

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Bethel Deaf Fellowship, Fayetteville, Arkansas

September 10, 2013, Approved

Preamble

This Constitution and Bylaws are made to:

1. Preserve and secure the principles of our faith.
2. Preserve the liberties of each individual member of the church.
3. Ensure freedom of action of independence from any religious body or organization.
4. Provide for orderly conduct of internal affairs, in dealing with others, and of governing church members.

I. Name

The name of this church shall be Bethel Deaf Fellowship. It shall be affiliated with the Washington-Madison Baptist Association, the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

II. Purpose

The purposes of Bethel Deaf Fellowship are:

1. To worship God, who is worthy of all praise and glory.
2. To serve God locally, nationally, and internationally by fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus Christ as set forth in Matthew 28:19-20.
3. To minister to the needs of the members and others as the church is able to do so.
4. To do any and all things related to and in connection with the carrying out of the purposes of a New Testament Church.

III. Articles of Faith

1. We believe the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God, without any error, the all-sufficient authority in matters of faith, doctrine, and Christian living.
2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ, and that He is true God and man. He died on the cross for our sins. He rose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven where He sits at the right hand of the Father and is now our High Priest and Advocate.
4. We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is, therefore, lost. Only through regeneration by the work of the Holy Spirit can man's salvation and spiritual life be obtained.
5. We believe that eternal salvation is the free gift of God, entirely apart from man's works, and is possessed by any and all who have faith in and receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.
6. We believe in a regenerated church membership: that is, persons old enough to understand their need for Jesus Christ and, of their own free will, accepted Him as their personal Lord and Savior.
7. We believe that baptism is by immersion and the Lord's Supper is a memorial to His suffering and death on the cross. These are ordinances to be observed by the church in its present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means for man's salvation.
8. We believe in the personal, bodily, imminent, and glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ and that His second coming inspires believers for dynamic and zealous life and service for Him while waiting for His return.
9. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead, the everlasting blessedness of the saved in heaven, and the everlasting punishment and separation from God

C. Termination

Membership in this church shall be terminated when a member:

1. Requests a letter of transfer to join another Baptist church.
2. Is dropped from the roll of membership when he or she joins another kind of church. A letter of transfer is not necessary.
3. The member dies.
4. Is dismissed by a vote of the church due to reasons and circumstances provided in Section V. Church Discipline. The pastor/lay leader will do all he can to counsel the member for restoration prior to action of dismissal or a request of the member to be dismissed from the church membership.

D. Orientation of New Members

Candidates for membership and new members will be given the church's Constitution and By-Laws and the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 to learn and understand the privileges and responsibilities of belonging to the Lord's church.

1. Members in good standing shall have the right to a voice and vote in all church transactions and shall have the right and privileges to full participation in the life and work of the church. It shall be the duty of church members to uphold the Articles of The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, and the Constitution and Bylaws.

E. Inactive Members

1. Members who cease to attend and support the church (except those who have extenuating circumstances are physically unable to attend due to health, college, military service, etc.) for three months will be put on an inactive list. These members will be contacted by the Pastor/Lay Leader seeking to resolve any issues and encouraging them to become involved again.
2. Members on the inactive list may not vote nor receive the benefits active members receive. If a request for the transfer of membership is received the letter will be granted with a note that such person was on the church inactive roll and the church supports the candidate in joining another church.

II. Church Officers

All church officers must be members of the church for one year (with the exception of the Pastor) and in good standing according to Bethel Deaf Fellowship Member in Good Standing guidelines.

A. The Pastor/Lay Leader:

1. The qualifications for pastor/lay leader shall be consistent with those listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. His training, skills, and experiences are needed in this area of leadership.

2. His responsibilities:

- a) These generally fall into the following areas: preaching, teaching, pastoral counseling, planning, and guiding the church to grow and fulfill its purposes.
- b) He shall lead the church and assist all leaders of the church in performing their tasks in worship, proclamation, education, and evangelism.
- c) The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all church standing committees, except the Pastor's Selection Committee.

3. Call/Nomination

- a) A pastor shall be chosen and called whenever a vacancy occurs.
- b) A Pastor's Selection Committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor and this committee's recommendation will serve as a nomination.

E. Treasurer

1. The church treasurer shall be elected as the custodian of all moneys of the church and shall disburse these moneys by checks as authorized by the church.
2. He or she shall keep, at all times, an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements and shall render a monthly and annually written report of this account to the church.
3. The treasurer's report shall be audited annually by an auditing committee.
4. He or she shall be responsible for seeing that the offerings are properly received, counted, and deposited in the church's bank account.
5. He or she shall properly credit each contributor and their offerings.
6. He or she shall be responsible for preparing for mailing a quarterly or annual record of contribution to donors.

F. Church Council

1. The Church Council shall have as its regular members the Pastor/Lay Leader, Clerk, Treasurer, Chairman of Deacons/Ushers, Sunday School Director, Chairperson of each church standing Committees, and Children's Church Leader.
2. The Church Council shall be to recommend to the church objectives and goals; review the coordinated program plans recommended by the Pastor, Church Officers, and Committees; to recommend to the church the use of leadership, calendar times, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.
3. The Church Council will come up with a list of committees each year that will be needed to accomplish the ministry and mission of the church.
4. All matters agreed on by the Church Council calling for action not already provided for shall be referred to the church to be voted upon.
5. The Church Council shall meet each month on the last Tuesday of the month and shall appoint a chairperson and he/she must attend all Church business meetings; the only accepted excuses will be illness, work, and vacation. If the chairperson will be absent then he/she must inform someone to take his/her place.

G. Vacancies

In case of vacancy in any office, the vacancy shall be filled by the church at a regular or special meeting as soon as possible after such vacancy has occurred.

III. Church Committees

1. Church committees shall be formed as needed for successfully accomplishing the mission and purpose of the church. Church committee members shall be elected by the church from nominations from the floor with the consent of the nominee. All committees shall have a minimum of three (3) members with a chairperson. Any committee member elected to fill any vacancy shall serve the term of the position vacated. Each committee chairperson shall submit a budget request to the Treasurer and his/her audit committee.
2. Committees will change chairperson every September by nomination and church vote.
3. All Committee chairpersons must attend all church business meetings; the only accepted excuses will be illness, work, and vacation. If the chairperson will be absent then he/she must inform someone to take his/her place.

A. Nominating Committee

The committee shall nominate qualified candidates for all committees as needed by the church. Three members shall be appointed annually by the Pastor/Lay Leader.

C. Special Business Meeting

A special called business meeting may be called by the pastor/lay leader, and with other church officers, or by action of the church to consider special matters of significant nature. This meeting will be announced during two (2) worship services prior to the special called meeting.

D. Quorum

The quorum consists of those who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called. At least one-fourth of the members shall constitute a quorum.

E. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order (revised edition) is adopted as the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church and for all business meetings of the church and for all other meetings that demand voting of the church members, including committee meetings.

V. Church Discipline

A. Should any unhappy difference arise among members, the aggrieved member shall follow in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 6:1-8.

B. Should any case of gross breach of relationship, or of public scandal occur, the Church Council shall endeavor to resolve the conflict; and if this effort fails, shall report the case to the church.

C. All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance, but should an adverse decision be reached, the church may proceed to admonish or declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.

D. Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by vote of the church, upon evidence of his repentance and reformation; or if an account of continued absence, upon satisfactory explanation.

E. All members of Bethel Deaf Fellowship agree to submit to binding arbitration any matters which cannot otherwise be resolved.

Ratified by action of the church in its business meeting on 9-24-13
(date)

Moderator: Jared M. _____

Church: Bethel Deaf Fellowship