

INTRODUCTION

The most important things in life are those that count for eternity. This church seeks to prepare men for eternity. In every realm it is dealing with eternal matters. Thus, the practices and beliefs of this church are of utmost importance. With this in mind, it is our sincere desire that you will read and study every portion of this book, as it sets forth the beliefs and practices of this church. An intelligent grasp of the great fundamental truths found in this book will be a great blessing to your own heart and life, especially in these days of deepening apostasy and outright denial of Divine Truth.

In this introduction, let us remind ourselves of what this church expects of each of its members.

1. That you have personally been Born Again.
2. That you have been baptized by immersion, according to Scripture.
3. That you believe that the Lord has led you to New Life Church.
4. That you accept the ‘Confession of Faith’ and the ‘Church Constitution.’
5. That you be faithful in attending all the regular services of the church. Sunday morning and evening, and Wednesday evening.
6. That you give regularly your tithes and offerings for the support of this church in its various ministries.
7. That you endeavor to promote unity by loving one another ‘with a pure heart fervently.’

STATEMENT OF FAITH

I. THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible as originally written was verbally inspired, and the product of Spirit-controlled men, and therefore, has truth with out any admixture of error for its matter. We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried.

II Timothy 3:16,17

II Peter 1:19-21

II. THE TRUE GOD

We believe there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressively glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; and in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct, but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

Exodus 20:2,3

I Corinthians 8:6

Revelation 4:11

I John 5:7

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person; with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one, until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the agent in the New Birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer.

John 14:16,17

Matthew 28:19

Hebrews 9:14

Acts 11:16

John 14:26

Luke 1:35

Luke 24:49

Genesis 1:1-3

John 16:8-11

John 3:5, 6

Acts 5:30-32

Mark 1:8

John 1:33

Ephesians 1:13,14

Mark 1:8

Romans 8:14, 16,26,27

IV THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

We believe in the personality of Satan, that he is the unholy god of this age, and the author of all the powers of darkness, and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire.

Matthew 4:1-3

II Corinthians 4:4

Revelation 20:10

V. CREATION

We accept the Genesis account of creation and believe that man came by direct creation of God, and not by evolution.

Genesis 1,2

John 1:3

Colossians 1:16,17

VI. THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of His Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not only by constraint, but of choice; and therefore, under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

Genesis 3:1-6,24

Romans 5:19

Romans 5:12

Romans 6:10-19

Romans 1:18

Romans 1:32

VII. THE VIRGIN BIRTH

We believe that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner; born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born, or can ever be born of woman and that He is both the Son of God, and God the Son.

Genesis 3:15

John 1:4

Isaiah 7:14

Matthew 1:18-25

Luke 1:35

VIII. THE ATONEMENT FOR SIN

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, Who, by the appointment of the Father freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the Divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust; Christ, the Lord, bearing our sin in His own body on the tree; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in Heaven, and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with Divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable and compassionate and an all-sufficient Savior.

Ephesians 2:8

I John 4:19

Acts 15:11

Romans 3:24,25

I Corinthians 15:3

Matthew 18:11

Philippians 2:7

Hebrews 2:14

John 3:16

Isaiah 53:4-7

II Corinthians 5:21

IX. SALVATION

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous, and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the Divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with Divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith, and newness of life.

II Corinthians 5:19

II Corinthians 5:17

I John 5:1

John 3:3

John 3:6,7

Acts 16:30-33

John 3:8

II Peter 1:4

Romans 6:23

Colossians 2:13

Ephesians 2:1

X. FAITH

We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation.
Acts 16:31

XI. JUSTIFICATION

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification:

(a) That justification includes the pardon of sin and the gift of eternal life, on principles of righteousness;

(b) That it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness is imputed to us.

Acts 13:39 Romans 5:9 Isaiah 53:11
Zechariah 13:1 Romans 5:1 Romans 8:1

XII. THE LOCAL 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 them by His Word; that its officers are, Pastors and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures; we believe the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ, thru the Holy Spirit; that it is Scriptural for true churches to co-operate with each other in contending for the faith, and for the furtherance of the Gospel; that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and methods of its cooperation; on all matters of membership, of policy of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

Acts 2:41,42; 15:13-18; 20:17-28
I Corinthians 11:2 I Timothy 3:17
Ephesians 1:22,23; 4:11; 5:23,24 Colossians 1:18

XIII. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin, and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation. We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He come, and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination.

