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Constitution & Bylaws of Berean Fundamental Church of Valentine, Nebraska

I. Name

II. Doctrinal Statement

III. Affiliation

IV. Membership / Participation

V. Church Leadership

VI. Church Meetings

VII. Church Discipline & Restoration

VIII. Church Property

IX. Rules of Order

X. Limitations of Liability

XI. Interpretation and Amendments

I. Name

Constitution & Bylaws of Berean Fundamental Church of Valentine, Nebraska.

The constitution & bylaws exist to provide clarity to those inside and outside the church about who we are, what we believe and value, and how we operate in regard to the governance and operations of the Valentine Berean Bible Church (VBBC), located in Valentine, Nebraska.

- A. **Name:** The name of this organization is Berean Fundamental Church of Valentine here after referred to as Valentine Berean Bible Church (VBBC). 'Bereans' were New Testament era residents of a town called Berea. In Acts 17:11, "Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true," these people were commended for their devotion to searching the Scriptures to make sure what was being taught to them was really 'in the book.' We believe that God's Word, the Bible, is the one true complete Word of God, and are committed to using it as our guide and standard for truth and living.
- B. **Mission Statement:** Glorifying God by reaching the lost and equipping the saints through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- C. **Affiliation:** This church is affiliated with the Berean Fellowship of Churches (BFC). This church is subject to the rules and regulations stipulated in the Berean Fellowship of Churches' Constitution and Bylaws.

II. Doctrinal Statement

As an interdependent, collaborative group of churches, VBBC holds to the following statement of beliefs. We hold our beliefs regarding the nature and character of God, the person and work of Jesus Christ, the need for salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone, and the authority and reliability of Scripture as doctrine. Individual believers who love Jesus Christ and believe that the Bible is God's Word may differ on secondary matters. For the sake of unity and clarity of teaching, we believe it is important to state clearly where the BFC stands doctrinally. Christians who share our commitment to Jesus and the Bible and wish to partner with the BFC in pursuit of Christ's mission may have reservations or differing personal views regarding secondary issues. We welcome these brothers and sisters in Christ into our fellowship with the understanding that doctrinal unity is critical to the mission of each local BFC church. We ask that all leaders and members of VBBC church submit to the following doctrinal statement of beliefs regardless of reservations or differences they may personally hold regarding secondary issues. Mathew 28:19-20 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- A. The following core doctrines are held by our church.

BIBLE

We believe the Bible, consisting of the 66 books of the Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety, is the only divinely inspired, inerrant, objectively true, and authoritative written Word of God. It is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. The divine inspiration of Scripture extends to each word of the original manuscripts, but not to the various copies or translations of Scripture. The Bible should be interpreted literally, grammatically, contextually, and historically. (Deut. 29:29; Matt. 5:17; John 10:35; 1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:21, 3:16)

GOD

We believe there is only one God, the Creator, who is infinite and personal. He exists eternally in three distinct persons, revealed to us in Scripture as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is holy. God is love. God is just. God is all powerful, all knowing, and ever present. He is the source of all that is good and is the only rightful object of worship. (Gen. 1:1; Deut. 6:4; Job 42:1-2; Ps. 96:9, 115:3; Prov. 15:3; Isa. 6:3, 43:10-11, 44:6, 45:22, 66:1; Matt. 28:19-20; John 1:1, 4:24, 5:26, 10:30; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 3:26, 1 Cor. 3:16, 8:4; Heb. 4:13; 1 John 3:20, 4:8-10)

JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ is God the Son, who has neither beginning nor end. The Old Testament contains numerous prophecies of His coming. He was conceived in the flesh by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin named Mary, and is fully God and fully man. Jesus lived a sinless life that perfectly revealed God's love and truth. He died for our sins, was buried, and arose bodily from the dead on the third day. He ascended into heaven and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father as our only mediator, high priest, and advocate. (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 110:1-4; Isa. 9:1-7, 53:1-12; Mic. 5:2; Matt. 1:20-25; Luke 24:27; John 1:1, 17, 10:30, 14:3-6; Acts 1:11, 4:12; Rom. 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:3-5, 20; Col. 1:16-19; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 1:3, 4:14-15; 1 Pet. 2:22-24; Rev. 1:18)

HOLY SPIRIT

We believe the Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity. He is a person, not a force. The Holy Spirit's ministries include convicting all people of sin; calling, regenerating, indwelling, and baptizing believers into the Body of Christ at conversion; setting them apart to a holy life; and guiding, teaching, keeping, and empowering them day by day. The Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to each believer according to His will for the building up of the church. We believe the primary evidence of the presence and filling of the Holy Spirit is the fruit of the Spirit. (John 3:5-8, 16:5-15; Acts 1:8, 5:3-4, 16:7-14; 1 Cor. 2:9-12, 3:16, 12:3-13, 13:8-11; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 1:13-14, 5:18; Heb. 2:3-4)

