

The Constitution

of the

Paw Paw Bible Church
McCoole Avenue, Paw Paw, West Virginia

Approved January 25th, 1998
Supercedes all previous Constitutions

THE CONSTITUTION
of the
Paw Paw Bible Church
McCoole Ave., Paw Paw, West Virginia

PREAMBLE

We, the members of Paw Paw Bible Church, do ordain and establish the following articles to which we voluntarily submit ourselves:

ARTICLE I - Name and Place

The name of this Church shall be Paw Paw Bible Church of Paw Paw, West Virginia.

ARTICLE II - The Object

The object of this Church is to glorify God through the edification of believers by the preaching and teaching of God's Word, the world-wide proclamation of the Gospel of God's grace expressed in the shed blood and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary, the promotion of Godly worship and the defense of the fundamental truths of conservative Protestantism.

ARTICLE III - DOCTRINE

THE BIBLE. We believe the Bible as the verbally inspired Word of God, wholly without error in the original writings, our all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21)*

GOD. We believe in one God eternally existing in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and that these three are equal in every divine perfection. (Deut 6:4; Matt 28:19)

JESUS CHRIST. We believe that the eternal Son of God became incarnate in the Lord Jesus Christ, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man; that He lived a sinless life, gave Himself in death as a perfect substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of all men, arose bodily from the grave, and ascended into heaven. (John 1:1, 14, 18; 1 Cor 15:3-4)

THE HOLY SPIRIT. We believe that the Holy Spirit regenerates, baptizes, indwells, and seals all believers in Christ immediately upon salvation; and that He empowers for service those who are yielded to Him. (John 3:6; 1 Cor 6:19; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 4:30; 5:18)

SPIRITUAL GIFTS. We believe that God has given to all believers a spiritual gift (or gifts); that speaking in tongues is not a necessary sign for the baptism or filling of the Holy Spirit; and that ultimate deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection. (1 Cor 12:11; 13:8; Eph 4:11-12)

MAN. We believe that mankind was originally created in the image and likeness of God; that in Adam he fell through sin and thereby incurred spiritual death which is eternal separation from God; so that now all men are sinners, hopelessly sinful in themselves, apart from the grace of God. (Gen 1:27; Rom 3:23; 5:12)

SALVATION. We believe that salvation is received by grace through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ, on the ground of His shed blood and altogether apart from works; and that all who believe in Christ are born again by the Holy Spirit and thereby become the children of God, possessing every spiritual blessing. (John 1:12; Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5)

ETERNAL SECURITY. We believe that all who are truly born again are assured of salvation and will, by the grace of God, persevere and be kept saved forever. (John 10:27-29; Rom 8:29; 1 John 5:13)

SANCTIFICATION. We believe that, in Christ, every believer secures a holy standing before God; that in experience the believer progressively grows in grace and into Christ-likeness by the power of the Holy Spirit; and that the believer will be fully perfected at the appearing of Christ, such that his state will conform to his standing. (John 17:17; Eph 5:25-27; Heb 10:10)

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MISSION. We believe that every believer is called to a holy life of service and testimony in the power of the Holy Spirit, which service includes the proclamation of the Gospel to the whole world; and that there is promised reward in heaven for faithfulness to such service. (Matt 28: 18-19; John 12:25-26; 1 Pet 1:15-16)

SEPARATION. We believe that every believer should separate from worldly and sinful practices and associations; and that Bible-believing churches should separate themselves entirely from worldliness and religious apostasy. (Rom 12:1-2; 2 Cor 6:14; 7:1; 2 John 9-11)

THE CHURCH. We believe that the Church is composed of all true believers baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body that is Christ's; and that the local church is an assembly of born-again, immersed believers who regularly gather for the purposes of worship, fellowship, administration of the ordinances, edification, discipline, and effective promotion of the work of Christ throughout the world. (Acts 2:41-42; Eph 1:22; Heb 10:24-25)

ORDINANCES. We believe that believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only ordinances of the church. We further believe in immersion as the mode of baptism, and in the memorial significance of the Lord's Supper. (1 Cor 11:23-26)

DISPENSATIONS. We believe that dispensations are stewardships by which God administers His purpose on the earth through man under varying responsibilities; that three of these are the subject of extended revelation in Scripture: Mosaic law, the present dispensation of grace, and millennial kingdom. (Eph 3:2-6; Col 1:25-27; Heb 7:18-19)