Acts 8:36-39 John 3:23
Romans 6:3-5 Matthew 3:16
Colossians 2:12 I Corinthians 11:23-28

XIV. ETERNAL SECURITY

A Letter of Dismissal shall be granted to anyone who desires to discontinue fellowship with us, or who is not in good standing and desires to untie with another church.

Section 4 - Any member, who, in the judgment of the Pastor and Board of Deacons, fails to participate in the life of the church, or whose address is unknown, may be placed on the List of Inactive Members. Where the address is unknown, such member shall be notified by letter from the Board of Deacons that their name has thus been placed on the inactive list, and that they are ineligible to vote, to hold office, or to receive a letter of good standing.

Section 5 - Members whose name has been on the inactive list for six months or whose conduct is unbecoming a professing Christian and member of this church, may be excluded by a majority vote of the church.

Section 6 - Discipline and Suspension of Members:

Discipline Committee

The Deacons with the Pastor shall constitute the discipline committee of the church and have sole charge in determining covenant violations and disciplines.

Restoration of Discipline of Members

1. Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another (I John 3:16, John 13:34, 35). When a member becomes knowledgeable of an offense of the magnitude to hinder spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go alone to the offending party, only after self-examination and rectification (Matthew 18:15-18; Galatians 6:1). As specified in our covenant, each member is to endeavor to make reconciliation quickly (Matthew 5:23-25a; Ephesians 4:29-32).
2. If reconciliation is not reached, a second member, usually a deacon or pastor, is to accompany after following the same procedure of self-examination and in a spirit of humility and restoration.
3. If still unresolved, the pastor and deacons as elected representatives, Biblically responsible to put down murmuring, must hear the matter. If the matter remains unresolved, they must recommend to the church prayerful examination of our own lives, then prayerful effort to restore the offending member, and if still unresolved, the exclusion of such member who refuses to be restored.

No matter or offense may be heard unless previous Biblical steps have been followed, except in the case of a public offense, such as Galatians 2:11-15.

No information concerning parties not under discussion may be heard.

No member may be excluded where there is genuine fruit of repentance evidenced.

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

The pastor and deacons are directed to move promptly in the safeguard of the purity and peace of the church when anyone is obstructing the work in any way.

STUDENT WATCHCARE MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - The purpose of the Student Watchcare Membership is to provide an opportunity of service and fellowship to those of temporary residence who are members in good and regular standing of a church of the same faith and practice.

Section 2 - The requirements are the same as those listed under regular membership in Article iii. A notice of the granting of Student Watchcare membership shall be sent to the home church.

Section 3 - The privileges afforded Student Watchcare Members are the same as for regular members, except they shall not be allowed to vote or hold a church elected office listed in Article IV, Section 1.

Section 4 - The Student Watchcare Membership shall be TERMINATED automatically when such member is no longer a temporary resident. Should permanent residence be established, the deacons may recommend regular membership by vote of the church, pending receipt of the letter from the home church.

ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS:

Section 1 - The officers of this Church shall be: a Pastor, Board of Deacons, Committee of Trustees, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Bible School Superintendent, Assistant Bible School Superintendent.

Section 2 - The officers of New Life Church must fully accept the Articles of Faith and Constitution as contained herein. They must be people filled with the Holy Spirit as manifested by the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25), growing in Christlikeness (Romans 8:29), and committed to Biblical standards of holiness in thought, word, and deed. They are to be growing patterns and models of love for God and man, denying the lusts that rule the world today (Matthew 22:36-40; I John 2:15-17; Titus 2:11-14; II Timothy 3:1-5). Further, they will be examples in their commitment to the ministry of New Life Church and loyal to the leadership of New Life Church as said ministry and leadership are faithful to the mandates of the head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 3 - A person who is elected to the office of pastor or deacon must be a man meeting the requirements of Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13. (The practice of the church has been to interpret I Timothy 3:12 as meaning that if a person has not been married to a second wife/husband after conversion, he is qualified. A second marriage is allowed only after the first wife/husband is deceased.) The Board of Deacons shall elect a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary.

