

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE PETERSBURG BIBLE CHURCH

PREAMBLE:

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

ARTICLE I. NAME

This organization shall be known as the Petersburg Bible Church.

ARTICLE II. STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section 1

We believe in the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, that they are inerrant as originally given, and are God's final written revelation of Himself and His will, and the sole authority for all faith and practice.
(II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:20,21; John 17:17)

Section 2

We believe there is one God, who is infinitely perfect, existing eternally in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
(Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; Acts 5:3,4; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6)

Section 3

We believe Jesus Christ is true God and true man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life and died upon the cross as a perfect substitutionary sacrifice; all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood. He physically arose from the dead. He ascended into heaven where He is the High Priest and Advocate for His people. He will come again, first, to rapture His church, and , following a period of tribulation, to set up His kingdom on earth. This, our Lord's second coming, is imminent, and will be personal and visible and premillennial.
(Isaiah 9:6,7; Zechariah 14:4; Matthew 26:28; 24:21; Luke 1:30-35; Acts 2:32-33; Romans 5:6-11; I Corinthians 15:3-8, 51-54; Hebrews 4:14-16; I Peter 2:21,22; I John 2:1)

Section 4

We believe in the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit, who convicts of sin, who is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, and who, at the moment of conversion, baptizes and seals the believer into the Body of Christ, immediately indwelling him.
(John 14:16,17; 16:7-11; I Corinthians 12:12-14; Ephesians 1:13,14)

We believe that it is the duty and privilege of the believer to be filled with the Holy Spirit, who illumines, guides, and energizes the believer, enabling him to maintain a consistent Christian walk.

(John 16:13; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18; I John 2:20,27)

Section 5

We Believe that man was originally created by a direct act of God, in the image and likeness of God. Man fell through disobedience and thereby became depraved and guilty before God, and separated from the life of God. He can be saved only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Genesis 1:26,27; Romans 5:18,19)

Section 6

We believe that salvation has been provided for all men through Jesus Christ. Those who by faith receive Him are born of the Holy Spirit, receive the gift of eternal life, and become the children of God.

We believe in the sonship of all born-again believers in the family of God, their justification, sanctification, and eternal redemption being fully provided for and assured in the finished work of Christ on Calvary and in His continued intercession above.

(John 1:12; Romans 5:1,21; 8:14-17; Galatians 3:26; 4:5-7; Ephesians 1;13,14; Hebrews 7:25; I Peter 2:9; I John 3:2; 5:11-13)

Section 7

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust. For the just this is a resurrection unto life and blessedness in heaven, and for the unjust a resurrection unto everlasting suffering in hell.

(John 5:28,29; Luke 16:19-26)

Section 8

We believe that the Church consists of all those who have been born of the Holy Spirit; Christ is its head, and it has been commissioned by Him to go into all the world as a witness, preaching the Gospel to all nations.

(Matthew 28:19,20; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; I Corinthians 12:12-14; Ephesians 1:22,23; 5:25-27)

Section 9

We believe that the local church is a body of believers in Christ who are joined together for the worship of God, for edification through the Word of God, and for prayer, fellowship, the proclamation of the Gospel, and the observance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

(Acts 2:41,42; I Corinthians 11:2, 23-26; 12:27,28; Hebrews 10:24,25)

Section 10

We believe in the reality and personality of angels, both good and fallen, including Satan, the great enemy of God and man, whose opposition is ever increasing but whose ultimate doom is sure.

(Job 1:6,7; Psalm 103:20; Matthew 4:11; Luke 2:13; Hebrews 1:14; Revelation 20:10)

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1

Qualifications for membership shall consist of: satisfactory evidence of regeneration; testimony of faith in Jesus Christ; and, belief in: God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures as originally given; the vicarious atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the eternal salvation of all who believe in Him and the eternal punishment of all who reject Him. The candidate must also be in full sympathy with the Church's principles, Doctrinal Statement, and goals, and express a willingness to be involved in its work. A person must be at least twelve (12) years of age to be eligible for membership, and must have completed a class to study the points of Bible Doctrine contained in the Church's Statement of Faith.

