

# **Orwell Bible Church Constitution**

**1-21-18**

# CONTENTS

Article	Page
I. Name.....	2
II. Purpose.....	2
III. Basis of Doctrine and Declaration.....	2
IV. Church Covenant.....	6
V. Membership.....	7
VI. Officers.....	10
VII. Committees.....	18
VIII. Meetings.....	20
IX. Church Year.....	22
X. Property.....	22
XI. Amendments.....	22

## ARTICLE I - Name

The corporate name shall be Orwell Bible Church.

## ARTICLE II - Purpose Statement

The purpose of this church shall be to glorify God in all things, to promote the worship of God, to exalt the Bible as God's verbally inspired book, to present Jesus Christ as mankind's only Savior, to foster the spiritual growth of Christians, to strengthen Christian fellowship, and to support world evangelization.

The goal of those who worship here, children of God who have acknowledged their sins and been forgiven by the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, is to walk as Jesus walked. We commit to honor God through faithful adherence to the apostles' doctrine, the pursuit of loving relationships with fellow believers, the regular practice of corporate and private worship and prayer, and personal involvement in making disciples for Jesus Christ (I John 2:6, Acts 2:42-47).

## ARTICLE III - Basis of Doctrine and Declaration

### Section 1: The Scriptures

Every word in the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek writings of the Old and New Testament scriptures is inspired of God and without error (1Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21).

### Section 2: The True God

The Godhead eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, all equal in divine perfection and these three are one God (Gen. 1:1; Deut 6:4, 4:24; Matt. 28:19; John 10:30; 2 Cor. 13:14).

### Section 3: God The Father

God the Father is the Maker of heaven and earth and of all things. His is Sovereign Authority. God is the one and only unchangeable, invisible, infinite, and perfect Spirit being. He is holy, living and truthful in all He does. He gave His Son for our redemption and the Holy Spirit for our sanctification. He is loving and just, "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," (Ps. 139:1 - 9; Is. 44:6; Jn. 4:24; Col. 1:15; James 1:17; I Peter 1:15,16; II Peter 3:9; I John 4:8-16).

#### Section 4: God The Son

The Son of God became incarnate in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is true God and true man, virgin born and sinless in His life (Matt. 1:21-23; John 1:1, 14, 18; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 1: 6-8; Heb. 4:15; 1 John 5:20).

#### Section 5: God The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead who indwells, convicts, regenerates, baptizes and seals all true believers in Christ and fills those yielded to God. The Holy Spirit endows believers with service gifts upon conversion. (Matt. 28:19; John 1:13; John 3:3-6; John 7:39; John 14:16,17 & 26; Acts 1:5; Rom. 8:9; Rom. 12:3-8; 1Cor. 2:12; 1 Cor. 6:19; 1 Cor. 12: 8-13 & 28-31; 1 Cor. 13:8-12; 1 Cor. 14: 33-40; Eph. 1:13,14; Eph. 4:7-11 & 30; Heb. 2:3,4; Heb. 9:14; Rev. 22:18,19).

#### Section 6: The Devil or Satan

We believe in the personality of Satan. He is a fallen angel: the unholy god of this age, the authority over all the powers of darkness, the accuser of the saints and is destined to the judgement of an eternal justice in the Lake of Fire (Matt. 4:1-3; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 12:9,10; Rev. 20:10).

## Section 7: Mankind

We accept the literal Genesis account of creation and believe that man is a direct creation of God.

Man was created in the image and likeness of God. In Adam all mankind fell into sin with the result that all men are sinners, apart from the grace of God (Gen. 1:1; Gen. 1:27; Gen. 9:6; John 1:3; Rom. 3:23; Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1; Col 1:16,17).

## Section 8: Salvation

God's free gift of salvation from divine judgement is received by individual repentant sinners through faith in Christ alone. In love and grace He shed His blood and died as a substitute, was buried and rose again by the power of God. (Acts 4:12; Acts 13:38,39; Rom. 4:4,5; Rom. 5:1,9; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; 1 Tim. 2:4-6; 1 Pet. 1:18,19).