ANGELS. We believe that angels were originally created as sinless spirit beings, and that many continue in their holy state as ministers of God; that Satan and many other angels rebelled against God, and in their fallen state continue to oppose God and His work. (Col 1:16; Eph 6:12; Jude 6)

THE SECOND COMING. We believe that the blessed hope of the imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church, commonly called the Rapture, is to be followed in order by: the Tribulation, the Second Coming of Christ to the earth, and the millennial reign of Christ. (1 Thess 4:13-18; Titus 2:13)

THE ETERNAL STATE. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to everlasting blessedness in the presence of God, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matt 25:46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15)

* Scripture references are representative, and do not constitute "proof texts" for the doctrinal views presented. Our doctrinal distinctives arise out of a careful study and synthesis of many passages of Scripture, taken in their literary and historical context.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

Any person who has accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior, who has been baptized by immersion following acceptance of Christ, who displays a desire to live a consistent Christian life, and who willingly agrees to the Constitution of Paw Paw Bible Church, shall be eligible for membership.

Any such eligible person who desires to unite with this church shall make application to the Pastor and the Board. If applicants, after a personal interview before the Pastor and Board, meet with unanimous approval, they will be recommended to the church for membership. Candidates for membership will be voted upon by the members of the church who are present at one of the regular services. A simple majority shall approve the candidates for membership. Candidates who are accepted shall be given the right hand of fellowship and will be placed on the church roll.

The Board shall have the authority to review the church membership whenever it is deemed necessary. At such time, members who seem to manifest flagrant inconsistencies in their Christian life, or demonstrate a negative attitude toward the church's Constitution, or show indifference toward the life and work of the church, shall be investigated for the purpose of reconciliation. It shall be within the authority of the Board to grant a member "inactive" or actually remove such a member from the roll, provided the individual is given an opportunity to appear before the Board to show just cause why action should not be effected.

ARTICLE V - GOVERNMENT

This Church acknowledges only the Lord Jesus Christ as its head; the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible guide in matters of faith, discipline and order; the Holy Spirit as its teacher; and is not and never shall be answerable to or under the jurisdiction of any other ecclesiastical body.

The government of this Church is vested in its membership and executed through the Board.

1. The Board:

- a. The Board shall consist of Pastor or Pastors, Deacons, Trustees, Clerk, and Treasurer. The Pastor and Treasurer are members of the Board but have no voting rights on Board motions.
- b. The Board shall elect annually from its membership a chairman at its first regular business meeting following office elections in the month of January.

- c. The Board shall have supervision over the business transactions and general work of the Church, including the supervision of Christian education ministries within the Church, its organization and branch works.
 - d. The Board members shall be expected to assist the Pastor in teaching, visiting the sick, and the edifying of the church members.
 - e. The Board shall supervise and direct all expenditures. Expenditures exceeding five hundred dollars for one item must have the approval of the congregation at a regularly called meeting, unless said item already appears in the adopted budget. Salaries and fringe benefits of the Pastor and other paid personnel shall be evaluated and administered in a timely manner.
 - f. The Board shall meet quarterly or more often by mutual consent of the Board members.
 - g. The simple majority of the members present at any regular or called meeting shall constitute a quorum.
 - h. The Board shall call congregational meetings for any purpose it deems necessary, provided that notice of such meetings shall be given as herein provided.
 - i. When the Church is without a Pastor, it shall be the duty of the Board to:
 - 1. conduct congregational meetings.
 - 2. arrange for all regular Church services.
 - 3. secure candidates for pastor, whose Christian character and teachings are in accordance with the Doctrinal Statement and Constitution of this Church.
 - j. The Board shall appoint from the Church membership a qualified Treasurer for the Church. The Treasurer shall serve an annual term in office subject to the Board's approval.
 - k. The Board shall handle and consider written suggestions, recommendations, and grievances submitted by any member or organization affiliated with the Church.
 - l. In the event of a vacancy during the term of office, the Board may entertain nominations to fill such office at a regularly called congregational meeting. The officer-elect to fill the vacant office shall serve out the unexpired term.
2. The Deacons:
- a. The basic Scriptural qualifications defined in I Timothy 3:8-13 shall be used as a guideline to determine the eligibility of candidates for Deacon. Each Deacon will serve a term of one year, subject to re-election during the January congregational meeting.