Section 2

Persons desiring membership should express their intention to an Elder. Following participation in the class mentioned in Section 1, prospective members will be asked to submit a written or verbal testimony of faith in Jesus Christ to the Elder Board. The Elders will then meet with the candidate for further discussion. When the Board of Elders is satisfied that a candidate has met the qualifications for membership outlined in Section 1, the Board will present that person to the membership, at least three weeks prior to a congregational business meeting, so that he or she may give a public testimony of faith in Jesus Christ. The congregation shall be advised of the three-week notice and encouraged to use that time to give the person and/or the Elders any necessary input. After the waiting period, at the congregational meeting, persons who have met the preceding guidelines will be affirmed as members.

Section 3

Members of the Petersburg Bible Church shall be entitled to the rights and privileges outlined in the Church's Membership Covenant and by-laws.

Members will be expected to make every reasonable effort to attend church business meetings, and those members who are eighteen (18) years of age and older will be eligible to vote at all church business meetings.

In the event that a person is dismissed from church membership, as outlined in Section 4, there shall be no appeal to any court of that action.

Section 4

Forfeiture of membership will occur when a member:

- A. Moves away from the Petersburg-Kupreanof area, unless the move is intended to be temporary, as in college attendance or military service.
- B. Fails to carry out the duties associated with being a member as outlined in section 3 of this article.
- C. Refuses to be reconciled of unconfessed sin as outlined in Article VI.
- D. Refuses to uphold any of the doctrines outlined in article 2 of the constitution.

ARTICLE IV. ORDINANCES

We recognize and administer immersion as the Scriptural mode of water Baptism, to be received by the believer subsequent to profession of faith.

We commemorate the Lord's life and death at the Lord's Supper; His body and blood being symbolized.

ARTICLE V. LEADERSHIP

Section 1

I. Selection of Elders

Candidates earnestly desiring the office of Elder, including the commitment inherent thereto, must initiate this request, in writing, to the Board of Elders stating their desire to serve the Petersburg Bible Church as an Elder. The Board will carefully examine the candidate as to his qualifications as outlined in section 1 subsection 5 of this article, as to his genuine enthusiastic support of the constitution which must include his total understanding of and agreement with the doctrinal statement and policy statements of the Church. After an appropriate trial period to insure harmony and like-mindedness, the candidate will then become an Elder after the unanimous approval of the entire Elder Board and a two thirds approval of the church membership.

The following steps will be the process by which an individual will be screened and evaluated in terms of discerning God's hand upon that person's life, in qualifying him for a leadership position within the Petersburg Bible Church:

INITIATION - The individual responds to God's working in his life by expressing a desire to serve in a leadership capacity.

CONFIRMATION - The Elders unanimously agree that the individual has the potential for leadership and thereby assume the responsibility to work with the individual toward that end.

DEMONSTATION - The Elders will assign specific responsibilities of ministry within the Church for a period of time in order for the entire body to examine by observing the individual's spirit and giftedness in service.

PRESENTATION - If the individual's service is deemed to be appropriate by the elders for the designated trial period, the person in question will be presented to the entire Church three weeks prior to a church meeting for evaluation, examination, and affirmation as one whom God has qualified for leadership. The entire body will be given a 7-day period in which to express concerns or needed input to the Elders, personally.

AFFIRMATION - After the Elders have acted upon the input of the congregation (if necessary), and the Elders are in unanimous agreement that the individual has indeed been qualified by an act of the grace of God for leadership within the Church, the Elders will affirm what God has already done in the man's life by setting him apart for the leadership position in question. At the next church business meeting the man will be officially ordained as an elder of the Petersburg Bible Church.

Once a man is appointed to the position of an elder he will not be required to reenter the selection process in order to serve for another year. Their service and qualifications will be reviewed annually by the rest of the Board of Elders.

II. Duties of Elders

Subject to limitations of the Constitution and these Bylaws, all the activities and affairs of the Corporation shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Board of Elders, who are responsible for shepherding and having oversight of the flock. Without prejudice to such general powers, but subject to the same limitations, it is hereby expressly declared that the Board shall have the following responsibilities in addition to the others enumerated in these bylaws:

- A. Assist the Pastor(s) in the spiritual work of the church.
- B. Meet with the Pastor(s) at regular times for prayer and counsel.
- C. Elect from their own number those who will, with the Pastor, constitute the Committee on Membership.
- D. Constitute the committee on all matters of church discipline.
- E. Assist, when needed, in home visitation.
- F. Assist in serving of the Lord's Supper and in baptismal services.
- G. Appoint Sunday School Superintendent annually.
- H. Approve all Sunday School teachers appointed by the Sunday School Superintendent, except substitute teachers.
- I. Appoint Petersburg Bible Church Corporate Officers.

