

CONSTITUTION
Salem Baptist Church
Crozier, Virginia

PREAMBLE

We, the followers of Jesus Christ who make up the part of God's family and Christ's body known as Salem Baptist Church, adopt this Constitution which reflects the heart, spirit, and intent of our body; establishes the beliefs, structure, functions, and purposes we embrace; and sets forth the guidelines and parameters by which we will seek to accomplish our stated mission and purpose.

ARTICLE I: NAME

This congregation shall be known as Salem Baptist Church of Crozier, Virginia, a Virginia church corporation located at 1701 Cardwell Road, Crozier, VA 23039.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND MISSION

The purpose of the people of this church, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, is to glorify God; to win the lost to Jesus Christ; to disciple them in faith, to be involved in corporate prayer and worship, in order that they may follow the Lordship of Jesus Christ and become witnesses for Him; to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of its people in Biblical knowledge, holiness, and wisdom; to promote its spiritual prosperity through worship, prayer, ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spreading of the gospel through all nations. Our mission is to seek and serve Christ.

ARTICLE III: DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Salem Baptist Church affirms its adherence to the fundamental doctrines of the evangelical Christian faith, and its uncompromising belief in the Old and New Testaments as the divinely inspired Word of God, as it has since its founding in 1880.

Having been led by the Lord to maintain a testimony for Jesus Christ, we the members of Salem Baptist Church do establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

A. The Bible

The Bible is made up of sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the verbally inspired Word of God, inerrant in the original writings and being infallible is the supreme and final authority in faith and life. (*2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Corinthians 2:13*)

B. The Triune God

There is one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfection. (*Genesis 1:1, 26; Matthew 28:19-20; John 10:30; Romans 1:7; Hebrews 1:8; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14*)

1. God the Father

God as Father reigns with provisional care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all

knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God

through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men. (*Genesis 1:1; 2:7.*

Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff; 20:1ff; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles

29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:3; Matthew 6:9ff; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15;

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Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews

11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7)

2. God the Son

a. Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having

been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might

reveal God and redeem sinful man. (*Matthew 3:16-17; John 17:5; Philippians 2:5-6;*

Matthew 1:18-23; Galatians 4:4)

b. Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice atoning for our sin by His shed blood and that our justification is fully attested by His literal, physical resurrection

from the dead and now lives, seated at the right hand of God. (*Romans 5:8; Galatians*

1:4; Ephesians 5:2; Revelation 1:5; Romans 5:1, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8; 2

Corinthians 5:21; Luke 24:36-38; Hebrews 1:1-3)

c. The Lord Jesus will return and His return will be in two phases:

(1). His return in the air for His Saints is imminent, personal and pre-millennial.

(*Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Revelation 20:1-6)*

(2). His return to the earth with His Saints in a physical, personal, visible and glorious manner, at which time He will sit on David's throne in the Millennial Kingdom and reign in righteousness and justice over all

nations.

(*Luke 1:32, Zechariah 14:4-11; Isaiah 9:6-7, Revelation 19:11-16)*

3. God the Holy Spirit

a. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment; and He is

the supernatural agent in regeneration. We further believe there is one baptism with the Spirit and it is unto the Body of Christ, indwelling and sealing each believer unto the day of redemption. We believe God gives spiritual gifts to all believers for the building up of the body of Christ. (*John 16:8-11, 3:3-6, 1:31-34; Acts 4:31; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13-14, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11*)

b. He is the Divine Teacher who guides believers into all truth and it is the privilege and responsibility of all believers to yield in order to be filled with the Holy Spirit. (*John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:9-12; Acts 13:52; Ephesians 5:18*)

C. Man

Man was created in the image and likeness of God, but in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God and is totally depraved and of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (*Genesis 1:26-27; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 3:23, 5:12-19; Isaiah 59:2; Ephesians 2:2-5*)

D. Salvation

Salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by repentance and personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that all who receive Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God and thereby become the children of God. All the redeemed are kept by God's power. God's Word clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to give license to the flesh. (*Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:13; John 3:3-6, 5:24, 10:27-29; Galatians 5:15; 1 Peter 1:18-23; Romans 6:11-13, 14; 1 Corinthians 8:9-13; Matthew 3:1-2; Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19-20; 2 Peter 3:9*)

E. Ordinances

1. All believers should be baptized by immersion in water (unto) in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This act shows forth in a solemn and beautiful symbol our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior. It is testimony of our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. (*Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:4-5; Mark 1:9-11; Matthew 28:19*)
2. The believer is to avail himself of the opportunity of remembering the Lord at the communion table, which by sacred use of the bread and wine commemorates the wounded body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ in our behalf. (*Acts 2:41-42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 19:34-36; Matthew 26:26-29*)

F. Conduct

All believers should live in such a manner as to bring glory to God in living holy lives being

used of God as trophies of His grace and not to bring reproach upon our Savior and Lord and separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful practices and associations is commanded by God. (*Romans 6:11-13; Ephesians 4:1, 22-24, 5:8-11; Galatians 5:16; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 1 John 2:15-17*)

G. Missions

The Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ to take the Gospel to every person throughout the world is still incumbent upon every believer. (*Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:13-15*)

H. Satan

Satan was once holy and enjoyed heavenly honors, but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, he fell and drew after him a host of angels; he is now the malignant prince of the power of the air and the unholy god of this world system. We hold him to be man's great tempter, the enemy of God and Christ, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, and the chief power of all apostasy. He is the lord of the Antichrist and the author of all the powers of darkness, destined, however, to final judgment in hell: a place prepared for the devil and his angels. (*Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17; Jude 6; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; 1 Peter 5:8; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-11; Genesis 3:1-13; Job 1:8-11; Revelation 12:10, 20:1-3,10*)

