

# **Berean Baptist Church**

## **Constitution**

*HOLDING FORTH THE WORD OF LIFE*

**1030 E. Evesham Avenue  
Magnolia, NJ 08049**

**(856) 784-2668**

## **MISSION STATEMENT FOR BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH**

To present the Gospel message to every creature, baptizing them and equipping them for the work of the Lord.

To focus their attention/commitment on obedience, worship, bearing one another's burdens and the caring of each other.

In the fulfillment of this mission or purpose our basic aims will be:

- A. An upward look (worship) in which we fix our attention upon our God with all of His marvelous attributes and benevolent deeds. Our upward look involves the giving of praise and thanks to Him, the strengthening of our commitment to Him, the stimulation of further trust in Him and the spiritual enjoyment of Him.
- B. An inward look (fellowship) in which we fix our attention upon each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. Our inward look involves loving concern and care for one another, the cultivation of spiritual friendships, mutual prayer support, edification, reproving, rebuking, exhortation, and discipline equip-ping each other for service and participation in ministry.
- C. An outward look (evangelistic discipleship) in which we fix our attention upon those who are not yet disciples of Jesus Christ. Our outward look involves the establishment of rapport with our community and the world, the development and use of effective evangelism strategies, the training of our own to carry out those strategies and the activation of church to maintain a consistent evangelistic thrust individually and corporately in this community and throughout the world by means of our missions and church planting ministries.

## **PREAMBLE**

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith and in order that this congregation may be governed in an orderly manner and in order that the liberties inherent in a congregation may be preserved, we therefore, join ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ and adopt the following articles for worship and service.

## **ARTICLE I – NAME**

This assembly shall be called BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCH of Magnolia, New Jersey.

## **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

The purpose of this assembly shall be the carrying out of the Great Commission as given in Matthew 28:18-20.

## **ARTICLE III – CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour (John 1:12); Romans 10:9, 10); and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19), we do now in the presence of God, angels (I Tim. 5:21) and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, and one body in Christ (I Cor. 12:12-31; Eph. 5:30).

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; Rom. 8:26), to walk together in Christian love (John 13:34, 35), to strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness and comfort (Eph. 4:16), to promote its prosperity and spirituality (II Peter 1:5-10), to sustain its worship (Heb. 10:25), ordinances (Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 11:23-29), discipline (Matt. 18:15-17; Rom. 16:17; I Cor. 5:1-13), and doctrines (II Tim. 3:16; 4:3), to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, to the support of this ministry (I Cor. 16:2; Acts 4:35; 11:27-30; II Cor. 9:7), the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor (II Cor. 8 & 9) and the spread of the Gospel through all nations (Acts 1:8).

We shall also engage to maintain family and personal devotions (Matt. 6:6; Eph. 5:26, 6:4), to search the scriptures with all diligence, to raise up our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, to exercise Biblical attitudes toward the family unit and the permanence of marriage (Gen. 2:22, 23; Mal. 2:16; Matt. 5:31,32), Christian education (Deut. 6:4-9), and human government (Rom. 13:1-3, I Tim. 2:12), to seek the salvation and spiritual growth of our kindred and acquaintances (Acts 16:27-34), to walk circumspectly in the world (Col. 4:5), to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements and exemplary in our deportment (I Pet. 2:12), to avoid all gossip, backbiting and ungodly anger (James 3; Eph. 4:31) to avoid practices which are harmful or may be offensive to the brethren (I Thess. 5:22; I Cor. 6:12; I Pet. 2:11) and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:14).

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love (Rom. 12:10; Phil. 2:3), to remember one another in prayer (James 5:16), to comfort and aid one another in sickness and distress (James 2:14-16; I John 3:16-18), to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech (Col. 4:6), to be slow to take offense, always ready for reconciliation (Eph. 4:32), and to be obedient to the instruction of our Lord to secure it without delay (Matt. 5:23,24).

We moreover engage to remember our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ as our Master and King and to endeavor in the midst of all our relationships to glorify God (I Cor. 10:31), to give the Holy Spirit His rightful place in our lives (I Cor. 9:19, 20), to demonstrate His indwelling by the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23), and to exercise the spiritual gifts He gives individually (I Cor. 12), understanding that the personal spiritual gifts of speaking in tongues, performing healings, and performing miracles as mention in I Cor. 12-14 were temporary sign gifts for establishing the Word, and are not valid today (I Cor. 13:8-10).

We furthermore engage that when we remove from this Church body, we will as soon as possible unite with another Church body where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of the Word of God.