## Section 9: Justification/Sanctification

God justifies or declares righteous each person who receives salvation. Every true

believer is promised sanctification:

- a. positional - set apart from the penalty of sin
- b. progressive - set apart from the power of sin
- c. ultimate - set apart from the presence of sin

(John: 17:17; Eph. 5:26; 1 Thess. 4:3,4; 1 Thess. 5:27; Heb. 10:10-14; 1 John 3:2).

## Section 10: Eternal Security

All who are born of the Spirit through faith in Christ are promised assurance of salvation and are eternally secure in Christ (John 3:5,6; John 10:28,29; John 17:12; Rom. 5:1;

2 Tim. 1:12; 1 John 5:13).

## Section 11: The Church

The Church, composed of all true believers, is the body and bride of Christ, formed by baptism of the Holy Spirit. The local church is a self-governing body of believers whose duty is to worship God, observe the ordinances, edify itself, and evangelize the world

(Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 4:24; 1 Cor. 12:12 & 27; Eph. 1:22,23; Eph. 4:12; Eph. 5:24,25,30; Phil. 1:1).

## Section 12: Christian Service

Christians are called to a holy life of loving service and testimony in the power of the Holy Spirit, which includes scriptural giving and the propagation of the Gospel to the whole world. There is promised reward in heaven for faithfulness in such service (Mal. 3:10; John 12:25,26; 2 Cor. 8:7; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 9:6,7; 1 Pet. 1:15,16).

## Section 13: Ordinances

The Scriptural ordinances of baptism by immersion (which is a public testimony of identification with Christ) and regular participation in the Lord's Supper (which is for remembrance of Christ's sacrifice) are for all true believers in Christ (Matt. 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 8:12, 26-38; Acts 9:18; Acts 10:47; 1 Cor. 1:16; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

## Section 14: Dispensations

God has revealed and worked through different dispensations, or stewardships, with corresponding rules of life, of which the present dispensation is the age of grace (Rom. 6:14; Eph. 3:2-6,9-11; Col. 1:25-27; Heb. 7:18,19).

## Section 15: Position and Practice

We believe it is important to identify ourselves as being: fundamental, dispensational, pre-tribulational, pre-millennial, evangelistic, local church-oriented, separated, independent, and Baptist (adhering to historic Baptist distinctives).

In contrast we are opposed to all forms of theological compromise such as: liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, neo-evangelicalism, hyper-Calvinism, covenantalism, and movements such as the charismatic movement and the emergent church.

## Section 16: Church Creed

We believe that the eternal God has revealed himself to sinful humanity by the words of the Holy Scriptures, which are authoritative in every area of thought and belief. We believe that the righteousness of the Holy Trinity justly condemns the sinful, and that the willing sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the means by which free forgiveness is granted to those who believe in his true identity as God and Savior. We believe that Jesus Christ has physically risen from the dead, and has ascended into Heaven, from where he will one day return to judge the souls of all who have ever lived. We believe that the Spirit of God, preexisting as a member of the Trinity, personally indwells all followers of Christ, to guide them in lives of God-pleasing thoughts and actions.

## Article IV – Church Covenant

By my commitment to membership in Orwell Bible Church, I demonstrate my desire to live in the sight of God, in the company of the true church, and in the presence of the lost, a life clearly demonstrating my allegiance to our Lord and Savior. I will hold myself true to conduct befitting the gospel, and be instant in encouraging my fellow Christians to do the same. I will submit myself to the authority of the Holy Spirit in all areas of thought, speech, and action, expecting

his guidance to faithfully produce the fruit of righteousness in me, that God may be glorified, and salvation proclaimed.

## Article V - Membership

### Section 1: Requirements

All candidates for membership in this church shall be immersed believers who give a clear testimony of a personal salvation experience, and cheerfully and willingly subscribe to the Purpose, Covenant, and Basis of Doctrine and Declaration as contained in Articles II, III and IV.