HUMAN RACE

We believe that both man (Adam) and woman (Eve) were created in the image of God to enjoy a personal relationship with Him. As a result of deliberate disobedience, they fell from their sinless state, and they and all their descendants became sinners. Consequently, no one can save himself or herself, and apart from the grace of God in Jesus Christ, all are condemned to eternal torment. All humans still bear the image of God and are therefore intrinsically valuable, but all humans are now broken image-bearers in need of the restoration found in Christ. God distinguishes between the sexes, equally valuing men and women, who both reflect His image. God ordained marriage to be between one man and one woman as part of His design that some roles within the family and the church be distinctly male or female. (Gen. 1:26-27, 2:18-

25, 3:1-24; Matt. 19:3-9; John 3:16-18, 36; Rom. 2:12-16, 5:12-21, 6:23, 7:14-21; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:9-10; Jas. 3:9; Rev. 20:13-15)

SALVATION

We believe we are saved solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ alone. This salvation was purchased through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ who, by shedding His blood for sin, offers salvation as a free gift to every person without distinction. God is sovereign over salvation, and yet each person is fully accountable for his or her response to the gospel. The person who has trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior is eternally secure and can enjoy the assurance of salvation as guaranteed by Christ's victorious resurrection. We believe that, at death, those who have trusted in Jesus enter eternal glory and those that have not enter eternal conscious torment in hell. (Matt. 25:46; John 1:12, 3:16, 10:27-28; Acts 16:31, 20:20-21; Rom. 3:21-28, 8:31-39, 10:9,12-15, 17; 1 Cor. 15:3-4, 17-22; Eph. 1:7, 2:4-9; Phil. 1:6; Heb 2:14; 1 John 2:2)

SANCTIFICATION

We believe that every believer has been set apart with a perfect standing before God. As believers yield themselves to the Holy Spirit, they will experience spiritual growth in holiness, but not perfection in conduct in this life. Believers will battle the world, the flesh, and the devil, but living by faith in Christ results in transformation of the heart and authentic righteous living. Future rewards are determined primarily by what motivates Christian behavior. Those whose behavior is an outflow of finding their identity in Christ will be rewarded. (John 15:1-8; Rom. 6:13-19, 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 3:8-15, 10:13; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; 5:10; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph 2:1-3; Phil. 1:6, 3:12; 1 Thess. 4:3; Heb. 10:10)

CHURCH

We believe that Christ is the Head of the Church, which is His body, established to bring God glory. All who have trusted in Christ as Savior are members of this body. Christians should commit themselves to worship, prayer, instruction, fellowship, stewardship, and service in a local church. The church is responsible to represent Jesus Christ in the world through godly living and evangelism. All believers are commanded to participate in two church ordinances: believers' baptism, by immersion if possible; and the Lord's Supper, the bread and cup symbolizing Christ's body and blood. Acts 2:41-42, "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." (Matt. 26:26-29, 28:18-20; Acts 1:8, 2:41-42, 8:35-39; Rom. 12:9-13; 1 Cor. 11:23-34, 12:12-13; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Eph. 3:6-11, 4:11-13; Col. 1:18; Heb. 10:23-25; 1 Pet. 2:9-10)

SATAN

As an angelic being created by God, Satan rebelled against God, becoming the author of sin, our adversary and accuser, and the great deceiver of the nations. Unlike God, Satan is neither omnipresent, omniscient, nor omnipotent. He was defeated by Christ's death and resurrection but continues to wield power in this world under God's sovereign control. In the end, he will be completely overcome by the Lord Jesus Christ and suffer eternal punishment in the lake of fire. (Gen. 3:1,15; Job 1:6-12; Matt. 4:3-11; John 8:44; 1 Cor. 15:24; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1-2; Col. 2:13-15; 1 John 3:8, 5:19; Rev. 12:7-12, 20:10)

FUTURE EVENTS

We believe in the imminent, bodily, personal return of Jesus Christ. On a day known only to God, Jesus will return for his Church. God will reunite all human souls with resurrected, imperishable bodies. This will be followed by the final judgment of the wicked into the lake of fire and eternal life for God's children in a new heaven and a new earth, restoring all creation to a joyful, God-honoring state. (Matt. 24:27-36; John 5:28-29; 14:3; Acts 1:7, 11; Rom. 8:1, 18-25; 1 Cor. 15:20-26, 35-57; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; Col. 1:19-20; 1 Thess. 4:15-5:3; Rev. 11:15, 19:11-21:5).