## **ARTICLE IV – ARTICLES OF FAITH**

### ***Section I – Of the Scriptures***

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit of God; that it is the truth without any admixture of error for its matter; and therefore, is and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

- A. By the “Holy Bible” we mean that collection of sixty-six books from Genesis to Revelation as found in the original Hebrew, Chaldean, and Greek manuscripts, which does not only contain and convey the Word of God, but is the very Word of God.
- B. By “Inspiration” we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired.
- C. We believe that the most accurate and time-tested translation of the Holy Bible in English is that translation from the Textus Receptus, commonly known as the Authorized King James Version, which was translated and preserved under God’s providential care.

II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:19-21; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25; Ps. 119:160; Ps. 119:105; Luke 24:25-27; John 17:17; Luke 24:44-45; Ps. 119:89; Prov. 30:5-6; Rom. 3:4; I Pet. 1:23; Rev. 22:19; John 12:48; Isa. 8:20; Eph. 6:17; Rom. 15:4; Luke 16:31; Ps. 19:7-11; John 5:45-47; John 5:39.

## ***Section II – Of the True God***

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

Ex. 20:2-3; I Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:4-6; John 4:24; Ps. 147:5; Ps. 83:18; Ps. 90:2; Jer. 10:10; Ex. 15:11; Rev. 4:11; I Tim. 1:17; Rom. 11:33; Mark 12:30; Matt. 28:19; John 15:26; I Cor. 12:4-6; I John 5:7; John 10:37-38; John 17:1-5; I Cor. 2:10-12; Phil. 2:5-6; Eph. 2:18; II Cor. 13:14.

## ***Section III – Of Jesus Christ***

We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ who is the second person of the Triune God, the eternal Word, and Only Begotten Son; that without any change in His divine Person, He became man by miracle of the Virgin Birth, thus to continue forever as both true God and true Man, one person with two natures; that as man He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin; that as the perfect Lamb of God He gave Himself in death upon the cross, becoming there the sin of the world, and suffering its full penalty of divine wrath in our stead; that He arose bodily from the grave and was glorified; that as our great High Priest He ascended into Heaven, there to appear before the face of God as our Advocate and Intercessor.

John 1:14; Isa. 7:14; I Tim. 2:5; John 1:1; Titus 2:13; Matt. 27:40, 43; John 5:25; Rev. 23:13, 16; Isa. 53:6; Rom. 8:34.

## ***Section IV – Of the Holy Spirit***

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Third person of the Triune God; equal 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 judgment and of righteousness; that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; and indwells; that he is the agent in the New Birth, He seals, empowers, endures, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer.

John 14:16-17; Matt. 28:19; Heb. 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Gen. 1:1-3; II Thes. 2:7; John 16:7-15; John 15:26-27; Acts 5:30-32; John 3:5-6; Eph. 1:13-14; Matt. 3:11; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; John 16:13; John 14:26; Rom. 8:14-16; Acts 1:8; I Pet. 1:2; Rom. 8:26-27.

## ***Section V – Of the Devil, or Satan***

We believe that Satan was once holy and enjoyed heavenly honors; but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and drew after him a host of angels; that he is now the militant, unholy god of this world. We hold him to be man's great tempter, the enemy of God,

and the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, the chief power behind the present apostasy; the lord of the anti-Christ, and the author of all the power of darkness.

We believe that he is destined to final defeat at the hands of God's own Son, and the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels.

Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:14-17; Rev. 12:9; Jude 6; II Pet. 2:4; Eph. 2:2, John 14:30; I Thes. 3:5; Matt. 4:1-3; I Pet. 5:8; I John 3:8; Luke 22:3-4; Rev. 12:10; II Cor. 11:13-15; Mark 13:21-22; I John 4:3; II John 7; I John 2:22; Rev. 13:13-14; II Thes. 2:8-11; Rev. 19:20; Rev. 12:7-9; Rev. 20:1-3; Rev. 20:10; Matt. 25:41.

### ***Section VI – Of Creation***

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly by God in His own image and after His own likeness; that the creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher form; but, that it took place in six solar (24 hour) days and life was made directly by God and that His established law was that they should bring forth only “after their kind”.

Gen. 1:1; Ex. 20:11; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 11:3; John 1:3; Rev. 10:6; Rom. 1:20; Acts 17:23-26; Jer. 10:12; Neh. 9:6; Gen. 1-2:7.

### ***Section VII – Of the Fall of Man***

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

Gen. 3:1-6, 24; Rom. 5:12; Rom. 5:19; Rom. 3:10-19; Eph. 2:1,3; Rom. 1:18; Rom. 1:32; Rom. 1:20; Rom. 1:28; Gal. 3:22.

### ***Section VIII – Of the Virgin Birth***

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit born of a virgin, Mary, and that He is both true God and true man.

Gen. 3:15; Isa. 714; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:14; Ps. 2:7; Gal. 4:4; I John 5:20; I Cor. 15:47.