### Section 2: Candidates

A person may be considered for membership of this church by one of the following ways:

- a. Any candidate compliant with the requirements of Section 1, who has completed the church membership class and been interviewed by the membership committee, shall upon the recommendation of the membership committee be voted upon by the church for membership.
- b. Any candidate presenting a duly verified letter of transfer from a church of like conviction, who at the time of the presentation is compliant with the requirements of Section 1, shall upon recommendation of the membership committee be voted upon by the church for membership. It is recommended that this candidate attend a church membership class.
- c. All candidates received into membership of the church shall be welcomed publicly.

### Section 3: Active and Inactive Members

- a. Active members shall show themselves to be faithful participants in the life of the church. Only active members have voting privileges (Heb. 10:25).
- b. A member will be considered inactive when, being physically able, that member neglects to faithfully participate in the life of the church for a period of one year.
- c. An inactive member is restored to active membership by becoming a faithful participant in the life of the church. Only when efforts for restoration by the membership committee have been made and rejected, and when they have been on the inactive list for two consecutive years, will the committee recommend the inactive member for dismissal by the membership. The vote shall be by three fourths majority of those present and voting. Their name will then be dropped from the membership roll.

#### Section 4: Letters of Transfer and Dismissal

Members in good and regular standing may, at their request and by a vote of the church, receive a letter of transfer to any other church of like conviction and doctrine, otherwise a letter of dismissal shall be granted. All letters from this church will be signed by the pastor(s) and secretary.

#### Section 5: Discipline and Forgiveness in the Church

a. Since it is vital to the testimony of this church and the glory of our Lord that the purity of the church be preserved and its peace be protected, the discipline of this church shall be entrusted to a Discipline Committee consisting of the pastor(s) and deacons. These men shall have sole authority in determining heretical deviations from the Basis of Doctrine and Declaration and violations of the Church Covenant. It shall be their duty to seek diligently to reclaim any member known to be living in disregard of his Biblical and covenant obligations. If a pastor or deacon is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall not sit as a member of the Discipline Committee.

b. The object of discipline is to: (1) demonstrate obedience to the Word of God, (2) restore the erring brother, and (3) restrain sin (1 Cor. 11: 31, 32; Gal. 6:1).

c. The basic reasons for discipline are: (1) immorality (2) false doctrine (3) disorderly conduct (4) an unrepentant attitude, or unresolved conflict between members (Matt. 18:17; 1 Tim. 6:1-5).

d. Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother. Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration (Gal. 6: 1-2).

e. If reconciliation is not reached, a second member, either a deacon or a pastor, is to accompany the one seeking to resolve the matter. This second step should also be preceded by self-examination, and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.

f. If the matter is still unresolved after the steps outlined in subsections (d) and (e) have been taken, the Discipline Committee shall hear the matter. The accused shall be given the opportunity to appear before the Discipline Committee in defense of said charges. No accusation shall be brought against any member except upon written testimony of two or three witnesses. Any disciplinary action that is deemed necessary shall be in the spirit of love and meekness. The accused, if found guilty by the Discipline Committee, shall remain under discipline until demonstrating repentance by confessing the sin, forsaking the sin, and replacing the sin with godly behavior.

g. Disciplinary action can be any one or more of the following: (1) private admonishment, (2) personal separation, (3) public censure, and (4) removal from membership.

h. No matter may be heard by the Discipline Committee unless the steps outlined in subsections (d) and (e) have been followed, except in the case of a public offense.

i. After following the steps outlined in subsections (d), (e), and (f), the Discipline Committee shall call a meeting of church members for the purpose of disclosing disciplinary action and joining in prayer for those who refuse to repent and be restored.

j. If an unrepentant offending party is removed from the church membership, all contact with the person from that point forward must be a loving ministry of reconciliation for the sake of restoration.

## Article VI - Officers

### Section 1: Names

The officers of this church shall be: Pastor(s), Deacons, Trustees, Secretary, Financial Secretary, Church Treasurer and Education Director.

