

# Constitution of Springfield Baptist Church

## PREAMBLE

We, the members of Springfield Baptist Church, in order to more effectively carry out The Great Commission given by Jesus Christ to His Church, do ordain the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

## ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this church shall be Springfield Baptist Church.

## ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be to glorify God, revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, to obey Christ's directive for the Church recorded in the Scriptures, and to engage in such religious, educational, charitable and benevolent work as the Constitution and Bylaws of this church may determine to be necessary to carry out the above stated purpose.

**Exclusive Purpose Clause.** We exist for the sole purpose of being a religious organization that expresses our commitment to our Lord and Leader Jesus Christ to fulfill his Great commands to love our God, to love our neighbor, and to fulfill his Great Commission. We exist to use all of our donations for the exclusive purposes of bringing restoration to lives and our community

## ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. **The Word of God.** We believe that the Bible, 66 books, 39 Old Testament, 27 New Testament, is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
2. **The Trinity.** We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct, but harmonious, offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption.
3. **God the Father.** We believe in God, the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through faith in Jesus Christ.
4. **Jesus Christ.** We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles and teachings. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth.
5. **The Holy Spirit.** We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells

- every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide.
6. **Regeneration.** We believe that all men are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.
  7. **The Church.** We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible confession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world.
  8. **The Ordinances.** We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that the Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  9. **The Last Things.** We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked.

#### **ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP**

Persons who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been baptized by immersion, who give evidence by their confession and conduct that they are living in fellowship with Him, and who subscribe to the above Purpose and Statement of Faith, shall be accepted into membership of this church in accordance with the Bylaws of this Constitution.

#### **ARTICLE V - PROPERTY**

1. This church shall have the authority to receive, either by gift or purchase, and to hold such real or personal property as is authorized by the laws of the State of Nebraska, and as is deemed necessary for the business of the church, and shall have the authority to dispose of such property by mortgage, deed or otherwise. All such property shall be held in the name of the church.
2. In case of dissolution of the church, the leadership shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities of the church, dispose of all the assets of the church in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or the corresponding provisions of any later federal tax laws, as the leadership of the church shall determine that conforms with our Statement of Faith.

#### **ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended, altered or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular or special church meeting, provided such is proposed in writing and made available to every member of the church at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

# Bylaws of Springfield Baptist Church

## ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

### **Section 1. Qualifications for Membership**

Any person who confesses faith in, and has trusted the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation, been baptized by immersion, and whose character, conduct, and reputation is in accord with their confession, who subscribes to the foregoing Statement of Faith, who accepts the Constitution and Bylaws of , and who is willing to support her in worship (“draw to Jesus”) and participation (“develop in community”), financial giving and exercise of spiritual gifts, may apply to become a member of Springfield Baptist Church. All members are able to vote.

### **Section 2. Membership Commitments**

- A. Draw to Jesus. As a part of the body of Christ-followers at Springfield Baptist, members are expected to commit to regular worship attendance and participation. This attendance should be a joyful expression of their personal communion with God through private prayer and Bible study. (Ps. 95:1-7; Ps. 100:1-2; Ps. 150).
- B. Develop in community. Members are expected to develop vital accountability-based connections with other members of Springfield Baptist. (1 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 10:24-25).
- C. Participate in mission. Members are expected to systematically give a portion of their income and other financial resources for the support of the general obligations of the church (1 Cor. 16:2; Prov. 3:9; 2 Cor. 9:7) and to generously give of their time and talents by exercising their spiritual gifts to build up the body (Mark 10:43-45; Eph. 4:11-13).

### **Section 3. Suspension of Membership**

- A. Members who fail to attend the church (except in extenuating circumstances such as health issues, college, military service, etc.) for more than three months may have their membership suspended according to the following process:
  - 1) The Council of Elders or their designee shall attempt to locate and contact the absent or non-supportive member.
  - 2) If the absent member cannot be located or contacted within three months, he (she) shall be moved to “Inactive” membership status.
  - 3) If the absent member is located but fails to resume attendance within three months, he (she) shall be moved to “Inactive” membership status.
- B. Inactive Members may not vote or receive other benefits of active membership, nor shall they be counted for purposes of establishing a quorum.

- C. The membership roll will be reviewed annually by the Council of Elders or their designee.

#### **Section 4. Termination of Membership**

- A. A member who wishes to terminate their membership should inform the Council of Elders in writing. Unless the member is under church discipline, he (she) will be removed from the membership roll.
- B. A member who wishes to transfer their membership to another church should inform the Council of Elders in writing. Unless the member is under church discipline, he (she) will be granted a Letter of Recommendation and removed from the membership roll.
  - 1) In either case, departing members, if possible given the constraints of time and logistics, will be shown public affection, affirmed, and prayed for by the elders at the conclusion of the worship service on their final day of attendance.
- C. Membership may also be terminated in the following circumstances:
  - 1) A member has been received as a member of another church and the Council of Elders are able to confirm the same.
  - 2) A member has been on Inactive membership status for over one year without demonstrating evidence of a desire to return to Active status.
  - 3) A member dies.