### ***Section IX – Of Salvation by Grace***

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly by grace through the mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for our sins according to the Scriptures as our representative and substitutionary sacrifice; and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood and are in possession of a salvation which is eternally secure.

Eph. 2:4-9; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24; John 3:14-16; Matt. 18:11; Heb. 2:14; Isa. 53:4-7; Rom. 3:25; I John 4:10; I Cor. 15:3; II Cor. 5:21; John 10:18; Gal. 1:4; I Pet. 2:24; I Pet. 3:18; Isa. 53:11-12; Heb. 12:2; Heb. 7:25; I John 2:2; Eph. 2:4-9; I Cor. 15:10; I Tim. 1:15; Rom. 10:13; John 3:14-18; John 3:36; Matt. 11:28.

### ***Section X – Of the Freeness of Salvation***

We believe that salvation is made free to all by the Gospel and 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 sins, is made a new creation and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit, and its evidence appears in the fruits of faith, repentance and newness of life.

Rev. 22:17; Rom. 10:13; John 6:37; Acts 2:38; Isa. 55:7; John 5:40; II Cor. 5:17; John 3:3-6.

### ***Section XI – Of Justification***

We believe justification is the judicial act of God whereby those who put their faith in Christ are declared righteous in His eyes and free from eternal guilt and punishment.

Acts 13:39; Isa. 53:11; Rom 8:1; Rom. 5:9; Rom. 5:1; Titus 3:5-7; Rom. 1:17; Hab. 2:4; Gal. 3:11; Rom. 4:1-8; Rom. 3:21-28.

### ***Section XII – Of the Church***

We believe in the Church which is the body of Christ, and that it is distinctively New Testament, not to be confounded with the saved of the Old Testament. We believe in the local Church as a company of baptized believers associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, independent and self-governing, which could fellowship with other churches of like faith and order. It is the responsibility of the local church to observe the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, edify Christ and evangelize the world.

Acts 2:41-42; I Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 12:4, 8-11; Acts 14:23; Acts 6:5-6; Acts 15:23; Acts 20:17-23; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23-24; Acts 15:22; Acts 1:8; I Cor. 5:11-13.

### ***Section XIII – Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper***

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

We believe the elements of the Lord's Supper to be unleavened bread and unfermented fruit of the vine.

Acts 8:36-39; Matt. 3:6; John 3:23; Matt. 3:16; Matt. 28:19; Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Acts 2:41-42; Matt. 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:15-20; I Cor. 11:23-28.

#### ***Section XIV – Of the Righteous and the Wicked***

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; and that all who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked. This distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting blessedness of the saved and under the curse, which is the everlasting damnation of the lost.

Mal. 3:18; Gen. 18:23; Rom. 2:17-18; Prov. 11:31; I Pet. 1:18; Rom. 1:17; I Cor. 15:22; Acts 10:34-35; I John 2:29; Rom. 6:16; I John 5:19; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 7:6; Rom. 6:23; Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matt. 25:34,41; John 8:21; Luke 9:26; John 12:25; Matt. 7:13-14.

#### ***Section XV – Of Civil Government***

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom. 13:7; II Sam. 23:3; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; I Pet. 2:13-14; I Pet. 2:17; Phil. 2:10-11; Ps. 72:11; Dan. 3:14-18; Acts 4:13-21.

#### ***Section XVI – Of the Return of Christ and Related Events***

- A. We believe in the “Blessed Hope”, the personal imminent pre-tribulation and pre-millennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones of the Church, and in His return to earth after the tribulation with His saints to establish the Millennial Kingdom. (I Thes. 4:13-18; II Thes. 1:6-12; Rev. 20:1-6, 12-14).
- B. We believe that every saved person will appear before the “Judgment Seat” to be judged by the Lord, in regard to his service. (I Cor. 3:11-15; Rom. 14:10; Matt. 6:2; II Cor. 5:10).
- C. We believe that the Millennial Kingdom literally will be on earth and will be ruled from the throne of David. (Luke 1:32-33; Acts 2:29-30; Isa. 9:6-7).
- D. We believe in the bodily resurrection of *all* men, the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting damnation. The souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord where, in conscious bliss, they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul and body are reunited to be forever glorified with the Lord. The souls of the unbelievers at death remain in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when

with spirit, soul and body reunited they shall appear before the Great White Throne Judgment and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting separation from God. (Luke 16:19-26; Matt. 25:46; John 5:28-29; Phil. 1:23; II Cor. 5:8,10).

### ***Section XVII – Of Missions***

We believe that the command to give the Gospel (death, burial and resurrection of Christ) to the world is clear and unmistakable and that this commission was given to all believers.

Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; John 20:21; Rom. 10:13-15; Acts 1:8.