- B. In addition to the above, Valentine Berean Bible Church holds the following doctrinal distinctives which are consistent with and supplemental to the above doctrinal statement:

RAPTURE & MILLENNIUM

On a day known only by God the Father, Jesus will rapture His Church to deliver it from the judgments that God will pour upon the earth. After this terrible period, the Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory to establish His Millennial Kingdom on the earth. (Matthew 24:15-31; 36-44; 1 Corinthians 15:50-57; 1 Thess. 4:13-5:3; Revelation 3:10; 19:11-20:10)

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image of God. (Gen. 1:26-27) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the way that God intended for that person to reflect God's image.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen. 2:18-25) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10)

We believe that, in order to preserve the function and integrity of the Valentine Berean Bible Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church's members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Valentine Berean Bible Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22)

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking God's mercy and forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11) We believe that God offers His grace to all people, regardless of past sins, if they respond to His offer of salvation through faith in Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward

any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the Valentine Berean Bible Church.

STATEMENT ON SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps. 139)

VALENTINE BEREAN BIBLE CHURCH STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Church Subject to Biblical Authority on Marriage: The Valentine Berean Bible Church follows the living, holy God inspired Bible as God's instruction manual for all followers of Jesus Christ, including all leaders and members at The Valentine Berean Bible Church. The Bible is the authority under which we make all ministry operating decisions and all church conduct and policies must be consistent with Scripture. Our church, its minister and its property exist only to serve and be used for Biblical principles and shall not be used for ungodly, unbiblical purposes such as performing non-Christian marriages, even if under governmental duress.

Matthew 24:35, Isaiah 40:8, Acts 4:19-20, Acts 5:29, 1st Corinthians 6:19-20, 2nd Corinthians 6:14-18, 2nd Timothy 3:16-17

Biblical Teaching on Marriage: The Book of Genesis shows that the Christian concept of marriage is based on God's revelation of the origin of human life on earth where God declares that His creation was "very good" after He had declared that it was not good for man to be alone and He created Eve to make them complete as a husband and wife, man and woman.

Genesis 1:26-2:25, Proverbs 18:22, Matthew 19:4-6, Hebrews 13:4

Church's Acceptance of God's Word Over Man's Anti-Biblical Laws: The Valentine Berean Bible Church accepts this Biblical covenant of marriage as it has existed from the first man forward and that precedes any governmental laws regulating the marriage unit that God created. The Biblical concept is that marriage is an emotional, physical, and spiritual union between one man and one woman who become one flesh together when they join as husband and wife. In **Mark 10:2-9**, Jesus clearly states that God's plan and view of marriage involves only the union of a man and a woman in matrimony that is holy and acceptable to God. Obedience to the Word of God in the area of sexual behavior leads to stable and productive family life. The husband and wife marriage relationship reflects the Church's relationship with God. In **Ephesians 5**, husbands are commanded to love their wives as Christ loves the church, to be willing to die for them; and wives are called to respect their husbands as the head of the family, just as Christ's body, His church, is called to respect Christ as head of the church in all regards. The Valentine Berean Bible Church respects Christ as the Head of the Church and will follow His teachings on marriage regardless of what any secular government might otherwise attempt to command.

Harm From False Teaching on Marriage: To the extent that Biblical truths about marriage are corrupted by laws or man, the family unit as God created it is harmed. When a society **proclaims a corrupt definition of marriage and rejects God, it harms those who are falsely led to** believe they live in a valid relationship. All people who consistently live in violation of God's truths without true repentance are subject to God's judgment. False governmental teachings proclaiming marriage as acceptance between anyone other than one man and one woman is a governmental rejection of God. Proclaiming false marriages is not an

act of love toward the participants but is an act of rebellion against God and His revealed truth and it subjects people and our nation to the judgment and discipline of a holy God who will not allow sin to go unpunished.

Biblical Teachings on Non-Christian Marriages: The Valentine Berean Bible Church's policy regarding Christian marriage and refusing to accept any proclamation that same sex marriage is acceptable is based on the Bible's clear teaching that homosexuality is a sin. All sexual relationships other than between a man and a woman married to each other are condemned in the Bible.

Leviticus 18:22, 26:15-56, Romans 1:24-25, 1st Corinthians 5:9-13, 6:9-12 & 15-20

Church's Obligation to Teach God's Truth in Real Love: The Valentine Berean Bible Church loves people enough to unselfishly warn individuals when their lifestyle exposes them to God's judgment. Celebrating a decision to live a life of sin and encouraging people to live contrary to God's Word is neither an act of love nor true friendship. Non-Christian churches and even churches that hold themselves out as Biblical Christian churches who teach or proclaim the acceptability of any "*marital relationship*" other than a marriage between a man and a woman are apostate churches subject to the very severe judgment and punishment of God for leading people into sin and exposing them to the consequences of their sin.

Matthew 18:15-22, 1st Corinthians 13:6, Ephesians 4:14-16, James 1:13-15, James 5:19-20

Church Ministry to Those Caught in Sin: The Valentine Berean Bible Church supports ministries to and prays for individuals living in any sexual sin, as defined by God, that they be delivered from their sin. Failing to repent from any sin and failing to accept Christ's redemptive payment of the price of our sin will determine the eternal destiny of all men and women, to either eternity in a literal heaven or a literal hell. A penalty must be paid for all sin. It can only be paid for each individual sinner's turning from sin and accepting Christ's love and forgiveness, so that they are washed, sanctified and cleansed by Jesus Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit and be freed from their sin.