#### **Section 5. Church Discipline**

*15 "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (Matt. 18:15-17 ESV)*

Church discipline is a biblical process that is to be followed by the church when a member is found to be consistently in violation of clear biblical truth. The purpose of church discipline is not to punish a member; its goal is the repentance and restoration of the erring member to a spiritually healthy condition and full participating membership with Springfield Baptist. In progressing through the stages of church discipline, ample time for repentance should be allowed at each step.

- A. Steps of church discipline according to Matthew 18:15-17:
  - 1) Private confrontation. The erring member should be directly approached in private by a concerned and informed fellow member and confronted with his (her) sin. If repentance does not follow, the church discipline process proceeds to the next step.
  - 2) Private conference. The erring member will be confronted about his (her) sin by two or three believers, including at least one elder. If repentance does not follow, the erring member is to be removed from active membership and listed

as a suspended member under discipline. The church discipline process proceeds to the next step.

- 3) Public meeting. After the second step, the Council of Elders should be made aware of the situation and will determine whether or not the biblical ideals of discipline, love and concern have been appropriately communicated to the erring member. If the Council of Elders is so convinced, the matter shall be presented to a public meeting of church members. If repentance still does not follow, the church discipline process proceeds to the final step.
  - 4) Public exclusion. When the Council of Elders and congregation of members have made consistent efforts to bring the erring member to repentance without results, the erring member shall, with public congregational agreement signified by a vote during a business meeting, be dismissed from membership and *may* be asked to stay away from all Springfield Baptist activities.
- B. At any point of the discipline process, if the allegations are found to be false, the case shall be dismissed, and the Council of Elders shall clear the name of the accused member as publicly as is required for full vindication.
- C. If the Council of Elders determines it to be appropriate, the erring member may be removed from any role of leadership or any other role of service in Springfield Baptist until the disciplinary issue is resolved according to the above steps.
- D. A member under discipline shall be denied a request to terminate membership in Springfield Baptist or transfer membership to another church.
- E. A member under discipline may be restored to active membership if the Council of Elders determines that he (she) has repented of the offense(s) for which discipline was exercised.

## **ARTICLE II – CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

Springfield Baptist recognizes that the Bible gives clear instruction about the identity and responsibilities of the human leaders of God’s church (Acts 20:17-35; Php. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Heb. 13:17). The Bible also gives us some freedom in how to implement these Biblical principles. At Springfield Baptist the following key leaders will have prominent roles and responsibilities. Church leaders must be members of the church, and be in good standing

### **Section 1. Elders**

- A. The elders, as overseers or shepherds under the headship of Christ, shall provide for the spiritual leadership of the church. They must be members of the church, and be in good standing.
- B. The elders shall gather twice per month for an Elders’ Meeting, which will be open for observational attendance by any active member or any person(s) which a majority of the council invites to attend.

- 1) During the meeting, the council shall allow for a time of comment from those in observational attendance.
  - 2) During this meeting, time shall be dedicated to praying for the needs of the church.
- C. The number of elders shall be determined by need and available qualified men, however there shall be an odd number. In the autumn of each year, active members may nominate qualified men to be considered for eldership by attending an elders' meeting and speaking during the comments portion of the meeting. The elders currently serving shall propose to the congregation prospective elders which are qualified.
- 1) A prospective elder must meet the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.
  - 2) The Elders shall have the authority to determine whether a prospective elder meets the referenced qualifications.
  - 3) The Elders will propose specific men deemed to be qualified to the congregation after consultation with the Council of Elders
  - 4) Members will be notified of prospective elders at least one month prior to the Spring Members' Event and encouraged to bring evidence of a disqualifying nature to that prospective elder's attention. If a member is uncomfortable doing so, they may seek counsel from the elders.
  - 5) If disqualifying evidence is presented, the elders shall fully investigate and evaluate the evidence. If the Elders confirm the disqualifying evidence, the prospective elder shall be disqualified from serving.
  - 6) The appointments of new elders shall be finalized by a 75% affirmative vote of members present at the annual Spring Member's Event.
- D. The elders shall collectively be responsible for overseeing and shepherding the people of Springfield Baptist. This is accomplished as they:
- 1) keep watch over themselves and the flock (Acts 20:28);
  - 2) model Christian living (1 Tim. 4:12);
  - 3) provide servant leadership (Matt. 20:26-28);
  - 4) teach, exhort and correct according to Scripture (1 Tim. 4:13, Titus 1:9);
  - 5) guard the spiritual welfare of each individual (Heb. 13:17); and
  - 6) promote the growth in Christ and unity of the body of believers (Eph. 4:12-16).
- E. An elder may be dismissed from serving at any time he is deemed to be disqualified. Any accusation against an elder must be brought to the Elders by two or more members (1 Tim. 5:19). If the Elders determine that an elder is disqualified, he shall immediately be dismissed from office by the congregation.