### ***Section XVIII – Of the Grace of Giving***

We believe that Scriptural giving is a command of God to bring our tithe into the storehouse (common treasury of the Church) upon the first day of the week. We are also commanded to offer our spiritual gifts for the enhancement of the Gospel.

I Cor. 16:2; Heb. 7:2,4; Lev. 27:30; Mal. 3:10; Acts 4:34, 35, 37.

### ***Section XIX – Of Separation***

We believe that a New Testament Church is a called-out assembly and has a responsibility to separate itself from worldliness, immorality and apostasy.

II Cor. 7:1; I Pet. 4:15; II Cor. 10:5; Rom. 14:1-9; II Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11-12; Luke 13:8-11; Haggai 2:12-13; I John 3:1; I John 2:15.

## **ARTICLE V – BY LAWS**

### ***Section I – Membership***

#### **A. Reception of Members**

1. Any person who gives evidence of having been born again and unequivocally without mental reservation, accepts the Articles of Faith and Church Covenant, and by personal interview first with the Pastor and then with at least two Elders and upon recommendation of the Pastor and Board of Elders, and acceptance by the Church, shall after baptism be received into membership. If the Pastor and/or the Board of Elders cannot agree to recommend said candidate(s) to the membership for admission as a member of this Church then the issue shall be brought before the Church body for the final decision.
2. Any person who has been baptized by immersion, holding membership in an evangelical Church, who can give satisfactory evidence of having been born again, and unequivocally and without mental reservation accepts the Articles of Faith and Church Covenant, and by personal interview first with the Pastor and then with at least two Elders. And

upon recommendation of the Pastor and the Board of Elders, and acceptance by the Church, shall be received into membership. If the Pastor and/or the Board of Elders cannot agree to recommend said candidate(s) to the membership for admission as a member of this Church, then the issue shall be brought before the Church body for final decision.

3. In all cases prospective members must attend the two part classes on church membership. After which the Church body shall vote on the issue of membership.

## **B. Responsibilities of Members**

1. Members are expected to love and serve their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and to show this love by faithful attendance to services of this Church.
2. Members are expected to love their Pastor, to pray for him and follow his leadership as he exercises the Scriptural authority given him as the undershepherd.
3. Members are expected to cultivate and cherish brotherly love for all members of the Church and to show this love through harmony of fellowship.
4. Toward those not connected with the Church, members are expected to be honest and faithful in fulfilling obligations and performing promises. All members are expected to witness to all unbelieving friends and acquaintances concerning faith in Jesus Christ.
4. It shall be the privilege and responsibility of all members to practice Scriptural giving as to amount and time and place as the Lord may prosper in harmony with the system used by this Church.

## **C. Transfer of Membership**

1. All members, when transferring membership are required to find a church of like faith with which to unite themselves. Upon request from that congregation, a letter of recommendation will be granted.
2. Members in good standing, who have been faithful in their responsibilities, shall be granted a letter of recommendation. In no case will a member not in good standing be granted a letter of recommendation.

## **D. Discipline of Members**

In order to maintain its purity and peace, a local church has the Scriptural responsibility to prayerfully and lovingly restore errant members. Members whose behavior continues in violation of scriptural command are to be disciplined.

1. All Church discipline will be conducted within the guidelines of Matthew 18:15-20 and I Corinthians 5:9-13.

***a. Offended and Quarreling Members***

Offenses are inevitable and it is important that they be settled privately according to the pattern outlined in Matthew 18:15-16. Members are to seek reconciliation in a spirit of love when offenses occur whether noticed by the offender (Matthew 5:23-24) or the offended person. However, if the parties involved will not follow this pattern, or if, upon following it, reconciliation has not been reached, the Pastor and Elders may need to become involved in order to preserve the peace of the Church. No charge of a derogatory nature against any member(s) is to be communicated to others or before the Church in a business meeting until (1) a written report signed by accused is presented to the offender in private according to Matthew 18:15 and Galatians 6:1; and (2) shall have been communicated to the Discipline Committee according to Matthew 18:16 and Galatians 6:1.

***b. Rebellious and Divisive Members***

Scriptures warn that persons who rebel against the spiritual leadership of the Church, who gossip, who endeavor to influence others against the leadership, who promote divisions and who make trouble in the Church are to be disciplined according to scriptural guidelines of II Thessalonians 3:6.

The Pastor and Elders shall act (II Timothy 4:2) with love and grace, but they are required to proceed immediately to deal with any member engaged in, secretly or otherwise, obstructing the work or disturbing the peace of the Church. Conduct such as gossip or backbiting, falsehood, slander, conspiracy, immorality are unscriptural and detrimental to the life of the Church. Such persons are to be admonished by the Pastor and Elders, after much prayer, with love and frankness according to Titus 3:10. If the attitude and actions persist, the Discipline Committee shall make a recommendation of dismissal to the Church body.

