



Delaware Bible Church

Constitution

Delaware Bible Church

45 Belle Avenue
Delaware, Ohio 43015

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Purpose of this Constitution

This constitution is written for the following three purposes:

1. To be an extensive written source of information that enables the congregation of Delaware Bible Church (hereafter DBC) to understand the structure and the purpose of this church.
2. To serve as a legal document outlining the structure of DBC in accordance with the requirements of incorporation.
3. To establish the governing principles and parameters by which decisions will be made and actions will be determined.

DBC Mission, Core Values and Vision

Mission of DBC

The mission of Delaware Bible Church is to

Glorify our Creator, Jesus Christ, by living for Him.

We commit to this mission within the context of uncompromising conviction that the local church is both commissioned and totally enabled to accomplish that which God has directed us to do. "...Created by Him and for Him" Colossians 1:16

Core Values of DBC

We are committed to live for God by loving Him, loving one another, and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the glory of God through:

- Facilitating public worship of the Lord God Almighty. (Hebrews 10:25)
- Promoting discipleship and spiritual growth. (Hebrews 10:24; 2 Timothy 4:2-3)
- Equipping the saints to serve one another and to demonstrate love for the lost. (Matthew 5:43-48; Ephesians 4:12)
- Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19-20)
- Reaching out to meet the needs of our local community. (James 2:16)

Vision for DBC

Our vision for Delaware Bible Church is to be a fellowship where every believer:

- Welcomes and loves all those who enter
- Demonstrates dedication to loving one another
- Strives to continually grow more like Christ
- Ministers to the needs of others
- Reaches out corporately to support and meet the needs of the community

Delaware Bible Church Doctrinal Statement

I. The Holy Scriptures

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible, and God-breathed. We believe that God speaks to people primarily through His Word, and we reject language that implies that God has directly spoken to individuals in any way that conflicts with His Word.

Matthew 5:18; John 16:12-13; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Peter 1:21

II. The Godhead

We believe in one triune God, eternally existing in three Persons -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- co-equal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections.

Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14

III. The Person and Work of Christ

A. We believe that the Lord 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.

Luke 1:35; John 1:1-2, 14

B. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead.

Romans 3:24-25; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 2:24

C. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministries of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate.

Acts 1:9-10; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25, 9:24; 1 John 2:1-2

IV. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ, and indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption.

John 16:8-11; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 1:13-14

V. The Total Depravity of Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and, that man is totally depraved, and of himself utterly unable to redeem his lost condition.

Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 3:22-23, 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12

VI. Salvation

We believe that salvation is the gift of God, brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins.

John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7, 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19

Doctrinal Statement (continued)

VII. Creation

We believe that God is the Creator of all things. As the Creator of all things, we believe that God created the universe in six twenty-four hour days and that before He created, nothing except God existed. We believe that within the context of these six twenty-four-hour days, God created man on the sixth day and we reject, as untrue, the theory of the evolution as it pertains to the origin of man or that life itself evolved from nonliving substances. In respect to man, we believe that all people are descendants of Adam and Eve, whom God created personally and individually and as complete human beings. We believe that God created mankind in His image, forming all people from conception in the womb and making them His image-bearers throughout life and until the point of natural death when they breathe their last breath; and assigning gender to His people, male (man) and female (woman), as He created them sexually (identified on a physical level) and biologically (identified at a chromosomal level) different, but with equal personal dignity and value.

Genesis 1; 2:7; 2:21&22; 25:8; Exodus 20:8-11; 31:16&17; Nehemiah 9:6; Job 14:5-6; Psalm 33:6-9; 139:13-16; 146:5&6; Isaiah 44:2; Jeremiah 1:4-5; Luke 23:46; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11; 10:6

VIII. The Eternal State

A. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment.

Matthew 25:46; John 5:28-29, 11:25-26; Revelation 20:5-6, 12-13

B. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord.

Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23, 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:4-6

C. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment.

Matthew 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Revelation 20:11-15

IX. The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers

A. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever.

John 6:37-40, 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; 1 Peter 1:5

B. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh.

Romans 13:13-14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15; Hebrews 12:1-11

Doctrinal Statement (continued)

X. The Two Natures of the Believer

We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provisions made for victory of the new nature over the old nature by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. We believe that all claims to the eradication of the old nature are unscriptural.