## **Section 2. Board of Directors and Officers**

- A. Board of Directors. The Directors of the church shall be the Elders. This section shall constitute sufficient authority for their designation as such.

B. Officers. As required by civil law, the officers of the church shall be the President, Vice-President, Trustees, Secretary, and Treasurer. Generally, though it is not required, one elder shall serve as the President and another elder shall serve as the Vice-President. The Trustees, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be appointed for a three-year term by the Elders, and confirmed by a congregational vote. Officers may serve unlimited consecutive terms.

- 1) The President shall preside at all business meetings and shall have such additional responsibilities as may be delegated by the Elders.
- 2) The Vice-President shall serve in the absence of the President and shall have such additional responsibilities as may be delegated by the Elders.
- 3) The Trustees shall;
  - a) serve as signatories for the church.
    - i. The position of "trustee" is not a biblically mandated office; rather, it is a practicality to aid the appropriation, maintenance, and disposition of church property. Although trustees are not mentioned in the Bible, their role is biblically appropriate. The New Testament calls us to be good stewards of our blessings, to maintain order in the church, and to use our gifts to benefit the body.
- 4) The Secretary, or his designee, shall:
  - a) keep accurate records of actions taken at all business meetings of the church and shall submit such records for approval at the next business meeting;
  - b) preserve, in a safe place, all records of the church, including membership rolls and current contact information for all elders;
  - c) complete any periodic reports required by state or federal agencies or other organizations; and
  - d) perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Council.
- 5) The Treasurer, or his designee, shall:
  - a) oversee receipt and disbursement of funds of the church in accordance with the annual budget and these Bylaws;
  - b) oversee the preparation of a proposed annual budget and, after review by the Elders, assist in the presentation of the proposed annual budget at the Annual Meeting;
  - c) ensure the maintenance of accurate records of Springfield Baptist's financial affairs and shall report on its financial standing at regular business meetings;
  - d) supply all records during audits and shall supply all financial reports

- required by government authorities; and
- e) perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Elders.

C. Officers shall perform the duties prescribed by these Bylaws or by the laws of the State of Nebraska governing non-profit corporations.

### **Section 3. Deacons**

Deacons serve in the role Biblically as servants of the church under the authority of the Elders (Acts 6:1-7; Php. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13.)

- A. The Elders reserve the authority to appoint deacons as necessary. There may be as many or as few as the current ministry needs require.
- B. Any deacons must meet the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

## **ARTICLE III – CHURCH MEETINGS**

### **Section 1. Purpose**

Church meetings are a forum for the Elders or their designee(s) to communicate with the congregation. These meetings may also be held for the purpose of the church to vote on items in which the authority of the Elders is restricted.

### **Section 2. Scheduling**

- A. The annual Spring Member's Event shall be scheduled in February with the primary purpose of ministry updates, budget, and vision for the season ahead.
- B. Additional church meetings shall be scheduled as necessary by the Elders, or by a simple majority of the membership choosing to meet in the unlikely event of a rogue eldership. A list of decision items for which a church vote is necessary or desired will generally be made available to members at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled meeting.

### **Section 3. Voting**

- A. The actual number of members in attendance at any duly called meeting shall constitute a quorum as long as that number represents at least 25% of the membership
  - a. A quorum is sufficient for the transacting of the business of the meeting.
- B. All matters shall be determined by a simple majority vote, except when otherwise specified in these Bylaws.



- C. Votes shall be taken either by a show of hands, voice, or by written ballot.
- D. Absentee votes or voting by proxy is not permitted.
- A. The Elders reserve the right to call for a congregational vote to table a decision for a period of four Sundays, not including the day it was tabled, if a vote appears to threaten the unity of the church.
- B. The following actions of the church shall require a vote of the membership:
  - 1) confirmation of Elders;
  - 2) hiring of staff;
  - 3) affirming new members;
  - 4) excommunication of members;
  - 5) borrowing of money by the church;
  - 6) expenditures greater than \$1200.00 not included in the approved budget
  - 7) approval of the annual budget; or
  - 8) amendment of these Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE V - AMENDMENTS**

### **Section 1. Process**

- A. These Bylaws may be amended or altered by a two-thirds majority vote of the members at any regular or special church meeting.
- B. An amendment may be proposed by any member of the church.
- C. A written copy of the proposed amendment must be given to the congregation at least two weeks before a vote.