### Section 2: Pastor(s)

#### a. Election and Terms of Office

The pastor(s) shall be a man (men) of God who without reservation agree(s) with Articles II, III and IV of this Constitution and meets the requirements of 1 Tim. 3:1-7. He (they) shall be required to subscribe to these Articles before entering this office, and yearly at the Annual Business Meeting. His (their) election or dismissal shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, and he (they) shall hold office indefinitely. The relationship of the pastor(s) and the church may be terminated by mutual consent, or upon thirty days' notice in writing. A call to

the pastorate shall be by three-fourths majority of the votes of a quorum at a special business meeting called for that purpose. The vote shall be by ballot.

#### b. Duties

The Pastor(s) shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the church. He (They) shall preach the gospel according to the principles of faith covered by Article III. He (They) shall have in his (their) charge the stated services of public worship and shall administer the ordinances and perform the duties of a pastor(s). He (They) shall be an ex officio member of all committees and organizations, and shall have access to all books and records of the church.

### Section 3: Deacons

#### a. Election and Terms of Office

The board of deacons shall consist of three or more active members of the church, each of whom will be elected for a term of three years and in such a manner that at least one shall be elected each year. Should a vacancy occur, the board may appoint another active member to fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting. They shall be men who can meet the requirements of 1 Tim.

#### b. Duties

The deacons, with the pastor(s), shall have the general oversight of the church. They shall assist with the ordinances and shall provide for the supply of the pulpit during the Pastor's vacations and other interims. It shall be their duty to visit the sick and needy, assist the pastor(s) in providing counsel, and oversee financial concerns. The deacon board shall meet soon after the annual meeting to organize and to elect a chairman.

### Section 4: Trustees

#### a. Election and Terms of Office

A board of trustees shall consist of three or more active members, one or more to be chosen annually to hold office for three years. Should a vacancy occur, the board may appoint another active member to fill the vacancy until the next annual meeting.

b. Duties

The board of trustees shall be custodians of all church property. They shall see that it is kept in good and proper condition, and keep a safe and proper insurance on the property. They shall have no power to purchase or dispose of any real estate or disburse any monies of the church other than those provided in the budget, except by special authorization of the church. The trustees may employ a janitor each year, and such employees as the church may deem necessary. The trustee board shall meet soon after the annual meeting to organize and elect a chairman.

Section 5: Church Secretary

a. Election and Terms of Office

The church secretary shall be an active member of the church and shall be elected by the church at its annual business meeting for the term of one year or until a successor is chosen.

b. Duties

The church secretary shall keep records of all business meetings, shall write and sign church letters, notify persons of their election or appointment to offices or committees, and keep an accurate list of members. Prior to the annual meeting, the secretary shall prepare and present to the membership committee the statistical membership report for review. The secretary shall also attend to such duties as may pertain to this office.

## Section 6: Financial Secretary

### a. Election and Terms of Office

The financial secretary shall be an active member of the church and shall be elected by the church at its annual business meeting for the term of one year, or until a successor is chosen.

### b. Duties

The financial secretary, in company with the treasurer or a qualified alternate, shall count and record monies received by the church. The financial secretary shall act as the church's financial bookkeeper, recording all receipts and expenditures according to approved accounting practices, keeping an accurate, confidential record of individual giving for income tax purposes, and issuing a profit and loss statement quarterly, and a balance sheet annually.

## Section 7: Church Treasurer

### a. Election and Terms of Office

The church treasurer shall be an active member of the church and shall be elected by the church at its annual business meeting for the term of one year, or until a successor is chosen.

### b. Duties

The church treasurer shall have charge of all monies of the church and shall pay all bills and obligations. No checks made payable to the church shall be cashed by the treasurer for the benefit of any individual or organization. The treasurer shall keep accurate records and be ready to report when requested.

## Section 8: Education Director

### a. Election and Terms of Office

The education director shall be an active member of the church and shall be elected by the church at its annual business meeting for the term of one year, or until a successor is chosen.

### b. Duties

The education director shall have general supervision of all education programs and call meetings as needed. It is also the director's responsibility to affirm that all teachers subscribe to Article III of this constitution.