III. Numbers of Elders

The authorized number of directors of the Corporation shall be not less than three (3) nor more than five (5) until changed by an amendment to these bylaws.

IV. The Chairman of the Board of Elders

The Elders will select from among themselves a chairman for the Board of Elders.

V. Qualifications

Each member of the Board of Elders must be an active member of this church and possess the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. He shall be:

- (A) Blameless as a steward of God; above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6-7).
- (B) Husband of one wife; a one-woman man (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6).
- (C) Temperate, sober, vigilant (1 Timothy 3:2).
- (D) Sober-minded, prudent (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8).
- (E) Of good behavior; orderly, respectable (1 Timothy 3:2).
- (F) Given to hospitality (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8).
- (G) Apt to teach; able to teach; he can exhort believers and refute false teaching (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9).
- (H) Not given to wine (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7).
- (I) Not violent; not pugnacious (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7).

- (J) Patient, moderate, forbearing, gentle (1 Timothy 3:3).
- (K) Not a brawler; uncontentious; not soon angry or quick-tempered (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- (L) Not covetous; not a lover of money; not greedy of base gain (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- (M) Rules well his own house. His children are faithful; not accused of rebellion to God (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:7).
- (N) Not a novice; not a new convert (1 Timothy 3:6).
- (O) Has a good report or reputation with outsiders (1 Timothy 3:7).
- (P) Not self-willed (Titus 1:7).
- (Q) A lover of good men and things (Titus 1:8).
- (R) Just, fair (Titus 1:8).
- (S) Holy, devout (Titus 1:8).
- (T) Self-controlled (Titus 1:8).

VI. Vacancies

Any Elder may resign effective upon giving written notice to the Chairman of the Board or the secretary of the Board, unless the notice specifies a later time for the effectiveness of such resignation. If the resignation decreases the number of Elders below three (3), then the procedures outlined in Article V, Section 6 must be enacted.

No reduction of the authorized number of Elders shall have the effect of removing any Elder prior to the expiration of the Elder's term of office.

VII. Removal of Elders

Any Elder may be removed from office if he becomes physically incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or his inability to serve is established in the minds of the remainder of the Board of Elders.

VIII. Decisions of the Board of Elders

Decisions shall be reached after prayerful consideration by unanimous vote in a spirit of humility, with each Elder regarding one another before himself.

Section 2

I. Duties of the Pastor

The Pastor shall be a man in full accord with the constitution of this church, faithfully proclaim the Word of God, care for the stated services of worship, administer the ordinances, and promote the spiritual welfare of the church. He shall be a member of the Board of Elders and an ex-officio member of all church related committees. The Pastor shall present an annual state-of-the-church report which will review the year's special events and the church's spiritual growth, and will describe plans for the coming year.

II. Pastoral Change

In the time of Pastoral change, it will be the responsibility of the Board of Elders to seek a new pastor. It shall first secure from any pastoral candidate a resume of himself, family, training and experience. After prayer and consideration by the board, a candidate shall be invited to the church to speak at three of its services and to be interviewed by the Board of Elders. A pastoral call shall be extended after recommendation by the Board of Elders, and after the candidate receives a two-thirds majority of the votes cast at a congregational meeting duly called.

The pastoral relationship may be dissolved at any time, either by the church or by the pastor, by written notice of such intent thirty days in advance. It will require a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in a church business meeting, duly called, to dismiss a pastor.

Section 3

I. Secretary

The Board of Elders shall elect from among their own number, for one year, a secretary, who shall keep a record of all proceedings of the Board Meetings and Congregational meetings, and give notice of all called meetings of the church. The Board of Elders may also appoint a corresponding secretary.

Section 4

I. Treasurer

The treasurer shall be appointed by the Board of Elders for one year. He/She shall hold and disburse the church funds as directed by the Board of Elders, see that proper financial records are kept, and report monthly in writing to the Board of Elders. Adequate care shall be taken by the Board of Elders to guarantee the propriety of all financial activities including periodic audits or review of the financial records.

Section 5

I. Deacons

The Deacon Board shall consist of not more than five male church members possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, and shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of three (3) years. A Deacon may be removed from office prior to the end of his term if, in the judgment of the Elders, he is no longer spiritually qualified to be a Deacon. The Deacons shall assist the Elders in the shepherding of the saints, aid in the general spiritual care of the church, and perform other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders.

