Antioch Missionary Baptist Church

Covenant, Constitution, & By-Laws

CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, 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 coven ant 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 spiritual ity; 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 devotion; to educate our children religiously; 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 conduct; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating substances; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to each other 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, mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that, when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with another church of like faith, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1—NAME AND PURPOSE

A. The name of this church shall be Antioch Missionary Baptist Church.
B. The purpose of this church shall be to maintain a public worship of God, to promote Christian education, to exalt the standard of Christian living, and under the leadership of our Divine Lord and Master, to cooperate in spreading the Gospel and in extending the Kingdom of God throughout the world. Trusting that as a result sinners shall be saved and believers shall be edified.
C. The church is organized exclusively for religious, charitable, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code. The church purposes also include the contributions to organizations that qualify as exempt under the same Internal Revenue Code.

ARTICLE 2—MEMBERSHIP AND CONDUCT

A. The membership of this church shall consist of persons who have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord, acknowledged His lordship in baptism by immersion, and received membership by a vote of the church in the manner prescribed.
B. The Standards of conduct are set forth in the covenant.

ARTICLE 3—FAITH AND DOCTRINE

A. **The Holy Scriptures:** We believe in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible, and God -breathed. (II Tim. 3:6,17; II Peter 1:20 -21; Matt. 5:18; John 16:12 -13).
B. **B. The Godhead:** We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
C. **The Person and Work of Christ:** We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, is true God and true man, is the only Saviour of mankind, and is the proper object of our worship.

D. **The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit:** We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who reproves the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment; that He is the supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, and indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. (John 16:9 -11; II Cor. 3:6; I Cor. 12:12 -14; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 1:13 -14); that He is the Divine Teacher who guides believers into all truth; that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit. (John 16:13; I John 2:20 -27; Eph. 5:18).

E. **The Total Depravity of Man:** We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God; that in Adam's sin, the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; that man is totally depraved, and of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Gen.1:26-27; Rom. 3:22 -23; Eph. 2:1 -3, 12).

F. **Salvation:** We believe that faith in the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died, was buried, arose from the dead, and has ascended to the right hand of the Father, is the only hope of salvation (Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5); that this faith is begotten through hearing the Word of God wholly apart from human works (Eph. 2:8 -9); that by a new birth one dead in trespasses and sin is quickened unto eternal life, made righteous, justified (II Cor. 5:21; I Cor. 1:30; Rom. 3:21 -26), made partaker of the Divine nature (II Peter 1:4), and is eternally secure unto the praise of His glory.

G. **The Eternal Security of Believers:** We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37 -40; 10:27 -30; Rom. 8:1, 38 -39; I Cor. 1:4-8; I Peter 1:5); that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an excuse for willful sin. (Rom. 13:13 -14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11 -15).

H. **Separation:** We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not t o bring reproach upon their Saviour and Lord; that separation from all religious apostasy, practices, and associations is commanded of God. (II Tim. 3:1 -5; Rom. 12:1 -2, 14:13; I John 2:15 -17; II John 9 -11; II Cor. 6:14, 7:1).

I. **The Church:** We believe that a local church is a congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in it by His Word; that its officers are pastors (elders, bishops) (Eph. 4:10 -11; Acts 20:26 -32; I Tim. 3:1 -7; I Peter 5:1 -4; Titus 1: 5 -9; Phil. 1:1) and deacons (Acts 6: 1 -7; I Tim. 3:8 -13); that it has the absolute right of self government directed by the Holy Spirit and is answerable only to Christ; that in all matters of membership, polity, government, discipline, and benevolences the will of the local church is final (Acts 2:41 -42; I Cor . 11:2; Eph. 1:22 -23, 5:23 -24: Col. 1:18; Acts 20: 17 -18).

