4. Affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of trustees are required;
5. Serve as officers of the Incorporation of the church.

C. **CHURCH MINISTRY TEAMS:**

1. **FINANCE TEAM**

This team will be responsible for the business management of the church and serve as Finance and Stewardship Team. The team will consist of a minimum of five members. The church Treasurer will serve automatically as a member of the team. The team will elect its own Team Captain and other necessary officers. New officers will be elected at the last meeting prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year. This team will handle all financial matters of the church, including:

1. Preparing a proposed budget for the church, to be presented to the church at its October business meeting.
2. Encouraging the subscription of the budget as proposed by the church;
3. Establishing and maintaining an acceptable system for receiving, recording and disbursing all monies received and disbursed by the church;
4. Ensuring that committed obligations are promptly met, that income and expenditures are kept in proper balance, and that expenditures are in accordance with the budget as approved by the church with the Chairman or Vice-Chairman signing all requests for payment;
5. Maintaining adequate insurance coverage for all insurable church property.
6. The Team will be responsible for the procedures and guidelines for the Counter Team.
7. Ensuring that the records of the Treasurer are reviewed by the Financial Team no later than 6 months after the close of the Fiscal Year to insure that all income and expenditures have been accounted for in a proper manner.
8. **BUILDING & GROUNDS TEAM**
   1. Have the responsibility for the direction of the operation, maintenance, and minor alterations and additions to all church property;
   2. Assume responsibility for maintenance of furnishings, buildings and grounds.
      1. Maintaining continual assessment of facilities for needed repairs.
9. If an emergency arises make decisions for repairs immediately.
10. Apply preventive maintenance of sound fiscal management;
11. Obtain bids to submit one time contract services.
    * 1. Evaluating suggestions for improvements to the church property and, where appropriate make recommendations to the Church;
      2. Instructing church members and other responsible individuals in the regulation of the heating and cooling systems and the use of other Church utilities.
      3. Maintaining an adequate supply of fuel.
      4. Restricting all expenditures to budgeted amounts unless an emergency arises. (In such cases the team will authorize repairs and report their action to the church as soon as possible.)
      5. Seeing that the grass and shrubs are properly planted and tended, and that the parking areas are properly marked and maintained; when necessary seeing that snow and ice is cleared from sidewalks and the parking areas.
      6. Erecting and maintaining any outdoor signs authorized by the church;
      7. Limiting spending to $500.00 in any single instance without authorization of the Finance Team;
      8. Hire and supervise the duties of contract services related to buildings and grounds.
      9. Be responsible for turning on and off the AC/heat for Sunday Worship and Wednesday services as well as other special events.
12. **TRANSPORTATION TEAM**

The Transportation Team is responsible for the maintenance of the church bus.

**4. COUNTERS TEAM**

* 1. This Team should be made up of individuals not involved is disbursing or recording church funds.
  2. Each group should have one member not related to the other two.
  3. Each team is responsible for counting the Sunday School and Worship Service Offerings every fourth Sunday on a rotating basis.
  4. The team will follow all procedures and guidelines provided by the Finance Team.

D. **WORSHIP TEAMS:**

1. **MUSIC TEAM**

This Team will be composed of the Minister of Music, Instrumentalists, and Directors of all choirs of the church, with the Minister of Music to serve as Team Captain. It will:

* 1. Be responsible for and provide such instrumental and vocal music as may appropriately aid any regular or special service of the church;
  2. Organize and maintain such choirs as authorized by the church;
  3. Have charge of the music and musical instruments of the church;
  4. Request the Finance Team to include in the annual budget an appropriation for music, song books, robes and the maintenance of robes and musical instruments for the ensuing year.