II. Councils and Committees

To promote efficient handling of Board matters, the Elders may appoint various councils and committees from within its membership, and from the church at large. These councils and committees shall perform tasks solely in accordance with the duties and with powers specifically delegated by the Board. The general functions of councils and committees are:

- (A) To bring considered recommendations to the Board concerning ministries.
- (B) To provide a wider base of counsel to the Elders having the oversight of specific ministries.

All councils and committees shall exist for the period specified by the Board.

III. Nomination and Selection

The nomination and selection of Deacons shall be done in the same manner as for Elders, except they shall be elected at the annual meeting by the congregation.

Section 6

I. Church Board

A. In the absence of three or more elders, the duties of the Elders as outlined in this constitution, with the exception of those outlined under “Selection of Elders,” shall be carried out by a Church Board. Board membership shall consist of all existing Elders. Additional members will be nominated by the existing Elders from the Deacon board and posted in the church three weeks prior to a membership meeting for congregation response. At the meeting the nominees will be voted on by the congregation, with consideration given to biblical qualifications for leadership. The maximum size of the Church Board shall be five. The term of office for elected board members will be until the next annual meeting, or until three or more Elders are affirmed by the congregation.

B. For purposes of applying this constitution, when the church is under a Church Board form of government, the phrases “Elders” and “Board of Elders” should be interpreted as “Church Board,” with the exception of those occurrences under “Selection of Elders,” and the phrase “Chairman of the Board of Elders” should be interpreted as “Chairman of the Church Board.”

C. In the event that there are no deacons to be nominated by the existing Elders the congregation shall elect three (3) active church members to serve as a Nominating Committee. Women may serve on the committee, but may not hold a majority of the membership. They shall request, from all church members, recommendations to fill the office of board member. This committee shall review all nominations and determine each nominee’s qualifications. Members of the nominating committee may be nominees, but no committee member shall nominate himself.

A proposed slate of nominees prepared by the nominating committee shall then be submitted to the existing elders, who shall then approve or disapprove the nominees. The committee shall then publicly post the nominees approved by the elders in alphabetical order at least three weeks prior to a congregational business meeting. The congregation shall be advised of the three-week notice and encouraged to use that time to give the Elders any necessary input on the candidates. In the absence of any Elders, the nominating Committee shall post the slate of names following the aforementioned guidelines.

II. Chairman of the Church Board

If one Elder is present in the church, he shall serve as the Chairman of the Church Board. If no Elder is present, the Church Board will select a Chairman from among themselves. The Chairman of the Church Board shall preside over all Church Board meetings and fulfill the duties of the Chairman of the Board of Elders as outlined in this Constitution.

ARTICLE VI. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

To rightly understand church discipline, a person must first understand God’s view of

discipline. God disciplines His children because He loves them, because He desires what's best for them, and so that they can share in His holiness (Hebrews 12:5-6, 10). The intended result of divine discipline is a life that is marked by righteousness and peace (Hebrews 12:11).

Effective church discipline must attempt to reflect and carry out these same purposes. It must be done out of love for an erring brother or sister, with a desire to lead that person back to a loving and peaceful relationship with God and with others, and it must be done to encourage a proper testimony of God's holy character in that person's life.

Discipline in the Petersburg Bible Church is applicable to its members, and to those who have demonstrated a commitment to the church through regular participation in its activities of worship and fellowship. It is not meant to give license to Church leadership to discipline those who may be involved in gray areas, but rather the goals should be: to deter sins, such as those listed below, to restore the one who is erring to a walk in fellowship with the Lord and with other believers, to purify the Church (1 Corinthians 5:6-8), and to thus demonstrate the reality of righteous living in the world.

In dealing with matters of church discipline, the Elder Board must demonstrate a brotherly concern for the erring one, marked by sorrow and a desire to forgive when repentance occurs. Church Discipline should not be exercised in every case of sin or deviation from the truth, for it is not God's method for making the Church sinless. Instead, sin that damages the Church, weakens its testimony, or promotes disunity, constitutes a disciplinary offense that primarily include the following:

- (a) Divisiveness - 2 Thess 3:11; Titus 3:10-11; Romans 16:17-20.
- (b) Unruly, disorderly, undisciplined living - 2 Thess 3:6, 11; 1 Thess 5:14.
- (c) Conflict between brothers - 1 Corin 6:5-8; Philippians 4:2-3; Matt 18:15-18.
- (d) Sins of the flesh - 1 Corin 5:11.
- (e) Denial of the great doctrines of our Faith - 1 Tim 6:3, 5; 2 Tim 2:16-18; 2 John 1:7-11; Rev 2:14.