- b. The Deacons shall see to the counting of all monies received and shall keep an accurate record of all receipts. These monies will then be turned over to the Treasurer for proper disbursements.
- c. The Deacons will assist the Pastor during the administration of the church ordinances, baptism and communion.
- d. In order to fill the office of Trustee, Deacons can serve as both Trustee and Deacon concurrently.

3. The Clerk:

- a. The Clerk shall keep accurate records of all congregational business meetings and minutes of the Board. These records shall be made available upon request to any member in good standing.
- b. The Clerk shall be responsible for keeping a record of the Church membership, admissions, dismissals, deaths, terminations, baptisms and ordination services.
- c. The Clerk shall carry on and maintain a complete record of all correspondence and such other records as may pertain to their office.
- d. The Clerk shall also have in custody any other papers, records, or other documents as directed by the Board.
- e. The Clerk as well as the Church Treasurer shall have access to the church safety deposit box.

4. The Trustee:

- a. Trustees shall serve a term in office of three years. Their duties as Trustee will be as follows:
- b. The Trustees shall be the official custodian of all property owned by Paw Paw Bible Church and shall, in accord with the laws of the state of West Virginia, transact any properties for the Church according to the prescribed manner of said laws.
- c. The Trustees shall not, however, sell, mortgage, or otherwise encumber the property without the consent of a two-thirds majority of the votes cast by the Church membership present at a regularly called congregational meeting for that special purpose.

- d. The basic Scriptural qualifications defined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 shall be used as a guideline to determine the eligibility of candidates for Trustee.
5. The Treasurer:
- a. The Treasurer shall credit in their proper form, in books provided for this purpose, all monies received, counted, and deposited.
 - b. The Treasurer shall disperse funds as directed by the Board or congregation.
 - c. The Treasurer shall submit to the Board a monthly financial statement of all receipts and expenditures and quarterly reports of the same shall be submitted to the congregation.
 - d. The Treasurer's books shall always be available for inspection and/or a yearly audit.
 - e. Records of gifts by envelope donors shall be kept by the Treasurer. A yearly report of the total amount given shall be forwarded to the donor upon request.

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS

1. The fiscal year of the Church shall coincide with the calendar year, beginning January 1st and ending December 31st.
2. Quarterly congregational meetings shall be held during the months of January, April, July, and October, the exact date to be determined by the Board. The purpose of these meetings shall be to inform the congregation of church business, hear Board reports, and conduct financial business. Members wishing to bring business before the congregation shall make a written request to the Board at least one week before a scheduled congregational meeting.
3. The congregational meeting held during the month of January shall be to elect church officers, hear reports of all boards and auxiliary organizations, and to transact such other business as deemed necessary.
4. The members present at a congregational meeting shall constitute a quorum.
5. The Clerk shall prepare and make public the agenda for quarterly congregational meetings at least one week, preferably two weeks, before the meeting.
6. The Board shall entertain nominations for the offices of Deacon, Trustee, and Clerk that are vacant or approaching end of term. The Board will announce the deadline for nominations and instruct the Clerk to prepare ballots listing the nominees. These

nominees must be a member of the Church, 18 years of age or over. Only male candidates shall be accepted as nominees for the office of Deacon or Trustee (1 Timothy 2:12).

7. Members of the Church, 16 years of age or over, shall be eligible to vote during a congregational meeting.
8. In the conduct of business meetings and parliamentary questions not covered by this constitution shall be decided by the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE VII - AUXILLARY ORGANIZATIONS

1. Ladies, Men's, Youth's and Children's organizations may be organized as needed, subject to the approval of the Board.
2. All auxiliary organizations shall be in complete accord with the Church Constitution and shall be subject to the direction of the Board.
3. No person, persons, groups, or organizations shall operate within or without the Church in the name of Paw Paw Bible Church without the approval of the Board.
4. The leaders/teachers of any church organization shall be members of the Church.

ARTICLE VIII - FINANCIAL SUPPORT BASIS

All money received and accepted for the support of this Church shall come from the following sources only: Free-will offerings taken at regular or special services of the Church, gifts, donations, real estate, and bequests. No paid performances, sales, public solicitation, commercialization, or other worldly methods shall be used to raise money for the Church.

ARTICLE IX - OFFICERS AND TEACHERS

1. Any officer or teacher of Paw Paw Bible Church must meet the following conditions:
 - a. Membership in the Church.
 - b. Must meet with the Board to confirm their total agreement with the Doctrinal Statement of the Church and to confirm their appointment as an officer or teacher.
 - c. Strive to keep our bodies pure and free of habits which may hinder the testimony of Paw Paw Bible Church.