1. **LORD’S SUPPER TEAM**
   1. This Team will be composed of volunteer members and shall:
   2. Prepare the elements for observance of the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper;
   3. Care for and maintain the equipment used in the observance of this ordinance.
2. **BAPTISMAL TEAM**
   1. This Team will be composed of volunteers; men and women. It will:
      1. Attend baptismal services and assist candidates for baptism;
      2. Assist the Pastor in these services as he may request;
      3. Properly prepare the baptistry facilities prior to and following baptisms.
3. **GREETER TEAM**

This team will perform the customary duties of ushers at all regular church services and also at special services when requested by the Pastor or the church. This team will be composed of at least volunteers. Among its specific duties it will:

1. Assist in welcoming all those attending church services;
2. Supervise the parking of automobiles on church property;
3. Seat those attending services;
4. Take charge of any emergencies arising during such services;
5. Assist in collection of tithes and offerings in such services.
6. **AUDIO/VIDEO TEAM**

This team will take care of the operation of the sound equipment for all services.

E. **DISCIPLESHIP TEAMS:**

1. **ADULT TEAM**

This team will teach Sunday School, Discipleship Courses and Bible Studies and will:

1. Assist the Pastor and the church in a program of consistent Christian education, evangelism and motivation to Christian service;
2. Foster growth in a vital Christian faith among its members;
3. Direct its members toward active and conscientious church membership.
4. **YOUTH TEAM**

This team is in charge of all activities for Youth in 6th through 12th grade.

1. **CHILDREN’S TEAM**
2. WOL. They organize a Bible based program for children aged 3 to 11 that meets on Sunday.
3. Nursery. Responsible for all children aged 0 to 3.
4. Junior Church. Teaches a Bible lesson to children age 3-11 during the worship service.

F. **FELLOWSHIP TEAMS:**

1. **HOSPITALITY TEAM**

This Team will consist of volunteer members. It shall be responsible for scheduling the use of the kitchen and establishing rules for its use. They shall see that an adequate supply of disposable materials are on hand at all times and coordinate meals and socials, etc. as scheduled by the Church.

1. **DECORATION TEAM**

This Team will be composed of volunteer members and shall supervise the securing and placing of flowers in the sanctuary for worship services and other special occasions.

1. **RECREATION TEAM**

This team will be composed of at least three members and will:

1. Survey recreational needs of the church and make arrangements as deemed wise for meeting any such needs in accordance with the church calendar so as not to conflict with other scheduled services or activities sanctioned by the church;
2. Provide facilities and equipment upon request of church groups for planned recreational programs.

F. **EVANGELISM & MISSIONS TEAMS:**

1. **OUTREACH TEAM**

The Outreach Faith Team will be responsible for contacting or visiting all prospects.

1. **MISSION TEAMS**
   1. **WOMEN’S MISSIONARY UNION – WOMEN ON MISSION**

This agency will,

* + 1. Assist the Pastor and the church in a vital missionary program;
    2. Seek to develop in the women and girls a sense of responsibility toward home, foreign and local missions;
    3. Be responsible in promotion of mission education and projects of the church;
    4. Lead, promote and suggest goals for the church in special mission offerings, Ex: Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions, and denominational special offerings.
  1. **MEN’S BROTHERHOOD – BAPTIST MEN**

This agency will,

* + 1. Assist the Pastor and the church in a vital missionary program;
    2. Seek to develop a high sense of stewardship among its members;
    3. Seek to develop in the men and boys a sense of responsibility toward home, foreign and local missions;
    4. Be responsible in promotion of missions education, support and projects of the church.

G. **PASTOR-SELECTION TEAM**

When the need for a pastor arises, the Deacons will nominate to the church a Pastor-Selection Team which will be elected at an appropriately called business meeting. This team will consist of two men, two women, and a representative of the youth.

**ARTICLE VI -- MEETING, QUORUM AND VOTERS**

**Section 1- Business Meetings**

Regular business meetings of the Church will be held annually in October on the third Sunday. Ordinarily, matters that Teams or members wish to present will be considered at any regular meeting.

**Section 2-Election of Officers**

At the regular October meeting the officers will be elected when needed and the proposed budget for the succeeding year will be voted on by the members.

**Section 3- Special Called Meetings**

(A) Notices of special business meetings of the church will state: the time; the place; and the purpose of the meeting; and will be called by the Pastor or the Clerk.

(B) Such notices will be printed in the church bulletin or read from the pulpit at services on two Sundays preceding said meeting. If a just cause should arise, as determined by the majority opinion of the Deacons, reading the notice from the pulpit on the Sunday morning preceding the meeting shall be sufficient.