John 3:16-21, 2nd Corinthians 10:5, 2nd Peter 3:9, 1st John 2:15-17

No Compromise of the Truth: The Valentine Berean Bible Church accepts God's Word as the ultimate truth over all laws, reasoning and thoughts of man. We will not compromise God's truth regardless of societies or the government's pressure to accept decisions and values that are not acceptable to God. We stand on the Biblical example of Peter and John who continued to obey God and to preach the truths of His Word even after the governing authorities commanded them to stop preaching the truths about Jesus Christ (**Acts 4:19-20**). So called "*anti-hate*" or discrimination laws that attempt to coerce and punish individuals, morally sin contrary to God's Word as an act of rebellion against God and subjects all who cooperate with the same to judgment of God by violating His revealed truth.

Rejection of Contrary Marriages: Based on the revealed truths and the perfect love of God behind them, The Valentine Berean Bible Church accepts the Biblical definition of marriage as a covenant relationship between one man and one woman in the presence and love and blessing of God and excluding all others. No other relationship is acceptable as a marriage in God's sight. According to **Malachi 2:14**, marriage is a holy covenant before God. Ketubah (*Hebrew*) was a marriage contract stating that it was the husband's responsibility to provide food, shelter, and clothing for his wife and to care for her emotional needs. It is a moral and legal commitment and is a picture of Christ and the Church. In **Genesis 2:18-24** God took a rib out of Adam and

created the woman, Eve. It was God's idea instituted by Him. We see in **Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:5, 1st Corinthians 6:9-10, & Romans 1:26-28** God's outspoken judgment against homosexuality, prostitution, adultery, and idolatry and that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. In **Genesis 19** Sodom and Gomorrah were punished for their flagrant homosexuality and in **Romans 1**, God's judgment involves giving people over to a depraved or reprobate mind. Homosexuality violates God's natural law and denies a child of a father and a mother, it turns moral wrong into civil rights and imposes sinful acts into the public arena.

Therefore, this church will not allow, recognize, participate in or support any other concept or definition of marriage. Any relationship between two men or two women in any claimed marriage, domestic partnership, domestic unit, or other relationship proclaimed equivalent to a marriage is contrary to God's Word and involves the government throwing off God's Word and subjecting society to judgment for sin.

Protocol for Staff and Properties

For these reasons, and given the place of honor and holiness that marriage is given in the Bible, The Valentine Berean Bible Church adopts the following policies:

Pastor: The Valentine Berean Bible Church shall employ no pastor or staff member or employee who does not verify that they personally affirm the truths set forth herein and agree to comply with the same. Any pastor or minister employed by The Valentine Berean Bible Church who performs or participates in a same sex wedding ceremony shall be promptly terminated consistent with these by-laws for immoral conduct celebrating a decision to live contrary to God's revealed truth.

Preventing Other Ministers From Conducting Ceremonies: No minister other than the one in direct ministerial employment relationship with The Valentine Berean Bible Church, in its sole discretion, believes that they personally agree with and accept the truths behind these marriage policies, shall be allowed to conduct or participate in wedding ceremonies on our premises.

Prohibiting Properties From Such Use: No marriage ceremony will be conducted at The Valentine Berean Bible Church unless it involves a Christian marriage between one man and one woman as set forth herein. No event will be allowed on church property that proclaims or endorses the acceptability of any alleged marital relationship contrary to the Biblical truths set forth herein.

Wedding Applicants: All persons desiring to be married at The Valentine Berean Bible Church by the pastor shall be required to complete pre-marital counseling with the pastor of The Valentine Berean Bible Church or a pastor of another church of like same faith and practice. No marriage or other ceremony shall be performed for any couple who are not qualified in accordance with our policies on marriage. The pastor conducting the pre-marital counseling has discretionary authority to recommend that in his judgment that the couple is not ready for marriage and should not be married at The Valentine Berean Bible Church. The pastor shall decide; in his discretion, but in conformity with these bylaws, whether or not the church will allow the marriage to be held at the church, and then will so advise the couple seeking to be married.

The Right to Deny Applicants: The Valentine Berean Bible Church reserves the right to refuse to allow the pastor to participate in a wedding or other ministry event at the church. The church

reserves the right to refuse to allow the use of church property or facilities to perform any wedding ceremony or other event that, in its sole discretion, is inconsistent with the church's statement of faith and contrary to Biblical standards for marriage and with its marriage policy.

Music and Alcohol Prohibited: Any music being played for a wedding or other event at The Valentine Berean Bible Church must be approved by the pastor or board prior to being played. Absolutely no alcohol or any controlled substances are allowed on the church property.

III. Affiliation

The Valentine Berean Bible Church of Valentine, Nebraska is a self-governing local church affiliated with the Berean Fellowship of Churches (BFC), sharing a common doctrinal statement, and subject to the rules and regulations stipulated in the BFC Constitution and Bylaws.