Romans 6:13, 8:12-13; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 John 3:5-

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XI. Separation

We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations is commanded by God.

Romans 12:1-2, 16:17; 2 Corinthians 6:14, 7:1; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11

XII. Missions

We believe that it is the obligation of the saved to witness by life and word to the truths of the Holy Scriptures and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind.

Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:19-20

XIII. The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts

A. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts; and that the gifts of evangelists, Pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today; and that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-11; Hebrews 1:1-2

B. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will, for the sick and the afflicted.

John 15:7; James 5:15; 1 John 5:14

XIV. The Church

A. We believe that the Church, which is the Body and the espoused Bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of this present age.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:25-27

B. We believe that the establishment and continuance of the local church is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures.

Acts 14:27, 20:17; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11

Doctrinal Statement (continued)

XV. Dispensationalism

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or regulations for living that define man's responsibilities in successive ages. This view is commonly referred to as 'Dispensationalism'. Because we interpret Scripture in this way, we believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that after the completion of the church, she will be regathered in the Holy Land and will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ. We believe the church and Israel to be separate and distinct. We believe the way of salvation for the church to be the same as that for Israel, through Jesus Christ alone.

Genesis 13:14-17; Ezekiel 37; John 1:14; Romans 11:1-32; Galatians 3:13-25; Ephesians 1:10; Ephesians 3:2-10; Colossians 1:24-25; Hebrews 7:19; Revelation 20:2-6

XVI. The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan is a personal being, a fallen angel, the god of this age, the great enticer and deceiver, the adversary of Christ and His people, and accuser of the brethren, whose end shall be eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire.

Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Matthew 25:41; 2 Corinthians 4: 3-4; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9-10, 20:10

XVII. The Second Advent of Christ

We believe in the "blessed hope," the personal, imminent, pre-tribulational, and premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to the Earth, with His saints, to establish His millennial kingdom.

Zechariah 14:4-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:10, 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-9; Revelation 3:10, 19:11-16, 20:1-6

XVIII. Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage

We believe that sexual union was established exclusively within the context of a male-female relationship and that sexual union is to be entered into only within the context of marriage between a male and female. Homosexual activity is condemned in the Scriptures. It is described as degrading and as an indecent act. Scripture further teaches that one who persists in this practice will suffer grave consequences. 1 Corinthians 6:9&10 also teach that one can turn away from this practice; therefore, we reject, as non-biblical, the teaching that homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle and that it is the result of one's genetic makeup.

Genesis 2:18-24; Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:22; 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22; Romans 1:26&27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Membership and Leadership

Membership

Membership at Delaware Bible Church is an opportunity for each individual who is in Christ Jesus to make a mutual commitment to one another founded in shared beliefs, values, and vision for the furthering of God's purposes for His church.

Membership does not merit God's salvation or necessarily His blessing; however, the commitment to one another and to the purposes of His church is God's desire for all those who have trusted in Christ Jesus.

The covenant of membership is found on the following page. This covenant is not intended to be merely acknowledged. It should be established in each of our hearts and minds for purposeful participation and commitment to the church and to one another. The intent of a covenant commitment is not to be a one-time event, but a continual, conscious, chosen commitment of one's life. This embodies the essence of our relationship with Jesus Christ and His desire for His church.

An element of membership is understanding and agreeing with DBC's doctrine, as taught in God's Word. The process of learning and growing in Christ is a core desire of God for each of our lives, and therefore a core purpose of DBC. Because each individual is at a different place in that process, we recognize that not every doctrinal position is always clearly understood by each individual. Those desiring membership will be interviewed to discern understanding and agreement with the issues of the Membership Covenant.

Delaware Bible Church Membership Covenant

Members of DBC enter into a covenant with one another in the presence of God based on the following points:

1. Trusting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (*Romans 10:9*).
2. Being baptized by water immersion (*Matthew 28:19*).
3. Honoring the Lord Jesus Christ by consistently striving to live as He did (*John 14:15, 21; Ephesians 5:1-2*).
4. Regularly attending the public worship of DBC, including the celebrations of the Lord's Supper (*Hebrews 10:25*).
5. Faithfully and cheerfully contributing not only to the ministry of DBC, but also to the physical and spiritual needs of others, including worldwide missions (*1 Corinthians 9:9-14, 16:2; Philippians 4:15-18*).
6. Constantly striving to put others before ourselves in our attitudes, speech, and actions (*1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Philippians 2:1-4*).
7. Fostering and maintaining the unity of believers in this local fellowship by not promoting any doctrine in opposition to that found in the entire doctrinal statement of this church
8. Demonstrating brotherly love by praying and caring for one another (*John 13:34-35; Galatians 6:2*).
9. Faithfully seeking the forgiveness of and reconciliation with those against whom we have sinned, making amends whenever and however necessary (*Luke 17:1-4; Ephesians 4:32; Philemon 18*).
10. Recognizing the authority of DBC in areas of church discipline (*Matthew 18:15-20; Hebrews 13:7, 17*).

Delaware Bible Church covenants with the members of the congregation to...

1. Facilitate public **worship** of the Lord God Almighty (*Hebrews 10:25*).
2. Promote **discipleship** by teaching Scriptural truth (*2 Timothy 4:2-3*).
3. Equip the saints to **serve** one another and to demonstrate love for the lost (*Matthew 5:43-48; Ephesians 4:12*).
4. **Evangelize** the local community and the world with the good news of Jesus Christ (*Matthew 28:19-20*).
5. **Encourage** fellowship by observing the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and baptism (*1 Corinthians 11:23-26*).
6. Serve as an authority of civil differences between believers and in areas of church discipline for the purposes of maintaining purity, deterring sin, and encouraging an offending believer to return to a biblical standard of conduct (*1 Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 6:1; 1 Timothy 5:20*).

Please check the following (please check 2 out of 3):

- I agree with the above membership covenant of Delaware Bible Church
 - I agree to the doctrinal statement in its entirety.
 - I agree with the doctrinal statement except for article(s) _____
-

Signed Member

Signed Pastor

Printed Name, Member

Printed Name, Pastor

Date

Date

Leadership

Leadership within the church consists of those who shepherd, lead, teach, disciple, or serve by directing ministry efforts. The organizational structure of the leadership of DBC is discussed beginning on page 9.

It is important to the unity of the church for those in leadership to have a common understanding and full agreement with the complete doctrinal statement. The purpose of this is to further strengthen the unity of DBC through consistent leadership, teaching, and discipleship.

CHURCH ORGANIZATION

Purpose

DBC desires to fulfill God's purposes through the mission and vision that has been presented earlier in this document. In order for this to be accomplished, DBC recognizes that the establishment of a biblically directed and effective organizational structure is essential.

God, in His grace and wisdom, has given us a blueprint for church leadership in His Word. While this blueprint is clear, His Word remains silent in many aspects of how the church is to establish organizational structure. One possibility for this silence is that God's Word has and will continue to grant each of His ministries the flexibility to organize and adapt to the needs and mission for which it is targeted.

Where it has been possible and applicable, DBC has sought to establish what can be learned from the structure of the early church from God's Word to the organizational structure presented in the following pages.

Leadership

The Bible specifically establishes two leadership positions for the church: the position of Elder and the position of Deacon. The position of Pastor within DBC is a title given to an Elder who is paid by the ministry but whose responsibility and position is the same as those of an Elder.

I. Pastors and Elders

- A. *Qualifications:* The qualifications of a Pastor or Elder are stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
- B. *Roles and Responsibilities:* While each Pastor and Elder is required to meet the Biblical qualifications noted above, each Pastor and Elder will have different roles and responsibilities as defined by the Elder council. Further information regarding the Elder council can be found in the following section, entitled *Oversight*.
- C. *Selection of Pastors:* The Elder council will determine the process of selecting Pastors. Approval of a senior Pastor will require a 90% vote of the members of DBC while approval of all other Pastors will require a 70% vote of the members of DBC.
- D. *Ordination:* Ordination is a formal process of equipping and qualifying a man for full-time Christian ministry. If a man desires to enter into vocational Christian ministry and has been a member of DBC for two years or more, he should seek the counsel of the Elder council regarding the qualifications for and process of ordination. The Elder council will oversee the process of ordination and grant ordination to a man who meets the qualifications and requirements of a Pastor. Once he has been ordained, he is entitled to carry the title of Pastor.
- E. *Selection of Elders:* The Elder council will select Elders to fulfill the purposes of DBC and its related ministries.
- F. *Removal of Pastors and Elders:* Any Elder subject to removal proceedings shall be given the opportunity to appear before the Elder council in his own defense. After a full hearing has been granted, the Elder council shall vote either in favor of or against the removal of the Elder. No Elder may be removed from office except by a vote of seventy-five (75%) percent of the Elder council.