(C) Such notice will state the purpose of the meeting and no other major business will be considered. This includes the Call and Dismissal of the Pastor.

**Section 4- Quorum**

For the transaction of business at any regular meeting, or at any duly called special meeting, five (5) percent of the resident membership as reported in the last previous annual letter to the Lynchburg Baptist Association shall constitute a quorum.

**Section 5-Rules of Order**

(A) The rules contained in Roberts’ “Rules of Order, Revised”, (most recent revision) will govern the conduct of business in church meetings where these rules are applicable, provided that they are not inconsistent with: this Constitution; these By-Laws; or any special rules of order of the church.

(B) The method of voting on each item of business will be determined by the Moderator, except in the call of a pastor where by the Pastor-Selection Team will suggest voting procedure and the church body determines the method of voting.

**ARTICLE VII--CHURCH MESSENGERS**

As voluntary participants in the Lynchburg Baptist Association, Baptist General Association of Virginia and the Southern Baptist Convention, the number of church messengers shall be determined by the Constitutions and By-Laws of each respective association or convention. These messengers will be elected by the church at the Annual Business meeting for a term of one year:

(A) Lynchburg Baptist Association Executive Committee;

(B) Lynchburg Baptist Association Annual Sessions;

(C) Baptist General Association of Virginia;

(D) Southern Baptist Convention.

**ARTICLE VIII--CHURCH YEAR**

The church year shall extend from January 1 through December 31 of the same year and shall apply to the budget, elected officers and team members.

**ARTICLE IX--LICENSE TO PREACH**

A man who is a member of this church gives and evidence that he is called of God to the work of the Gospel ministry, may be given license to preach the Gospel upon recommendation of the Pastor and Deacon Team. This licensing may be given upon a majority vote of the church as an acknowledgment of his call to the ministry and encouragement to make preparation for it. The clerk may furnish him with a copy of the minutes or a certificate of license as his credentials. It is understood that the performance of civil duties by the licensee shall be governed by State Law.

**ARTICLE X--MINISTERIAL ORDINATION**

When the church desires to ordain a man to the Gospel ministry, the following procedure shall be followed: the church will express its approval by a vote of three fourths the members present at any appropriately arranged business session of the church. Then the church shall invite regularly ordained Baptist ministers who shall form themselves into an examining council in accordance with accepted Baptist procedure and who shall examine the candidate with respect to his Christian experience, call to the ministry and his views of Biblical truth and Baptist doctrine. When the examining council recommends the candidate’s ordination, and the church has approved such recommendation, the Pastor shall plan an appropriate service and, with prayer and the laying on of hands, the church shall publicly set apart and ordain the candidate to the full Gospel Ministry. Except in unusual circumstances, the church will not ordain any person unless and until he is ready to enter upon an active pastorate of a church.

**ARTICLE XI--AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by the vote of a two-thirds majority of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the church, provided that at any such meeting a quorum is present, and further provided two weeks’ notice of any proposed amendment has been given in the church bulletin. Proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Pastor or Moderator, and if to be considered at a special meeting of the church, shall be included in the call for the meeting.

**ARTICLE XII--ADOPTION**

This Constitution and By-Laws shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when a two-thirds majority of the members present at the business meeting at which the vote is taken shall vote in favor of same. The adoption of this Constitution and By-Laws shall effect a repeal of all previously adopted rules in conflict herewith.

These items were adopted by the assembly of the Rustburg Baptist Church on the Twenty-First day of October in the year of our Lord Two Thousand and Twelve.

**Constitution Revision Committee**:

Pastor Rick Cole

Bob Cole

Barry Sell

David Garrett

Bobby Sarver

Ralph Hamilton

John Wallisky

Mark Conley

**CHURCH COVENANT**

**The covenant of the church shall be as follows, and this covenant shall be read in the services of the church from time to time:**

**“Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ”.**

**“We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations”.**

**“We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior”.**

**“We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in 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 rules of our Savior to secure it without delay”.**

**“We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God’s Word”.**