J. **The Ordinances:** We believe that there are two church ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

   a. **Mode of Baptism:** The pastor or some other person, of the same faith, authorized by the church shall administer the ordinance of baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Baptism sets forth in a beautiful and solemn way our faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, with its effect in our life of death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Baptism is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership. (Acts 8:36-38; Rom. 6:3 -4; Col. 2:12; I Peter 3:21).

   b. **The Lord's Supper:** The Lord's Supper shall be served to the congregation by the pastor, or some other person authorized by the church on the designated time established by the church body. Since it is the Lord's Table, none who are His shall be barred, but the pastor shall frequently state the scriptural order, which places baptism as a prerequisite to communion, and shall explain the meaning of the ordinance. Believers, who, through no fault of their own, are unable to participate in the public observance of the Lord's Supper, may request special administration of the ordinance at a time and place of mutual convenience. (I Cor. 10:21; II Cor. 11:24 -27; Matt. 26:26 -28).

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

L. **The Eternal State:** We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men; the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28 -29, 11:25 -26; Rev. 20:5, 6, 12, 13). We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord. There in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when the soul and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; Rev. 20:4 -6; II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; I Thes. 4:16 -17). We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain in conscious misery after death until the second resurrection. Then, with the soul and body reunited, they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment. (Luke 16:19 -26; Matt. 25:41 -46; II Thes. 1:7 -9; Jude 6 -7; Mark 9:43 -48; Rev. 20 :11-15.)

ARTICLE 4—GOVERNMENT

A. This church will be governed by and with the consent of the members, each of whom shall have equal rights as to voice and to vote, without preference, one over another.

B. The title to the property of this church shall be vested in a Board of Trustees elected and certified by the church under provisions of the laws of the State of West Virginia.

C. This church shall not join itself to any organization which would alleviate its right to self-government and ownership.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE 1—MEMBERSHIP

A. Reception: Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of having been born of the Spirit and having adopted the views of faith and practice held by this church, may be received for membership. Specifically, members may be received as follows:
    1. On profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and acknowledgment of His lordship in baptism by immersion.
    2. By letter from another church of like faith and order.
    3. Upon their testimony of salvation and having received proper baptism by immersion.
    4. By restoration.

Voting on members and the extension of the hand of fellowship shall take place at any meeting of the church, which the pastor or deacons may designate.

B. The church shall maintain an inactive roll for negligent members. When moved to this roll the members voting rights are withdrawn. Any inactive member may present himself to the church and request reinstatement to the active church roll, by the active church members.
C. The church shall maintain a roll for deceased members, from the active or inactive rolls.
D. Any member, unless providentially hindered, who fails to support by their presence, monetary substance, or personal contact (phone or letter), thereby not showing interest in our Lord's work, for a six month period will be automatically moved to the inactive church roll.
E. Dismissal: Any member in good standing shall be entitled to a letter of commendation to any other church of like faith and order and sent directly to the clerk or pastor of the church requesting the letter.

F. Statement of Membership: Members who are in good standing with this church, but who from personal circumstances satisfactory to their own conscience deem it desirable to unite with some church of Protestant faith, other than Missionary Baptist, may request the church to write a letter of statement of membership for the information of the pastor of the church with which they intent to af filiate. This statement shall not be construed as a church letter of dismissal and shall go no further than to evidence the membership and good character of the applicant without making recommendations. With the issuance of such statements, the member's church relations with us are severed, and his or her name will thereby be removed from our roll.

G. The church membership roll shall be revised at two-year intervals by the members. Recommendation may be made by the church to drop a name from the church membership roll because of lack of interest, lost of addresses, or prolonged non -attendance and non-support. Affirmative action, by the church , shall not be taken until the member has been contacted in person, if possible, or by certified letter with an addressed and stamped envelope enclosed. By a negative response to the contact or no reply from the letter, it will be assumed that the member is no longer interested.

H. Human Sexuality:

    a. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. Any member or potential member practicing any of the above is a breach of this covenant and is no longer a member in good standing and subject to disciplinary action as described under Article 4 -Discipline. Any employee of the church practicing any of the above or becoming pregnant or causing pregnancy as a result of consensual intercourse, outside of the marriage relationship, shall be terminated from employment. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8 -9; Lev. 18:1 -30; Rom. 1:26 -29; I Cor. 5:1,6:9; I Thess. 4:1 -8; Heb. 13:4).

b. We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman (Gen.2:24; Rom. 7:2: I Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22 -23).
c. We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God by that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home and the men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only the men are eligible for license and ordination by the church (Gal. 3:28; Col.3:18: I Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4 -6, 12).
d. Any member or potential member practicing any perversion, is a breach of this covenant, and subject to discipline as described under Article 4 - Discipline.