- d. Faithful in all services unless prohibited by uncontrolled circumstances.
 - e. Willingness to comply with platform standards established by the Board.
2. All teachers and officers are answerable directly to the Pastor and/or Board unless otherwise designated. A teacher or officer may be removed from their position by a majority vote of the Board if deemed in the best interest of the congregation.
 3. The resignation of any officer or teacher should be submitted in writing to the Board.

ARTICLE X - THE PASTOR

1. The basic scriptural qualifications defined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 shall be used as a guideline to determine the eligibility of candidates for Pastor.

Only such men shall be recommended who can and will conscientiously sign without mental reservation the Articles of Faith and Constitution of the Paw Paw Bible Church.

The selection of the Pastor shall be voted by written ballot at a meeting of the congregation especially called for this purpose. A majority of at least two-thirds of the votes cast shall be necessary to elect the Pastor.

2. If at any time the Pastor shall deem it necessary to resign, he shall notify the Board and the congregation in writing thirty days in advance of the termination of his ministry. If circumstances warrant, a shorter termination period may be mutually agreed upon.
3. If at any time in the estimation of the Board, the Pastor's personal belief, preaching, teaching, or moral character is not in full accordance with the doctrinal and moral standards of this Church, his services as Pastor shall be terminated. Such action will be effected upon the recommendation of the Board and a two-thirds vote of those members present at a properly called congregational meeting.

If, in the estimation of the Board, the Pastor's ministry is detrimental to the welfare of the Church, the dismissal will be effected immediately; otherwise a sixty-day notice will be given.

4. The Pastor shall be considered the major elder or overseer of the Church. It shall be his responsibility to faithfully study the word of God and to pray for those under his care. He shall have the general oversight of the spiritual matters of the Church, preaching and teaching faithfully the Word of God and administering the ordinances. He shall watch over, guide, and advance the spiritual interests of the people,

endeavoring to expose and warn against false teachers. His ministry shall reflect a sound balance between the training of believers and the evangelization of the lost.

ARTICLE XI - ORDINATION

The Church reserves the right to set aside any and all men who demonstrate that God has placed His hand upon them and called them into the Christian ministry. Each candidate shall submit to the Board a statement of his conversion, a statement of his call to the ministry, and a statement of his doctrinal beliefs. Upon examination and approval, the Board shall then call an Ordination Council, made up of ordained ministers, to ascertain their recommendation concerning the candidate.

ARTICLE XII - SUNDAY SCHOOL

1. The Sunday School shall be an integral part of the Church program and will in no way constitute a separate organization.
2. Teachers of the Sunday School will be appointed by the Board. The officers (not teachers) of the Sunday School will be elected by a majority vote of the congregation during a congregational meeting. These officers, Sunday School Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent shall each serve a term of one year.

ARTICLE XIII - CHURCH PROPERTY

The title to all real estate and personal property acquired by purchase, deed, gift, transfer, inheritance, or other conveyance shall be held in the name of the Paw Paw Bible Church, Paw Paw, West Virginia. The cooperation of this Church with any group, organization, or denomination shall not forfeit the right of this Church to own, control, and hold this property for the Paw Paw Bible Church.

In the event of termination or dissolution of this Church in any manner, all assets, property and interests which it shall then possess (including any devise, bequest, gift, or grant contained in any will or other instrument), shall be distributed and paid over to one or more organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall, at that time, qualify as an exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 and amendments thereto, as the Board shall determine.

ARTICLE XIV - PLATFORM OR PULPIT STANDARDS

We believe those individuals who participate in the church services reflect in a very definite way the beliefs and standards of the church itself. It is imperative, therefore, that the manner of dress, hair style, doctrinal convictions, moral integrity, etc., of those participating should be of the highest calibre and that which would not be offensive to any person. (Exceptions may be made to the above for children from outside the church when they are participating in special programs such as V.B.S., Sonshine Club, etc.).

ARTICLE XV – COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL TAX CODE

Paw Paw Bible Church is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

No part of the net earnings of the organization shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the purpose clause hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the organization shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, the organization shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or (b) by an organization, contributions to which are deductible under section 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

ARTICLE XVI - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at any regular or special business meeting, providing that the proposed amendment has been posted and read to the congregation at each regular service for the two Sundays previous to the meeting.