Section 4 - The Trustees shall consist of seven members. The Deacons shall meet to select three from their number and will appoint four members from the church at-large. The Board of Trustees shall elect a Chairman from among the Deacons that serve as Trustees. The names of those men, who have been appointed to the Trustee's Committee shall then be ratified by the Church, as required by Indiana State Law.

Section 5 - All members of the Bible School teaching staff shall be members of this church and approved by the Board of Deacons.

Section 6 - All persons elected by the church to any position must be a member of the church and approved by the Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE V - DUTIES:

Section 1 - It shall be the duty of the Pastor to preach the Word of God, teach and exemplify the principles of Christianity, administer the Ordinances, and to have in his care the stated services of public worship. He shall be ex-officio member of all boards and committees.

Section 2 - It shall be the duty of the Board of Deacons to have general supervision of the spiritual interests of the church; to make recommendations for the calling of a Pastor; to consult and cooperate with him in the performance of his duties; to supply the pulpit during a vacancy in the pastorate, to aid in the administration of the Ordinances; to have regard for church discipline; to consult with candidates for church membership; and to fill all appointive committees; to visit the sick and needy members and use for their relief such funds as may be available, to give special attention to the spiritual attainment of each member.

Section 3 - It shall be the duty of the Trustees to have charge of all church property and they shall not dispose of any church property without the consent of the church, and to act as legal representations of the church in accordance with the laws of the State of Indiana.

Section 4 - It shall be the duty of the Clerk to keep a careful and correct record of all business transacted by the church, to keep a current list of the membership, and to issue church letters as are authorized by the church.

Section 5 - It shall be the duty of the church Treasurer to receive and disburse all church funds, and to keep an accurate record of all church receipts and expenditures. A financial report shall be given to the church as desired from time to time.

Section 6 - It shall be the duty of the Bible School Superintendent to have general supervision of the Bible School; and to appoint such officers and teachers as are necessary for the work of the school, subject to the approval of the Pastor and Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE VI - TERMS OF OFFICE:

Section 1 - The Pastor shall be called at a Special Meeting of the Church; called for that purpose by public notice given on three Sundays immediately preceding the day of the meeting, and two thirds of the ballots cast shall be necessary for his election. The Pastor shall continue in office until he resigns, or his resignation is requested by at least a majority of the voting members present at a Special Meeting called to order by the Board of Deacons for that purpose, of which the customary three Sundays previous notice has been given.

Section 2 - All other officers shall be elected by the church for one year, excepting the Board of Deacons, which shall be elected for three years. Deacons may not serve more than two consecutive three year terms. When a Deacon is elected to fill a vacancy for less than the three year term, his eligibility to serve two consecutive three year terms shall not be reduced. Deacons shall be eligible for re-election one year after expiration of his second consecutive three year term. The number of Deacons on the Board may be increased as need arises, to maintain a ratio of three deacons for each unit of one hundred persons in total membership. When Deacons are added, the initial term of office is to be adjusted so that no more than one third of the Board membership will need to be replaced each year.

Section 3 - In case of vacancy, any office may be filled by election at a regular business meeting of the church providing public notice has been given on the preceding Sunday, upon the recommendation of a nominating committee.

Section 4 - In case of vacancy in the office of Trustee, notice shall be given in accordance with the laws of the State of Indiana.

Section 5 - All officers elected at the Annual Meeting shall assume the responsibility of their office immediately following their election.

ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS:

Section 1 - The church shall meet regularly on each Lord's Day for public worship, and a Midweek Service shall be held for Prayer and Christian Fellowship each week. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at such times as shall be fixed by the Pastor and Board of Deacons.

Section 2 - The Annual meeting shall be held on Wednesday following the second Sunday in July, or at the discretion of the Board of Deacons.

Section 3 - Church business may be transacted at any time the church meets. Unless otherwise stated in the constitution and barring emergency, business shall be announced the Sunday before the date of the meeting.

Section 4 - A Nominating Committee consisting of five members shall be appointed by the Deacons and Pastor, whose duty it shall be to select candidates for each office to be filled at the annual election.

Section 5 - The Pastor or Chairman of the Deacons shall preside at all business meetings. At his discretion, the Pastor may authorize another church officer to preside.