ARTICLE 2 OFFICERS

SECTION 1 PASTOR

A. A pastor may be called (one candidate at a time) after he has given one or more sermons to the church, and after he has been interviewed and found to hold standards in harmony with the church. A ¾ majority vote of the members present at a special meeting called for this purpose, which has been announced from the pulpit for two consecutive preceding Sundays, is necessary to call the pastor.
B. The pastor's tenure of office shall be indefinite, but may be terminated at any time by a 2/3 majority vote of the members present at a special business meeting called for this purpose, or by his resignation. A 60-day notice shall be given before termination by either party unless a shorter or longer notice is agreeable to both parties.
C. If at any time his personal belief, preaching, or teaching shall not be in full accord with the doctrinal standards of this church, his services as pastor shall be terminated.
D. The pastor shall have charge of the welfare and oversight of the church and shall be to it a true shepherd.
E. He shall minister unto the church at all regular and appointed times of worship, and to the individual members whenever possible.

F. He shall be an ex -officio member of all standing committee of the church.
G. He is allowed two weeks off each year with full pay for rest and vacation. This period may be increased or diminished at the direction of the church.
H. The pulpit supply shall be paid by the church when the pastor is absent with the consent of the church or because if illness. When other speakers are invited into the church, the church shall determine the amount of compensation.

SECTION 2 DEACONS

A. There shall be a Board of Deacons consisting of 7 or more members of this church who are active, scripturally qualified, and able to participate in the affairs of the church. Additional deacons may be elected as the need arises at the will of the church.
B. The deacon's tenure of office shall be indefinite.
C. In electing deacons, the church shall elect men who are honorable, who are true servants of God, and who conform with the meaning of the word and practice of the New Testament as reflected by the principals set forth in I Tim. 3:8 -13. They shall be servants of the church and zealous to guard the unity of the spirit within the church in the bonds of peace.
D. They shall be men who are willing to serve in such capacity, and are fully conscious of the work of the deacon. They shall serve as a council of advice in conference with the pastor in all matters pertaining to the spiritual welfare of the church and its members.
E. They shall seek to know the moral, spiritual, and physical needs and burdens of the members of the church, and shall serve the whole church in relieving, encouraging, and developing all who are in such need.
F. It shall be their duty to assist the pastor in serving the Lord's Supper.
G. The deacons shall meet at least once prior to the regular business meeting of the church and at special times upon call of the pastor or the chairman of the Board of Deacons for the consideration of urgent matters.
H. The deacons shall serve as a general pulpit committee in case of the absence or inability of the pastor. In any period when the church is without a pastor, unless, the church otherwise provides, the deacons shall arrange for temporary ministry and take counsel with reference to securing a pastor.

However, it is especially provided that the matter of selecting a pastor shall rest with the church and not with the deacons.

I. In the event of baseness, vileness, gross misconduct, or in case of acts involving moral turpitude or unchristian c onduct on the part of any deacon during his term of office, he may be removed from office by a majority vote of the church at a special business meeting called for that purpose.

J. In case of voluntary withdrawal of any deacon from the church during his term of office, or in case of the departure of any deacon from the vicinity, whether he withdraws from the church or not, he shall cease to be an active deacon and the church, if so desired, shall proceed to elect another deacon to fill such vacancy. Likewise, in the case of the death or voluntary resignation of the active deacon, this procedure will apply.

K. Deacons coming into the fellowship of this church from time to time, having been previously ordained in other churches, of the same faith and order, as deacons, shall not be considered active deacons unless and until so recommended by a vote of the church.

SECTION 3—Other Officers Elected at the Will and Pleasure of the Church. (These Must Be Active Members of the Church).

A. **Trustees:** The Board of Trustees shall consist of five or more members, (the total number not to be equal to or exceed the total number on the deacon board), as the church from time to time sees fit. They shall hold office at the will and pleasure of the church and act for and on behalf of the church in the manner and for the purposes required by the laws of the State of West Virginia. They shall hold in trust the property of the church, sign such mortgages and notes as the church may require, see to the insurance of the church property, and fulfill all requirements of civil law respecting the trustees of a church. They shall have the management and control of all property belonging to the church. They shall not encumber with loans, transfer, sell, or purchase any real estate for the church except by express written authorization conveyed through a majority vote of the membership present at a constitutionally called business meeting. They shall make annual reports to the church.