***c. Accused Members***

If a member is accused by another member in good standing of a violation of the Church Covenant or of doctrinal, immoral or unchristian conduct, such charges must be submitted in writing to the Discipline Committee by the accuser. When such charges have been presented, the Discipline Committee shall investigate the following: (1) Whether or not the pattern of Matthew 18:15-16 is applicable and has been followed. (2) Whether or not the charges appear to be valid. If the charges appear to be serious and valid, the offender shall be asked to meet with the Discipline Committee at a time that is reasonable to receive a full and fair hearing. The accused shall have at least two weeks written notice of such hearing and be informed personally of the nature of the charges. If the accused does not appear in answer to the summons, the Discipline Committee shall recommend to the Church the exclusion of such person from membership.

By majority vote the committee may acquit the accused if the charges appear untrue, or if there is evidence of genuine repentance and restitution on the part of the accused, or they may vote for such discipline as the case may warrant. Discipline short of expulsion from membership shall be at the discretion of the Pastor and Elders. The membership shall be informed of such action. If expulsion is recommended, the accused may appeal to the entire Church for a hearing. The Church shall then decide whether to hear the case or whether it will act, without such hearing, upon the recommendation of the Discipline Committee. The purpose here is to give full protection to any member who may be accused and allow the membership the opportunity to protect the Church from interruption by time consuming details which could be harmful to the young and discouraging to the membership.

*d. The Discipline Committee*

The Discipline Committee shall be the Pastor and Elders except for the following:

In cases where the accused is an Elder or Pastor or related by marriage or birth to an Elder or Pastor, that Elder or Pastor shall not serve on the committee. The remainder of the committee may select a church member(s) in good standing who is not related to the accused and meet the Galatians 6:1 standards for impartiality to serve as a replacement on the Discipline Committee.

If the accused party is the Pastor of the Church and accusations are (a) moral conduct, (b) doctrinal error, (c) serious negligence of ministry, and:

- 1) The accusations are well documented.
- 2) Two or three witnesses shall have presented the accusations in writing.
- 3) Accusations are scripturally defined as serious errors.

Then the Pastor shall, for purposes of concluding the evaluation of the charges and protection of the Church, remove himself from the Discipline Committee and immediately appoint a temporary pulpit supply acceptable to the Elders.

If the Pastor should fail to cooperate and follow this procedure, the Discipline Committee (namely the Elders) have the authority to immediately appoint a pulpit supply to serve while the charges are disposed of according to Paragraph D.1.c of this Section. Such information, as needed with reasons, will be presented to the Church for their awareness, understanding and cooperation.

2. Members disciplined may be restored to full membership in the following manner:
  - a. Confession and repentance of sins and errors which led to church discipline must be evidenced.
  - b. If the above qualification is met, the one seeking restoration will meet with the Pastor and Elders concerning future intentions toward this Church by that individual.

- c. If above requirements have been satisfactorily met, the Pastor and Elders will recommend to the Church body for renewed membership.
  - d. A disciplined member may be restored to membership with the consent of the Pastor and Elders and a majority vote of the membership of the Church.
  - e. A member who has been disciplined and subsequently restored to membership may not hold any office for a period of six months from the time of restoration.
3. Members who have willfully not attended services for a period of three months or more will be notified by mail about loss of voting privileges and will not be permitted to speak in the business meetings. Those willfully not attending for a period of six months, after having been called upon by the Pastor and Elders, and upon vote of the Church, shall be dropped from the Church roll and so notified by mail. These actions can be rescinded by a vote of the membership present and voting after the person in question has regularly attended for a period of three months.

## **E. Voting**

The legal voting membership shall consist of all members of the Church who are in good standing and are 18 years of a age or older.

### ***Section II – Church Leadership***

- I. The Church Elders, Deacons or Pastor shall be appointed in accordance with Scripture for the purpose of the administration of the spiritual and business affairs of the church. The Elders shall uphold the Word of God and the Deacons (Trustees) shall serve in the business affairs of the Church.
- II. In order to serve in the capacity of church leader, appointees shall be required to sign a doctrinal statement and agreement to abide by the Statement of Faith and Covenant.
- III. Each church leader must sign the doctrinal statement and agreement at the beginning of his period of service, at the first scheduled meeting of each year.
- IV. The Elders and Deacons shall meet jointly on a quarterly basis. The Pastor shall chair the meeting and the secretary of the Elder Board shall take the minutes. In the absence of the Pastor, the Elders shall appoint a moderator.
- V. Deacons will be appointed by the Elders to serve a three-year term. A Deacon may serve an unlimited number of consecutive terms as long as he meets the Biblical qualification for a Deacon.

