

Memorial Baptist Church
Port Arthur, Texas

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

For the certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church, and the freedom of action of the body in its relation to others of the same faith, we do declare and establish this constitution for the purpose of governing this body in an orderly manner.

ARTICLE I- IDENTITY

Section 1. Name

The name of this body shall be the Memorial Baptist Church of Port Arthur, Texas and the official address shall be 4011 Memorial Blvd. Port Arthur, TX 77640.

Section 2. Affiliations

This church shall be affiliated and cooperate insofar as practical, with the Association and State Convention affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE II- PURPOSE

The purpose of this body shall be to maintain continuing, vital relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and to bring all men into this relationship.

ARTICLE III- CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the spirit of God, to have received the Lord Jesus 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 in to covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together 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.

ARTICLE IV- THE CHURCH DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Section 1. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation to man. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. The Holy Scriptures will in all cases be the supreme and final authority for all matters of doctrine and practice of the church.

Section 2. God

There is one and only one living, eternal and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver and Ruler of the universe. God reveals Himself to us in Trinity as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being. God the Son was revealed on earth as the man Jesus Christ who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.

Section 3. Man

Man was created by God in the image of God, but in Adam's sin the race fell into sin and is totally depraved and in need of salvation.

Section 4. Election

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, sanctifies, and glorifies. It is consistent with the free choice of man. Election is a glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

Section 5. Salvation

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

Regeneration, or 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 and faith which are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a 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, full forgiveness and acquittal through Christ's righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.

Sanctification is the experience by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes. Sanctification brings in regeneration and enables the believer to progress toward moral and spiritual perfection through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue through the regenerated person's life.

Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Section 6. Eternal Security

All true believers are secured in Christ forever and will never fall away from the state of grace. 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.

Section 7. 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 offices are those of 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.

Section 8. Baptism

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony of his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privilege of church membership.

Section 9. The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is the symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through the partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Section 10. 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 in public and private.

Section 11. 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.

Section 12. 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.

Section 13. Judgment

In Romans 14:12 we find and we believe that everyone (lost or saved) must give an account to God for the things done in the body. No human being in the world shall escape this accounting.

Section 14. Civic Government

We believe that Civil Government is of divine appointment in the interest of and for good order in human society; officials are to be prayed for, honored and obeyed except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 15. 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 to 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.

ARTICLE V- CHURCH PROGRAM

Section 1. 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 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.

Section 2. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Therefore, Christians are under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions which are 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.

ARTICLE VI- POLICY

The government of this church shall be vested in the body of believers who compose its membership. This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist churches, acknowledging only the Lordship of Christ as its head, and the direction of the Holy Spirit as its guide.