The Berean Fellowship of Churches is an interdependent, collaborative group of churches built upon a solid biblical foundation, placing special emphasis on the authority of Scripture, the supremacy of Jesus Christ, and the importance of advancing the Gospel through personal relationships, church planting, and world missions.

IV. Church Membership

The membership of this church shall consist of those who are born again in the Lord Jesus Christ, are seeking to be obedient to the teachings of Scripture, and are consistently functioning as a part of this body to fulfill its mission.

A. Qualifications

1. Confess faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord and demonstrate a regenerated life.
2. Submit to the Doctrinal Statement of this church.
3. Indicate commitment to following Jesus Christ through believer's baptism in water by immersion if possible or giving testimony to this experience. If not baptized, we ask that a prospective member be baptized at the next available opportunity.

B. Procedure for Becoming a Member

1. A person seeking church membership must read through and sign the Membership Covenant and we recommend that they read through the VBBC Constitution & Bylaws.
2. The candidate for membership shall then sign the membership covenant and be examined by the Elder Board to ensure that he or she meets the qualifications for membership.
3. Upon approval by the Elder Board the candidate shall be accepted for membership.

C. Members will comply with the following Membership Covenant: As a member of the Valentine Berean Bible Church I...

1. Will walk in brotherly love and will work and pray for the unity of the Holy Spirit in our church.
(John 13:34-35, 17:20-21; Romans 12:10; 1 John 4:20-21; Ephesians 4:1-3)
2. Will, by the power of the Holy Spirit, pursue holiness, and flee from the sinful desires of my flesh.
(Galatians 5:16-26; 2 Timothy 2:22; James 4:1-3, 4:7; 1 Peter 1:14-16)
3. Will pray for my church family and will refuse to participate in gossip.
(Galatians 6:2; Colossians 4:2; James 5:16; Proverbs 20:19)
4. Will regularly attend worship services and Annual Meetings and participate in communion services when I am able.
(Hebrews 10:24-25)
5. Will agree to pursue the godly path of reconciliation when I have differences with others. I also agree to be held accountable by the leadership and other members of the church, understanding the nature of restorative church discipline.
(Proverbs 27:17; Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1; 2 Timothy 2:22; James 5:16)
6. Will pray for and submit to the leadership of the church.
(Colossians 4:2-3; Hebrews 13:17)
7. Will commit myself to live and give generously, both financially and with my Spiritual gifts.
(2 Corinthians 9:6-7; Luke 6:38; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 1 Peter 4:10)
8. Will commit equally to following the five pillars of involvement at VBBC:
 - a) Weekly worship attendance
 - b) Tithing
 - c) Serving in the church
 - d) Small Group involvement
 - e) Prayer

D. Removal of Membership

1. If a member joins another church, his or her membership in this church automatically terminates. A letter certifying the member's baptism and membership standing will be sent upon request.
2. Members who develop irreconcilable differences with either the doctrinal position of this church or the policies and procedures described in these bylaws shall quietly resign their membership without attempting to cause any trouble.
3. Members may be removed from membership as the final result of church discipline according to the procedure described in Matthew 18 and in these constitution and bylaws. (See below VII. Church Discipline & Restoration)
4. Members who are absent from church events and activities for six months may be removed from membership after the Elder Board has attempted contact to discern the reasons for their absence and ascertain their spiritual health.

V. Church Leadership

A. Church Decision-making Authority

1. The Valentine Berean Bible Church is Elder-led, with the Elder Board having the final authority regarding the direction and operation of the church.
2. Church members vote on affirming a call to a Lead Pastor. (See V.D.2.e below)
3. The Doctrinal Statement (Section II above) does not exhaust the extent of our church's beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of the Valentine Berean Bible Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Elder Board is the final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application for our church family.

B. Elder Board

1. The Elder Board (hereinafter sometimes referred to as "The Board") shall be the Board of Directors for this corporation and will provide accountability for all organizations, committees, and ministries of the church.
2. The Board will consist of biblically qualified male Elders as defined below.
3. The Board will select qualified Elders to serve on the Board for a term of 6 years. At the end of the 6-year term each non-staff Elder will take a 1-year sabbatical, and at the end of the sabbatical will be eligible to re-join the Elder Board, at the discretion of the remaining board. There is no limit on the amount of terms an elder may serve. An elder may take an early 1-year sabbatical before completing his 6-year term and still be eligible to rejoin the board at the remaining board's discretion. When possible elder terms and sabbaticals will be staggered.
 - a. The Lead Pastor and any pastoral staff serving as elders will not participate in Elder terms & sabbaticals.
4. The Board will meet regularly to pray for and provide spiritual oversight for the church, including conducting the business affairs of the church. Meeting may be by phone, video, or in person.
5. When the number of Elder Board members becomes fewer than three (including the pastor) a Provisional Leadership Team will be formed according to Article II.H.4 of the Berean Fellowship of Churches' Constitution. This team, along with at least one representative from the local church, will serve as the Elder Board of this church until an autonomous local Elder Board can be reestablished.
6. A quorum shall exist when two-thirds of the members of the Elder Board are present.
7. Decisions will be by the majority vote of those present unless previously stipulated by the Elder Board. Each member has one vote.