## **A. Elders**

### ***1. Qualifications***

- a. Elders are to be selected by the Pastor and/or Elders (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5) in accordance with the high standards set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.
- b. They must be a male member of the Church for a minimum period of one year.
- c. We shall strive to have a plurality of Elders at all times and Elders may be appointed at any time based on I Timothy 3:1-8.

### ***2. Duties of the Board of Elders***

- a. The Elders shall assist the Pastor in the spiritual ministry.
- b. The Elders shall assist in administrating the ordinances of the Church and shall make necessary provisions for the same.
- c. The Elders shall guide the spiritual and moral use of the church building and properties.
- d. The Elders shall accept into the church membership, discharge, discipline, and when necessary, terminate membership in the manner provided herein.
- e. The Elders shall receive, consider and dispose of any grievance, suggestion or recommendation by any member or organization of the church.
- f. The Elders shall post a list of newly appointed Deacons and Elders two weeks before such are publicly dedicated. If no justifiable objection is made prior to the dedication service, the list shall stand as posted. If a justifiable objection is made, the Board of Elders shall investigate the objection and make a ruling of the validity of the objection.
- g. When the church is without a Pastor, it shall be the duty of the Elders to supply the pulpit with the men whose Christian character and teaching are in accordance with the doctrinal statement.
- h. When the church is seeking a Pastor, the Elder Board has primary responsibility to form a pulpit committee.
- i. If there is no Board of Elders to fulfill the above obligations, the Board of Deacons shall fulfill the responsibility to form a pulpit committee.

## **B. The Deacons (Trustees)**

### ***1. Qualifications***

- a. The Board of Deacons shall be comprised of male members who will be selected by the Pastor and Elders in accordance with the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13.
- b. A man must be a member of the church for a minimum period of one year to serve in this position.
- c. The Deacons will act as Trustees in accordance with the laws of the State of New Jersey, N.J.S.A. 16:119.

### ***2. Duties of the Deacon (Trustee) Board***

- a. The Deacons shall have responsibility and accountability for all repairs and maintenance of the church building and physical properties.
- b. The Deacons shall annually prepare a budget to be reviewed by the combined Boards before final adoption by the congregation. The Deacons shall not approve any expenditure in excess of \$1000.00 without prior consent of the Elder Board and congregation unless the item appears in the adopted annual budget. The Deacons can spend up to \$500.00 without approval of the Elder Board.
- c. No personal property costing more than \$1,000.00 shall be sold without a vote of the Church congregation. An exception would be if the proposed purchase or sale were included in the budget as a separate line item and was already properly approved when the budget was adopted. See Section IX regarding Real Property.
- d. The Deacons shall submit bills to the treasurer.
- e. In the event of an emergency, the Elders and Deacons may enter into a financial transaction of greater than \$1000.00 without prior church approval. This will be brought to the attention of the congregation at the next service.
- f. They shall make recommendations to the church membership concerning the salary of the Pastor and all paid staff members. They shall give written reports relative to their particular areas of service at the annual business meeting.
- g. They shall appoint members of the church to be responsible for counting and depositing of all monies received through the church.
- h. The Board of Deacons shall make sure that accurate records are being kept of all financial transactions of the Berean Baptist Church in accordance with the laws of

the State of New Jersey. They shall also insure an internal yearly audit is performed as well as a bi-annual audit by an independent outside agency

- i. The title to all of the property of this Church is vested in the corporation, and the deacons of this Church are the trustees thereof.
- j. The Deacons, acting as Trustees of the corporation, shall not purchase, lease, encumber or dispose of any real estate without approval of the Elders and a vote of the Church authorizing such action.
- k. Gifts of real estate may be accepted upon approval of the Deacons.

## **C. The Pastor**

### ***1. His Qualifications***

- a. The standard of I Timothy 3:1-7 must be met.
- b. He must be willing to adhere to the Church Statement of Faith and Covenant as presented in this document.

### ***2. His Call by the Church***

- a. The Elders shall serve as the Pulpit Committee and shall select one of the Elders as chairman of the committee. This man shall serve as a moderator of all meetings when the Church is without a Pastor.
- b. It shall be the responsibility of the pulpit committee to secure satisfactory candidates and from those candidates recommend a man to the congregation for their consideration. No candidate shall be considered by this Church without the recommendation of the Pulpit Committee.
- c. A call shall be issued when seventy-five percent (75%) of all legal voting members present have voted for a candidate in a business meeting on the Wednesday following the Sunday the candidate has preached.
- d. To avoid confusion, only one candidate shall be considered at a time.

### ***3. His Duties***

- a. It shall be the duty of the Pastor to preach the Gospel as set forth in the Articles of Faith.
- b. It shall be the Pastor's duty to meet with the Elders at least once a month.
- c. It is understood that the Pastor is the administrator and overseer of the congregation. He shall carry out the Biblical functions of a shepherd, administer the ordinances,

moderate all business meetings, oversee all programs and ministries, in cooperation with the Board of Elders, necessary for the care and welfare of the congregation.