B. **Financial Officer:** A financial secretary -treasurer shall be elected as the church may from time to time see fit . They shall keep proper books of account of all church funds, receipts, and disbursements, and shall submit books of account for an annual audit by an auditing committee appointed by the church if the church deems it necessary. They shall receive all funds of the church, make proper record of the funds, and deposit them in a bank designated by the church. All expenditures of the church shall be made by checks. They shall give an itemized report of receipts and expenditures at the regular business meetings of the church.

C. **Clerk and Assistant Clerk:** The clerk and assistant clerk shall be elected as the church may from time to time see fit . They shall keep full minutes of the business meetings of the church; keep records, reports, and documents of the church; notify committees, messengers, officers, etc. of their appointments or election; conduct the correspondence of the church; keep the r oll of the membership of the church; record the names of all members received, the date and method of their reception (baptism, letter, etc.); record the dismission of all members, the date and the reason (death, letter, discipline, etc.); issue letters of dismission and recommendation upon order of the church.

SECTION 4—Officers to Be Elected Annually (These Must Be Active Members of the Church)

A. **Director of Music and Assistants:** They shall be charged with providing worshipful music for all regular and special services, and shall have general oversight and direction of the music. They shall direct the choir at practice and shall cooperate with the pastor and deacons in planning the musical program and the order of the service.

B. **Pianist Organist and Assistants:** They shall cooperate with the music director and assistants in providing worshipful music for all regular and special services.

C. **Ushers:** There shall be no less than four including a chairman. They shall be responsible for seating arrangements at all services and meetings of the church, receiving of all offerings at such meetings and shall act as a welcoming committee.

D. **Sunday School Officers:** They shall be responsible for coordination and promotion of Sunday school activities and programs in cooperation with the pastor and deacons.
E. **Sunday School Teachers:** They shall follow scriptural teachings in learning, as well as teaching others the Word. (Jas. 1:5; II Tim. 2:15; John 16:13). The pastor, deacons, and Sunday School Officers shall nominate teachers and assistants up through high school age. All other classes shall nominate their own teacher and assistant.
F. **Officers:** They shall be elected each year at the designated business meeting. A nominating committee, which shall include the pastor and deacons, shall be elected by the church in a previous business meeting. They shall submit a ballot nominating the names for each office to be filled after having carefully investigated the character and fitness of each nominee.

SECTION 5—Removal of Officers

A. If any officer of the church shall conduct himself in a manner unbecoming a church officer by an uncooperative attitude, either in word or deed, he may, after a hearing before the Board of Deacons and upon their recommendation, be removed from office by a majority vote of the members present at a special business meeting called for this purpose.
B. If any officer becomes unable to carry out the duties of his office by reason of sickness or nonresidency, or is in any way rendered incapable of continuing in office, the deacons shall declare the office vacant and may fill such vacancy until an election is held by the church.

SECTION 6—Absence of Officers

When an officer is going to be absent from a service requiring their office to be filled, it shall be the officer's responsibility to notify the assistant or other proper officer as much in advance as possible.

Section 7 – Board of Directors

A. There shall be a Board of Directors consisting of 5 or more members of this church who are active, have a Christ-like testimony and are able to participate in the affairs of the church. The Board shall consist of the Senior Pastor, who shall act as Chairman of the Board unless otherwise designated, along with other leaders, including but not limited to Assistant Pastors, Deacons, and ministry leaders.
B. They are to be selected by a ¾ majority vote of the active members of the church in an annual meeting, at the time designated by the church for such meeting, with a one-year tenure that may be renewed yearly an indefinite number of times.
C. The primary functions and purpose of the Board of Directors shall be:
    1. To oversee the legal, business, financial and administrative affairs of the church, including church property.
    2. To evaluate the current year's church budget and provide a budget recommendation to the church for the next fiscal year.
D. Removal of Board Members – Subject to Article 2, Section 5.