8. The Elder Board will consist of four or six members plus the Lead Pastor.
9. Board members will seek to maintain the qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, Hebrews 13 and 1 Peter 5.
10. The four/six members will be elected by the Board so as the Board is self-perpetuating.
11. Any other pastoral staff i.e. Associate, Youth, Worship Pastor, etc., will not have a vote on the Board.
12. New Board members will be chosen from the membership of the church.
13. New members will be interviewed by the Board to determine their standing in terms of the qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3.
14. New members will be elected by a unanimous vote of the standing Board.
15. Board members except the lead pastor, will serve six year terms. These terms will rotate so as only one member will leave the Board in a calendar year.
16. If a Board member resigns, dies, or is removed by of the Board before the end of his term, a replacement will be elected to finish said term.
17. At the end of a Board member's term, he will step down on sabbatical, and remain off of the Board for at least one year, before being eligible to be re-elected.
18. The Board will every other year elect a Secretary.
19. The Secretary is responsible for maintaining a record of all church business and any official board or church meeting.
20. It is the responsibility of the Board to disciple and train up the men of the church to be able to fill the role of Elder. Failure to find qualified men within the church body is a direct reflection of the lack of teaching and discipling of men by the Board and will not be considered acceptable.
21. All Elders will agree to the following covenant and sign:

I, (name), ask God for His grace to help me shepherd the Valentine Berean Bible Church. I commit to God's assignment to shepherd and guard this flock as an overseer. I understand that this role is not simply advisory, but one of shepherding God's people, guarding sound doctrine and advancing God's mission in this community. I recognize that I will give an account to the living God for my leadership in this church, and so I ask for His help to grow in my love for Him, and grow in a committed love for my church and community. I commit to pray for my church family and leadership.

I commit to seek the Holy Spirit's help in setting an example in godliness, integrity, and repentance, relying on God's grace to live out the character qualities of 1 Timothy 3. I commit to maintain a soft heart before the living God by practicing the spiritual disciplines, intentionally keeping my eyes on Jesus the Chief Shepherd.

I commit to cooperate with the Berean Fellowship of Churches, using my influence to further the interdependent mission of the Berean Fellowship.

If at any time I am out of harmony with my fellow Elders or with the Berean Fellowship, I commit to seek reconciliation. If I fail to be reconciled, I will graciously resign immediately, causing no trouble which would damage this church.

D. Lead Pastor

1. Responsibilities

- a. The Lead Pastor shall provide spiritual leadership to the church in equipping God's people for the work of the ministry. (Eph 4:11-12).
- b. The Lead Pastor is an Elder of the church and shall be accountable to the Board for the performance of his duties. He serves on the Elder Board as an Elder. He will not be subject to term limits.
- c. He shall have the right to be an ex officio member of all committees and other organized groups within the church.
- d. He shall participate in the BFC Regional Fellowship and the annual BFC General Council meetings.
- e. It is recommended that pastoral staff take a paid church ministry sabbatical every 7 years.
 - 1) He will keep his salary and receive a stipend to cover expense associated with such things as a pastoral retreat, pastoral counselling, etc.
 - 2) Minimum of eight weeks
 - 3) Must create a written plan and submit to the Elder Board 6-8 weeks prior to the scheduled sabbatical.

2. Calling a Lead Pastor

- a. The Elder Board shall appoint a Pastoral Discovery Team consisting of four to seven church members, at least one of whom is an Elder.
- b. All discussions of the Pastoral Discovery Team shall be confidential, as to the names and evaluations of each potential candidate, although they will keep the congregation well informed of their process.