- d. The Pastor shall serve as a voting member of any committees established by the Church.

#### ***4. Termination***

- a. The Pastor shall serve an indeterminate term of office. He may end that term of office by giving sixty (60) days notice. The Pastor may be terminated by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a quorum at a regularly called business meeting. Notice of said meeting must be given from the pulpit on two successive Sundays.
- b. In the event the Church is without a Pastor, the Board of Elders shall assume all Pastoral duties and responsibilities.

### ***Section III - Officers and Appointees***

#### **A. Qualifications of all Officers**

Officers must be members of the Church in good standing, and must unequivocally and without mental reservation, subscribe annually to the Statement of Faith and Covenant of this Church. They shall give unquestioned evidence of having been born again. Furthermore, every Officer shall live a life beyond doubt of separation from the world. While there are other phases of the separated life which are to be taken for granted, we specifically shall demand that Officers be free of the use of tobacco, illicit drugs, alcoholic beverages, gambling, and viewing and/or reading of carnal material. Departure therefrom shall be just cause for removal from office.

#### **B. Treasurer**

##### ***1. Qualifications***

Same as Paragraph A. of this Section. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Church in good standing and have been so for a period of at least one year. If possible, the person elected should be acquainted with sound accounting practices.

##### ***2. Duties***

- a. To pay all Church bills as directed by the Pastor and Elders.
- b. To maintain proper records of all funds received and disbursed and to give a monthly report to the Pastor and Elders as well as annual and semi-annual reports to the congregation prepared in conjunction with the Financial Committee.

### ***3. Election and Term of Office***

The Treasurer is to be elected by the Church at the annual business meeting for a Term of one year. Successive terms of office are permissible.

## **C. Financial Steward Committee**

### ***1. Qualifications***

Same as Treasurer.

### ***2. Duties***

Same as Treasurer.

### ***3. Appointment and Term of Office***

The members shall be appointed by the Pastor and the Elder Board. In the event of no Pastor, the Board of Elders will appoint the members.

## **D. Financial Secretary**

### ***1. Qualifications***

Same as Paragraph A. of this Section. The financial secretary must be a member of the Church in good standing and have been so for a period of at least one year.

### ***2. Duties***

To maintain a record of tithes and offerings for each member and to present a copy of the record quarterly.

### ***3. Election and Term of Office***

The Church financial secretary is to be elected by the membership present and voting at the annual business meeting. Successive terms are permissible.

## **E. Church Clerk**

### ***1. Qualifications***

Same as Paragraph A. of this Section. The Church clerk must be a member of the Church in good standing and have been so for a period of at least one year.

## ***2. Duties***

- a. The Church clerk shall keep full and accurate records of all proceedings of the Church at its business meetings.
- b. A complete register of Church membership shall be maintained by the clerk, including new members, termination of membership, marriages and baptisms.

## ***3. Election and Term of Office***

The Church clerk is to be elected by the membership present and voting at the annual business meeting. Successive terms are permissible.

## **F. Other Positions**

1. All other positions shall be appointed by the Pastor and Board of Elders with subsequent approval by the membership of the Church.
2. Funds paid for staff members of the Church must be authorized by the Church, but it is understood that the persons filling authorized paid positions will serve at the discretion of the Pastor.

## **G. Nomination of Officers**

1. A primary ballot will be given to all members of the Church membership by December 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.
2. Names of nominees can be given to the Elders.
3. Those names will be certified by the Nomination Approval Committee.
4. All nominees will be contacted for their consent before they are placed on the official ballot.
5. There will be no nominations from the floor at the Annual Business Meeting.

## ***Section IV – Meetings of the Church***

### **A. Worship**

1. The Church shall meet regularly on the Lord's Day (Sunday), morning and evening.
2. The Church shall meet each Wednesday evening for Prayer Meeting and Bible study.

3. The Church shall meet on a given night other than these already mentioned for the purpose of visitation and soul-winning.
4. Special meetings, i.e. revival, Missions Conferences, etc. shall be scheduled on an individual basis.