II. Deacons

- A. *Qualifications:* The qualifications of a Deacon are stated in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
- B. *Roles and Responsibilities:* While each Deacon is required to meet the biblical qualifications noted above, each Deacon will have different roles and responsibilities as determined by the Pastor overseeing the Deacon board, of which each Deacon will be a member. Further information regarding the Deacon board can be found in the following section, entitled *Oversight*.

Oversight

The oversight of DBC is under the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church (Colossians 1:18), and is in submission to Him. The organizational structure for this local body is shown in Figure 1.

I. The Elder Council

- A. *Purpose:* The Elder council is the executive body of DBC and will serve to lead the church and its related ministries in fulfilling the purposes that God has given.
- B. *Structure:* The Elder council will consist of Pastors and Elders. It will have the flexibility to structure itself, the administration, and ministries of DBC in the manner that most effectively carries out its mission and purposes.
- C. *Responsibilities:* The Elder council will be responsible to provide for appropriate accountability at all times in all decisions made and actions taken. This accountability, ultimately to the Lord Jesus Christ, may range within DBC from mutual accountability within the Elder Board to asking Deacons or others to assist in providing accountability.
- D. *Legal and Corporate Authority:* The Elder council will be recognized as the Board of Directors of the church corporation. It will have the authority to sign all official documents connected with legal transactions, financial transactions, and any documents required by the Local, State, or Federal Governments. The Elder council shall have control of all property belonging to the Church.

II. The Deacon Board

- A. *Purpose:* The purpose of the Deacon board is to serve and assist the Elder council in fulfilling the purposes of DBC.
- B. *Structure:* The Elder council will determine the structure, administration, and organization of the Deacon board. A Pastor or Elder will provide oversight to the Deacon board as Deacon Chair.

III. Voting

- A. *Concerning Voting:* Voting will take place at congregational meetings or by ballot delivered either through the mail or in person to every active member of the congregation in good standing. There is no minimum age for membership; however, the voting age is 18 years old.
- B. *Issues Requiring Congregational Vote*
 - 1. Incurring of any debt which exceeds five percent (5%) of the annual general fund offerings of the previous year.
 - 2. Employing Pastoral staff
 - 3. Annual budget
 - 4. Constitutional changes (with 2/3 approval)
 - 5. Any area for which the Elder council calls

IV. Amendments

- A. The wording or Biblical confirmation of our present doctrinal statement may be changed. Such changes can only be made with the unanimous approval of the entire Pastoral staff and Elder Council. Such changes would not be subject to a vote by the congregation.

- B. Any section of the Constitution other than the doctrinal statement may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at a business meeting, provided the proposed amendment has been printed and distributed two weeks prior to the business meeting.

V. **Congregational Business Meetings**

- A. Called meetings of the congregation may be held at the discretion of the Elder council or upon written request of ten percent (10%) of the members of DBC. The business meeting will be announced from the pulpit two Sundays preceding the meeting; the agenda will be posted on the bulletin board.
- B. The Elder council will determine the agenda for any business meeting, and no business other than that on the agenda will be discussed.
- B. *Quorum:* A quorum is constituted by at least thirty-five percent (35%) of the active, resident membership present for the transaction of business.
- C. A majority vote of the voting members present at any constitutionally called congregational business meeting will be required to render final decisions in any matter under consideration with three exceptions: (1) amendments to the doctrinal statement, (2) amendments to the constitution, and (3) calling of Pastors.
- D. All business meetings shall be conducted “decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40) to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and will follow the parliamentary procedures of Robert’s Rules of Order.

VI. **Policies and Procedures**

Guidelines regarding procedural and policy matters of DBC, the Elder council, and the Deacon board will be maintained in a separate document by the Elder council entitled Guiding Principles, Policies, and Procedures.

Jesus + Christ

The Head and Lifeblood
of the Church

The Elders

Purpose: To Lead

...in purpose
...in mission
...in vision
...by teaching &
discipleship

The Deacons

Purpose: To Serve

...by administration
...by management
...by oversight

The Church, the Body of Christ