I. Eternity

When a believer dies his soul and spirit go immediately to be with Jesus and there remain in conscious joy until the resurrection of the body at Jesus' coming, whereupon soul, spirit and body will be reunited to enjoy the glories of Heaven forever. The soul and spirit of those who have rejected Jesus Christ as Savior remain after death in a conscious misery in Hades until the final judgment of the Great White Throne, when soul, spirit and body will be reunited and cast into the lake of fire, banished from the presence of the Lord forever. (*John 3:16, 18-36; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Luke 16:19-26; John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:11-15*)

J. Agreement

Salem Baptist Church agrees with the doctrinal statements in The Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000, but considers the Bible as the ultimate document of faith and practice.

ARTICLE IV: RELATIONSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

Jesus Christ is the head of our church. We have made a commitment of our lives to follow Him and to be Christ-like in our relationships with others. We are committed to healthy, loving relationships in the body. When conflicts or differences occur, we will seek reconciliation through biblical principles and conduct, and a Christ-like spirit.

We are autonomous, but not independent. We value the biblical principle of cooperation with other Christians, churches, para-church organizations, associations, and conventions, as long as it advances and strengthens the Kingdom of God and does not compromise our integrity, values, or purpose. This church body affiliates and cooperates with the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia and the Southern Baptist Convention.

ARTICLE V: CHURCH COVENANT

God has called His people to covenant first with Himself and then with one another. This calls for a commitment to hold each other accountable within an atmosphere of love. As members of the body of Christ at Salem Baptist Church:

Having been led by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, 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, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We encourage family and personal devotions, to educate our children in the Christian faith, to seek salvation of our family and friends, to walk circumspectly in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our responsibilities, exemplary in our conduct, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We agree to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember one another in prayer, to aid one another in sickness and distress, to practice Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech, to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the teaching of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We covenant to support the mission and ministries of Salem Baptist Church through faithful participation, regular attendance for corporate prayer, worship and fellowship, generous giving of tithes and offerings, the use of spiritual gifts and talents, and words of love and encouragement to one another.

We further agree to support the leadership God has placed in our pastors, teachers, and deacons by praying for them to hear from God as they give direction to the church and following them as they lead us to glorify God.

We moreover engage when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

We have read the Articles, Constitution, and By-Laws, including those policies dealing with church discipline, conflict resolution and members' rights and responsibilities, and holy covenant and agree to be bound by the Articles, Constitution, and By-Laws, and accompanying policies and procedures.

ARTICLE VI: FAMILY

Marriage unites one man and one woman in a lifetime commitment to each other (*Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19:4-6*). Marriage provides for intimate companionship, pure sexual expression (*Genesis 2:25; Ephesians 5:31-33*), procreation, and reflects the relationship of Christ and the

church (*Genesis 1:28; Proverbs 5:15-19; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5*). A husband is commanded to love his wife as Christ loved the church. A wife is commanded to submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ (*Ephesians 5:22-33*). Parents are instructed to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (*Ephesians 6:4*).

The believer is expected to comply with the biblical admonition to refrain from homosexual practices, relationships and one-sex or domestic partnerships, and to seek appropriate counseling to refrain from and terminate such practices in order to receive or remain a member of this congregation. (*Genesis 2:20b-24; Matthew 19:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 6*)

ARTICLE VII: ORDINATION

A. Ordination to the Gospel Ministry

After the Church has received a proper request for ordination of a candidate, the Church shall authorize the appointment of an advisory council to examine the candidate in order to advise the Church regarding the candidate's fitness for ordination. The ordination council shall consist of ordained members of the congregation and other ordained men the Church may wish to invite. The council may recommend to the Church:

1. Ordination of the candidate,
2. Deferment of the ordination for a stated period, or
3. Rejection of the candidate.

If, after the church has received in writing the recommendations of the advisory council, the Church approves the candidate for ordination, the ordination services shall be scheduled and the candidate shall be ordained. The ordination of a person to the gospel ministry may be revoked by the Church in a meeting called for that purpose in the case of essential moral or biblical failure.

B. Ordination of Other Ministers

The Church shall have the right, if it is so disposed, to ordain those called to and serving in ministries other than the gospel ministry such as ministries of education, etc. The ordination of a person to any ministry may be revoked by the Church in a meeting called for that purpose in the case of essential moral or biblical failure.

C. Ordination of Deacons

A deacon who has not been previously ordained to the diaconate by a Salem Baptist Church shall be ordained by the Church at such a time as he is elected to serve that office. The ordination of a deacon may be revoked by the Church in a meeting called for that purpose in the case of essential moral or biblical failure.

ARTICLE VIII: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

This Constitution shall be the expression of our understanding of God's will for the organization and governance of our church. It may be amended at any regular quarterly business meeting by three-fourths (3/4) of the voters present provided the change is presented in its entirety at the previous quarterly business meeting.

Adopted - April 9, 1962

Amended -January 11, 1965; April 12, 1965; November 11, 1967; April 12, 1971; June 24, 1972; January 8, 1977; October 11, 1978; October 9, 1985; September 5, 1990; October 11, 1993; October 9, 1996; January 23, 2008; July 13, 2011; **July xx, 2012.**