ARTICLE 3—Church Business

A. The regular business meeting of the church shall be held at a time designated by the church.
B. The pastor shall be moderator of all business meetings. In his absence, an elected church officer shall call the meeting to order and a moderator shall be elected by a majority vote of those present.
C. The pastor may call a special business meeting from the pulpit, stating clearly the particular object of the meeting. It shall be the duty of the pastor to call a special business meeting from the pulpit when requested to do so by the deacons, trustees, or the chairman of any standing committee. Notice of such meetings shall be given at least one worship service prior to the time of such meeting or as otherwise required.
D. A quorum for the transaction of business at any regular of special meeting shall be not less than 40 members in good standing.

ARTICLE 4—Discipline

A. Should any unhappy differences arise between members, the aggrieved members shall follow in a tender spirit the rules given by our Lord in Matt. 18:15 -17.
B. Should any case of gross breach of covenant or of public scandal occur, the deacons shall endeavor to remove the offense with the advice and counsel of the pastor, and if such efforts fail, shall report the case to the church.
C. If the church votes to entertain the complaint, it shall appoint a reasonable time and place of hearing, and shall notify the person in question of the charges and of the time and place of the hearing.
D. At such hearing, the accused member shall be treated in all fairness, and in equity shall be permitted to call his aid any member of the church as counsel. If he shall not present himself at the time appointed, or fail to give a satisfactory reason for his failure to do so, the church may proceed in his absence.
E. All such proceedings shall be guided by a spirit of prayer and Christian kindness and forbearance, but should an adverse decision be reached, the church may proceed to admonish the offender or declare him to be no longer a member of the church and remove his name from the roll.

ARTICLE 5—Ordination

When a member feels he has been called to the Christian ministry, he shall submit his call to the pastor and deacons and after they are satisfied as to his call, they shall request the church license him for a period of one year, after which standard shall be followed.

ARTICLE 6—Salaries

Amendment to the By -Laws: That all salaries paid by the church shall be set by a vote of the church as the church deems necessary at a special called meeting properly announced.

ARTICLE 7—Church Budget

The pastor, treasurer, and Financial Committee shall meet prior to the December business meeting in each year and write up a budget for the coming year for the church's consideration and approval at the December business meeting.

ARTICLE 8—Home Missions

A. The church shall have a home mission program. This program will be supported by funds set aside by the church and disbursed by the Deacon Board as they deem necessary.
B. During revivals, evangelists are to receive the one offering to be taken per week, but not less than $100 per day, supplemented by the church treasury, if necessary.

ARTICLE 9—Foreign Missions

A. The church shall have a foreign m ission pr ogram and a mission board. B. This program will be supported by funds set aside by the church and disbursed as the church so orders.

ARTICLE 10—Flower Fund

A. The church shall maintain a flower fund at all times for death.
B. Eligibility shall be members, their immediate families, their fathers and mothers, the pastor, and his immediate family.
C. A maximum of $50.00 plus taxes and telegrams, unless otherwise adjusted by majority vote of the church, is to be spent.

ARTICLE 11—Power and Limitations

The church organizations, societies, and committees shall have the right to adopt such rules and regulations as they deem best and most favorable to their success, provided however, that none shall conflict with this Constitution or interfere with the regular or special meetings of this church. Also, all projects pertaining to the church property and its spirituality by Sunday school classes or other groups of the church shall be presented to the church at a business meeting for consideration and approval .

ARTICLE 12—Amendments

This constitution may be amended by a ¾ majority vote of the members present at a special business meeting called for that purpose, provided that the proposed amendment has been read to the congregation at each regular church s ervice for two consecutive Sundays preceding such meeting and provided that an exact copy of the proposed amendment has been posted in the church two weeks preceding such meeting. All by -laws, rules, resolutions, or regulations heretofore adopted or in force in this church and not consistent with this constitution are hereby repealed.

ARTICLE 13—Church Records

The church shall record marriages conducted in the church.

ARTICLE 14—Dissolution

Upon the discontinuance of this Church by dissolution or otherwise, any assets lawfully available for distribution shall be transferred to one or more exempt organizations qualifying as exempt within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.