- c. The process shall be five levels. At each level a vote will be taken to process to the next level.
 - 1) Team reviews résumés and check references and votes to move to next level (majority vote).
 - 2) Team will review online or submitted sermons and votes to move to next level (majority vote).
 - 3) Elder Board will review the résumés and online or submitted sermons and votes to move to next level (unanimous vote).
 - 4) Elder Board will schedule a in person or online interview with the candidate, conduct a background check, and votes to move to next level (unanimous vote).
 - 5) Candidate will be invited to visit VBBC and preach one weekend, after which the Elder Board will vote by unanimous decision as to whether to extend a call to minister at VBBC.
 - d. Upon a unanimous affirmative vote of the Elder Board, the candidate shall be presented to the congregation for a vote of affirmation.
 - e. Upon an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the church members present at a specially called meeting, a call shall be extended to the candidate.
3. A pastor shall serve as long as mutually agreeable between him and the church, provided that he continues to affirm the Pastor's Covenant.
4. Pastor's Covenant: Throughout his tenure with this church, a pastor will maintain the character and commitments of the following Covenant and sign:
- I, (name), commit to prayer and ask God for His grace to help me shepherd the Valentine Berean Bible Church. I commit to God's assignment to lead this flock through shepherding, teaching, evangelizing, and equipping believers for the work of ministry. I recognize that I will give an account to the living God for my time at this church, and so I ask for His help to grow in my love for Him and grow in a committed love for my church and community.
- I commit to seek the Holy Spirit's help in setting an example in godliness, integrity, and repentance, relying on God's grace to live out the character qualities of 1 Timothy 3.
- I commit to maintain a soft heart before the living God by practicing the spiritual disciplines, intentionally keeping my eyes on Jesus the Chief Shepherd.
- I commit to cooperate with the Berean Fellowship of churches, using my influence to further the interdependent mission of the Berean Fellowship.
- I commit to being sensitive to God's leading regarding the completion of my current ministry assignment, and will graciously resign when I sense God's leading. If at any time I am unable to submit to the authority of this church's Elders or the Berean Fellowship, I ask these Elders to call it to my attention. If I fail to be reconciled I will resign immediately and will quickly and quietly leave the field, causing no trouble

which would damage this church.

5. Any pastor not previously ordained shall be licensed or ordained for ministry. Ordination is for a man who has served at least one year as a licensed minister of the gospel and aligns with the Doctrinal Statement. If the pastor was previously ordained, his ordination may be formally recognized and endorsed by the church and reported to the BFC.

Ordination procedure:

- a. The VBBC Elder Board will assemble an ordination council to examine the candidate's character, doctrine and gifting for ministry. It is recommended that this council include representatives from at least two other BFC churches.
 - b. The examination will be conducted at the discretion of the ordination council. An examination will result in one of three outcomes; 1) Not Qualified, 2) Qualified with stipulations, or 3) Qualified. Upon completion of the examination, a unanimous recommendation of the council will result in ordination for the candidate. This ordination will be granted and held by VBBC and recognized by the Berean Fellowship.
6. An Interim Pastor has the same duties and covenant as a Lead Pastor and must be chosen by vote of the Elder Board.

E. Deacons

1. Deacons will be identified and appointed by the Elder Board to serve according to policies determined by the Elder Board.

F. Additional Ministry Staff

1. The Lead Pastor, in conjunction with the Elder Board, may hire/appoint pastoral and non-pastoral staff, whether full-time, part-time or volunteer. These staff members shall report to the Lead Pastor, with final oversight belonging to the Elder Board.
2. Pastoral staff members must meet the qualifications of an Elder and affirm the Pastor's Covenant.
3. All ministry staff and leaders shall abide by these bylaws, and will quietly resign if he/she is unwilling to submit to the authority of the Lead Pastor or Elder Board.

VI. Church Meetings

A. Annual Business Meetings

1. An annual church business meeting will be held for the purpose of presenting information considered necessary by the Elder Board, casting vision for ministry in the

coming year, and other necessary items of business.

2. Notice of the date of the annual business meeting shall be publicized at least three Sundays prior to the meeting by public announcement from the pulpit or in written form, either physical or digital.

B. Special Meetings

1. The Elder Board or 25% of the membership may call a special meeting of the church.
2. Notice of the date of the meeting, including its purpose, shall be publicized at least two Sundays prior to the meeting from the pulpit or in written form, either physical or digital.

VII. Church Discipline & Restoration.

God commands all Christians to be held accountable to their church leadership and church family. (Galatians 6:1; Heb. 3:12-13; 10:23-25; 13:17 1 Peter 5:5) This accountability will sometimes require a gentle and prayerful confrontation of sin. The Bible outlines a process of confronting a sinning church attender, a process here called "church discipline & restoration." The goal of church discipline is restoration of a consistently sinning believer to Christ and the church body.

A. Guidelines for Church Discipline & Restoration:

1. Biblically, each believer is responsible before God to examine his or her own obedience to Christ. (1 Cor. 11:31)
2. In disciplinary actions it is imperative that all parties be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and follow scriptural guidelines.
3. Church discipline is for specific sins, not for differences of opinion. (1 Cor. 5:1, 11-13; 1 Tim 5:19-21)

B. Process for Church Discipline & Restoration of Church Members (Matt. 18:15-20)

1. The person who is aware of the offense is to be the first to prayerfully and privately confront the sinning member.
2. If the sinning member refuses to repent, the first person is to take one or two witnesses for a second attempt to confirm and clarify the facts.
3. If the matter remains unresolved, it is to be brought to the Elder Board.
4. At their discretion, the Board can remove the member from their ministry role.