Section 6 - In all business meetings, fifteen shall constitute a quorum, except in special meetings for important business such as calling a Pastor, sale or purchase of property, or assumption of financial responsibility by the church, when twenty percent of the membership in good and regular standing shall be required for a quorum.

Section 7 - Voting shall be by show of hands or voice vote as called for by the one moderating the business meeting. A written ballot may be called for from the floor and approved with a "second" and majority vote.

Section 8 - "Roberts Rule of Order" shall govern all questions of Parliamentary Practice in business meetings of the church.

Section 9 - Voting age pertaining to calling or dismissal of the Pastor, buying or selling of church property, or any business of major importance, shall be 16 years.

Section 10 - In all business meetings for the purpose of calling or dismissal of a Pastor, sale or purchase of property, or assumption of financial responsibility by the church, absentee ballots are acceptable from a member who is, at the time of the business meeting, confined to a hospital, a shut-in or convalescing at home. Ballots must be submitted in a sealed envelope to be counted during the meeting, and each ballot must be signed by the member voting.

ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution may be made by a two-thirds vote of the members in good and regular standing present at any business meeting of the church, providing a copy of the proposed change shall have been read from the pulpit two preceding Sunday mornings.

ARTICLE IX - CHURCH STAFF

Section 1 - When the services of paid personnel other than the pastor are needed, the church shall hear a recommendation from the pastor and deacons and may authorize the position and salary.

Section 2 - Staff members, except secretarial and custodial:

The pastor shall recommend to the deacons the person to be employed in the position created. Upon recommendation of the deacons, the staff member may be called at a special or regular meeting of the church. Public notice and purpose of such meeting shall have been given (one) previous Sunday and two-thirds of the ballots cast are necessary for a call. Only one candidate may be considered at a time.

Section 3 - All staff members are directly responsible to the pastor, or to the deacons when there is no pastor, in the performance of their duties. Loyalty to the church and its leadership is expected. Each staff member shall understand that continuance of his ministry is subject to either the pastor or the deacons.

Section 4 - Secretarial Staff Members:

Upon creation of secretarial positions, secretaries will be hired by, directly responsible to, and terminated by the pastor.

Section 5 - Custodial and Maintenance Staff Members:

Upon creation of custodial and maintenance positions, personnel will be hired by the pastor and the Board of Trustees, shall be directly responsible to the pastor or the chairman of the Trustees and may be terminated by the pastor or deacons.

Section 6 - Dismissal of Staff Members:

It is understood that dismissal of a staff member is not subject to church action or review.

Section 7 - Due to changing circumstances, it may be necessary to vary the number and titles of personnel employed in the church staff.

This amendment approved and adopted by the congregation, May 22, 1974.

ARTICLE X

In the event of a dissolution of the Corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocable designated by corporate vote prior to dissolution to such other non-profit religious corporations as are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Articles of Faith adopted by this Church, and in conformity with the regulations of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (section 501 C-3).

CHURCH FELLOWSHIPS

The New Life Church is an independent Baptist Church, having severed all Convention ties in the year 1938, at which time this church was founded. However, while we are an independent Baptist Church, we recognize the blessings and privileges of fellowship with other local bodies of Believers of like faith and practice. Therefore, we are in Fellowship with the State and National groups of the G.A.R.B.C., the A.C.C.C. and the I.C.C.C.

What is the G.A.R.B.C.? It is the GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES, which is a voluntary fellowship of sovereign, independent, fundamental Baptist churches working together at the Baptist task. It is wholly separated from affiliation with modernism. Its churches are held together, not by elaborate Convention machinery, but solely by a common, passionate love for, and loyalty to, Jesus Christ, and a deep, abiding love and confidence for and in each other. Thus banded together, it moves forward to the accomplishment of the holy tasks, which lie before it. Quoting from "Literature Item Number 3" of the G.A.R.B.C., it says, 'Looking at a lost world and an apostate church, they have come away with a deep conviction that there is a place for united effort in the common task of (1) keeping a clear, undimmed picture of the true Gospel before a lost world and (2) sounding forth the clarion call of the Scriptures to every born-again believer to separate himself from the apostasy.'