## **B. Business**

1. The Annual Business Meeting of the Church shall be held by the end of January of each year at which time officers for the coming year shall be elected and annual reports shall be given. Election of officers is to be by secret ballot. The official ballot and all reports shall be distributed two weeks in advance of the Meeting.
2. The Semi-Annual Business Meeting shall be held by the end of July.
3. Special Business Meetings
  - a. Special meeting may be called by the Pastor, Board of Elders, or by a simple majority vote of the membership present when a request by a member for a meeting is announced. The vote will be taken in the first regular service after the request is made.
  - b. Special meetings must be announced in at least three services before the meetings are conducted, except those for dismissal of a Pastor and/or corporate business meetings which shall be given notice for two preceding Sundays.
4. Thirty percent (30%) of the voting members of the Church shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the following items of business:
  - a. Revisions to the constitution;
  - b. Call or dismissal of a Pastor;
  - c. Exclusion from the Church or any member due to Church discipline;
  - d. Approval of major building programs.
5. No quorum shall be required for normal business of the Church.
6. The election of Pastors, Deacons and church officers, as well as decisions on all matters, shall be by ballot, unless the congregation votes to do otherwise.

## 7. Order of Business

- a. The Pastor shall serve as moderator. In his absence, one of the Elders shall act as moderator.
- b. All Business Meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer. The following order of business is to be observed:
  1. Meeting called to order.
  2. Prayer.
  3. Reading of Minutes.
  4. Unfinished business.
  5. Reports of Officers and Committees.
  6. New business.
  7. Prayer.
  8. Adjournment
- c. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the accepted standard for procedure in all business meetings.

## **ARTICLE VI – TEACHING MINISTRIES**

### ***Section I – Purpose***

The purpose for all the children's ministries shall be to train and teach all members and friends of the Church the Word of God in a sound and systematic way.

### ***Section II – Qualifications***

Same as Article V, Section III, A.

### ***Section III – Guidelines***

The Pastor and Bible School Superintendent shall jointly appoint or remove all Sunday School Teachers. The Superintendent shall serve the Sunday School and help the Pastor in its administration. The Superintendent is appointed by the Pastor and may serve as long as acceptable to both the Pastor and Superintendent. Officers and teachers should be regular in attending all the services of this church especially Prayer Meeting and a continued absence

therefrom without proper explanation shall be just cause for removal from office. It is recognized that officers of organized classes in our Children's Ministries are associated with the teacher in a distinct service for the Lord, and because of this, it shall be a prerequisite that they give satisfactory testimony of the New Birth and set forth the ability to teach and train these young people in a way that is pleasing to the Lord and adhere to the Church's covenant. Church membership shall be required unless the Pastor and Officers' approval is given for non-membership.

All literature and training material must be approved by the Pastor and Elders.

#### **ARTICLE VII – AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS**

A. All auxiliary organizations of the Church shall be under the general oversight of the Pastor and Elders.

B. All Officers of auxiliary organization shall be members of the Church in good standing.

C. Youth Groups

1. The function of youth groups shall be to provide fellowship and spiritual training.

2. Leaders and workers in these groups shall be appointed by the Pastor and Elders.

3. All literature used must be approved by the Pastor and/or Elders.

D. Music Ministries

Music groups ministering to the Church shall consist of members of the Church or those approved by the Pastor and/or Elders.

E. No organization of this Church shall have a separate bank account unless approved by the Church Trustees. All monies received shall become the property of this Church and shall be handled through regular financial channels. The oversight of all finances of this Church and its subsidiary organizations shall be the responsibility of Church Trustees.

#### **ARTICLE VIII – ACCEPTABLE ASSOCIATIONS**

A. Berean Baptist Church shall always be an independent, self-governing Baptist Church.

B. Associations or fellowship of like Christian Churches may be entered into by the Church upon approval by the Pastor and Elders.

C. The Church shall disassociate itself by majority vote of the membership present and voting form any group with whom it has affiliated if said group wavers from the Biblical stand it had at the time of affiliation.

**ARTICLE IX – DISSOLUTION OF THE CHURCH**

In the event of dissolution of Berean Baptist Church, the property of the Church, real and personal, and its other assets shall be given by vote of the membership to some other Baptist Church, Baptist Missionary agency or benevolent agency that hold the same doctrinal position as this Church, provided such organization qualifies as a tax exempt organization under the provisions of Section 501©(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code as may be amended from time to time or any replacement provision of subsequently enacted law.

**ARTICLE X – METHODS OF AMENDMENT**

All articles are amendable by a three-fourths (3/4) majority vote of a quorum as defined in Article V, Section 3.B.4. The meeting must be announced two weeks in advance at all public meetings. No announcement in writing is necessary. Proposed changes must be submitted in writing to the congregation two weeks prior to voting.

**ARTICLE XI – CONSTITUTIONAL INTERPRETATION**

When questions arise in regard to the interpretation of this document, those having questions shall meet with the Pastor and the Board of Elders in order to reconcile the question. If it cannot be reconciled in this manner, the question will be brought to the floor and the membership present and voting will be the final authority in deciding said question.

**ARTICLE XII – PREVIOUS BY-LAWS**

All previous by-laws hereby are rescinded. Approval of the Constitution:

This constitution was approved by the congregation of the Church in regular business session this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_\_.

(s) Church Clerk