5. If the sinning member still refuses to repent, the Elder Board may bring the matter to the attention of the members of the church.
6. When the sinning member repents, he or she should be forgiven, restored to fellowship, and lovingly affirmed by those involved.
7. Restoration to ministry responsibilities shall be at the discretion of the Elder Board.
8. In the event that the sinning person continually refuses to repent, he/she may be removed from membership at the discretion of the Elder Board.

C. Discipline & Restoration for Non-members

1. Non-members, are those, other than members, who by attendance or participation identify themselves with the ministries of the Valentine Berean Bible Church.
2. They may be disciplined for specific violations of Scriptural conduct that are considered by the Elder Board to be disruptive to the harmonious and effective function of the church. (Matthew 18:15-20)
3. The same steps will be taken as in the preceding policy for members.

VIII. Church Property

- A. Titles: This locally incorporated church shall hold titles to all church property, real or personal.
- B. Use: Property held by this locally incorporated church shall be for the use of church ministry consistent with the doctrine, practice, and ministry contained within these bylaws.
- C. Division: In the case of an organizational division of the church, the group of members that abides by the BFC National Constitution and these bylaws shall retain all church property. Should controversy arise as to which group that is, the question shall be submitted to the BFC Board of Directors or its successor, and their decision shall be final. Upon determination by the BFC Board of Directors, all titles for church property shall be conveyed to the group of members retaining ownership.
- D. Dissolution: If at any time there are insufficient members to continue a viable church work and a decision is made to close the church, the ownership and title of all church property, real and personal, shall be transferred to the Berean Fellowship of Churches.
- E. Disaffiliation: This church may vote to disaffiliate from the BFC, as provided in Article V, D of the BFC bylaws.

IX. Rules of Order

- A. General Powers: This organization shall receive gifts, bequests and legacies; acquire, buy, hold, improve, rent, lease, mortgage, sell and convey, and otherwise deal in real

and personal property as may be necessary to conduct the business of this church and fulfill its stated mission. Appeals for funds may be made as deemed advisable by the Board.

- B. Fiscal Year: The fiscal year of this church shall be January 1 through December 31.
- C. Quorum: A quorum for any meeting of the membership shall be 50% and not less than 10 people of the active membership. A quorum for a duly called meeting of any board or committee shall consist of two-thirds of its membership.
- D. Decisions will be by the majority vote of those present, unless alternately defined in these bylaws or previously stipulated. Each member has one vote.
- E. Parliamentary Guide: In order that "...all things be done decently and in order," Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (of the most recent edition) shall be followed in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws of this church.
- F. "Ex officio" members, meaning "by virtue of office," shall have the right to vote and function in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.
- G. Policies: Each board, committee and auxiliary organization of this church may formulate and maintain its own policies and procedures, which shall be approved by the Board and be in harmony with these bylaws. A current copy of these policies and procedures shall be kept on file at the church office.

X. Limitation of Liability

- A. No member of the Elder Board of the Valentine Berean Bible Church shall be personally liable for the debts, liabilities, or other obligations of the Valentine Berean Bible Church.
- B. To the extent that a person who is, or was, an officer, employee or other agent of this organization has been successful on the merits in defense of any civil, criminal, administrative or investigative proceeding brought to procure a judgment against such person by reason of the fact that he or she is, or was, an agent of the Valentine Berean Bible Church, or has been successful in defense of any claim, issue or matter, therein, such person shall be indemnified against expenses actually and reasonably incurred by the person in connection with such proceeding.
- C. If such person settles any such claim or sustains a judgment against him or her, then indemnification against expenses, judgments, fines, settlements and other amounts reasonably incurred in connection with such proceedings shall be provided by this organization but only to the extent allowed by, and in accordance with state law.
- D. The Elder Board of the Valentine Berean Bible Church may adopt a policy authorizing the purchase and maintenance of insurance on behalf of any agent of the organization against any liability other than for violating provisions of law relating to self-dealing asserted against or incurred by the agent in such capacity or arising out of the agent's status as such, whether or not Valentine Berean Bible Church would have the power to indemnify the agent against such liability under the provisions of state law.

XI. Interpretation and Amendments

- A. Should the Elder Board desire to amend these bylaws, the Board will provide the church membership written notice of the proposed amendment, either physically or electronically, and give the church membership at least 30 days to comment on the proposed amendment. After the time period set aside for congregational comment, these bylaws may be amended upon an unanimous affirmative vote of the Elder Board at a meeting in which the entire Elder board is present.
- B. Upon adoption of an amendment to this constitution and bylaws, a current copy will be provided to the Board of Directors of the BFC.
- C. Matters of clarification and interpretation of this constitution and bylaws will be referred to the Valentine Berean Bible Church Elder Board.
- D. These bylaws of the Valentine Berean Bible Church supersede and replace all prior constitutions and bylaws.

XII. THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY that the above bylaws have been approved by the Elder Board of this church, at a duly called meeting of the Elder Board of the Valentine Berean Bible Church, on this _____ day of _____, 20____, and are adopted for the Church.

Lead Pastor

Elder Board Secretary