Church discipline is to be handled prayerfully, carefully, and justly, and only after several individual attempts of corrective or preventative action have been taken. Those attempts, as described in Luke 17:3 and Matthew 18:15-16, should include a private meeting at which the offender is rebuked. If he repents, forgive him. If the offender remains unrepentant, Scripture calls for a second meeting in which at least one or two other persons are present.

Those present are to serve as witness of both the charge, and the offender's response. If they believe the offended brother has brought a just charge of sin, they too should admonish the offender and call him to repentance.

If the offender remains unrepentant after these individual attempts of action have been taken, the matter is to be brought before the Church, following consultation with the Board of Elders (Matt 18:17; 1 Tim 5:20).

Should the guilty party remain unrepentant, despite the admonition of the church, he is to be spiritually excommunicated. This constitutes actions of:

- Denial - The offender is to be denied Christian fellowship as a brother or sister in Christ (Matt 18:17; Rom 16:17; 2 Thess 3:6).
- Deliverance - The offender is to be delivered over to Satan (1 Corin 5:5; 1 Tim 1:20),

- i.e. thrust back into the world, apart from the care and protection of the Church.
- Admonition - The offender is not to be shunned, or treated as an enemy. Though Christian fellowship is denied, opportunities for contact should be used to admonish the offender, calling him or her to repentance (2 Thess 3:15).

ARTICLE VII. MARRIAGE

Petersburg Bible Church will marry, or allow its building to be used for the marriages of, those who are members in good standing of Petersburg Bible Church, and who have satisfactorily completed an Elder-approved pre-marital counseling program.

Why? To insure that we only marry believers who are intent on pleasing God in every area of their lives and are rightly related to the local church for the purpose of accountability in their marriage vows and righteous living.

All exceptions to this policy should be directed to the Elder Board for consideration.

ARTICLE VIII. COUNSELING

General counseling by the Pastor of the Petersburg Bible Church will primarily be a function of the pulpit ministry. However, from time to time there will be special need for crisis, premarital, preventative, or corrective counseling that the Pastor may deem necessary.

In these special counseling occasions, the goal of counseling is to free people to enter into a deeper relationship with God, to more effectively please Him through worship and service by helping them become more like the Lord. In a word, the goal is maturity: immediate obedience in specific situations and long-range character growth.

Through biblical counseling, the counselee will be guided by the counselor in developing maturity by dealing with any immediate problem circumstances in a manner consistent with Scripture; and by developing an inward character which conforms to the character (attitudes, beliefs, purposes) of Christ. Both the short-range and long-range objectives will be approached by attempting to transform the thinking patterns - renewing the mind of the counselee through appropriate biblical principles. At no time will the Pastor counsel a female counselee without a third party present.

If, in order to justify one's behavior, an unwillingness to change one's thinking patterns is discerned, or if there is an unwillingness to complete the designated assignments given by the counselor, counseling will be terminated.

ARTICLE IX. BUSINESS MEETINGS

Section 1 - Annual Meetings

The Annual Business Meeting of the Church shall be held during the month of January, to hear the yearly reports of the officers and departments, to transact business, to review and select Elders, and to adopt plans for the coming year.

The Chairman of the Board of Elders shall preside at the Annual Business Meeting, as well

as at any Special Business Meetings.

Section 2 - Special Business Meetings

The church may be called together for the transaction of any legitimate business by the Board of Elders or by the Pastor. Notice of such meeting having been given at two Sundays preceding the day appointed. The notice shall specify the object of the meeting, and the meeting will only deal with the announced objective.

Section 3 - Quorum for Church Meetings

Fifty percent of all active voting members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of official business at:

1. Annual and Special Business Meetings
2. Official Board Meetings

ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS AND BY-LAWS

This Constitution may be amended, or by-laws added by a three-fourths majority of the votes cast at a regular business meeting of the church, the amendment or by-law in its final form having been read to the church congregation on the two consecutive Sundays preceding the meeting.

01/28/02