## Section 9: Teachers and Leaders

All teachers and leaders of groups must subscribe to Article III of this Constitution.

## Section 10: Offices - General Rules

### a. Vacancies

Vacancies in the office of secretary, treasurer, and education director shall be filled by appointment of the deacon board and approval of the church for the unexpired term.

### b. Salaries

No officer shall receive a salary except the pastor(s). Said salary shall be fixed or altered in amount by the church at a regular business meeting or a meeting called for that purpose and in no other manner.

- c. Offices may be established as needed and passed by plurality vote.
- d. No person shall hold more than one of the above offices at the same time except with the approval of the nominating committee.
- e. All elected officers shall be chosen by ballot. A plurality vote of those present and voting shall be necessary for election.

## Article VII - Committees

### Section 1: Pulpit Committee

There shall be a pulpit committee consisting of the board of deacons and other active members elected by the church. It shall be their duty upon the resignation of the pastor(s) to secure a candidate for the pastorate. They must make sure that the candidate with whom they are negotiating personally accepts Article III of this Constitution, by oral and written affirmation before he is called as pastor. He shall promise to adhere to these articles of faith so long as he shall serve this church.

When the committee has satisfied itself that they have secured a qualified candidate, they shall recommend him to the church. The committee shall present only one candidate to the church at a time.

### Section 2: Membership Committee

The committee shall consist of the pastor(s), and deacons. They shall interview all candidates for church membership and perform other duties as indicated in Article V of this Constitution. An annual review of the statistical membership report shall be the responsibility of this committee.

### Section 3: Nominating Committee

A nominating committee consisting of three or more active members, at least one being a deacon, shall be elected by the church at the third quarterly business meeting. It shall be their duty to post by November 1st a list of officers and committee members whose terms will expire on the day of the annual meeting. They shall compile a list of qualified nominees to be submitted to the church at the annual business meeting. The committee shall receive nominations from the membership of the church until November 30th. The nominating committee shall prepare ballots for the election of officers and committees.

#### Section 4: Budget Committee

The deacons, trustees, financial secretary, education director and missions committee representative shall constitute the budget committee. This committee shall prepare and post a proposed budget for the upcoming year two weeks prior to the annual business meeting.

#### Section 5: Auditing Committee

There shall be two auditors whose duties shall be to audit the church's financial books and prepare a report for the annual business meeting. They shall be elected at the annual business meeting.

#### Section 6: Missions Committee

The missions committee shall consist of one or more persons selected annually by the deacons to maintain communication with the church's missionaries, to make budgetary recommendations, and to maintain general relationships between the missionaries and the church body.

### Article VIII - Meetings

#### Section 1: Worship and Fellowship

- a. A public service shall be held each Sunday morning. Exceptions to this are to be decided by the pastor(s) and deacons (Acts 20: 7; Heb. 10: 25).
- b. The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly.
- c. The pastor(s) and deacons shall arrange for baptismal services.
- d. Other services may be held at the discretion of the members and pastor(s).

## Section 2: Business

- a. All business meetings shall be conducted by a moderator chosen by the deacons.
- b. The annual business meeting for the reviewing of reports, the election of officers and committees, and the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the church shall be held on or near the third Sunday of January.
- c. The church shall hold quarterly business meetings.
- d. Special business meetings of the church may be called by the pastor(s), by either board, or by the request of five active members of the church to the secretary, providing that the particular concern(s) is/are clearly stated in a notice. No other business shall be transacted in such meetings.
- e. With the exceptions of meetings where the subject to be considered is of an emergency or urgent nature, notice of all business meetings, and the purpose for which they are called, shall be suitably communicated from the pulpit at the morning worship service on each of two consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the proposed date of the meeting.

f. All active members eighteen years of age and over are entitled to vote. All voting must be done in person except in cases of sickness and emergencies when the deacon board may issue an absentee ballot. Each member shall have one vote.

g. There must be a quorum for the transaction of business. A quorum shall be 20% of active members.

#### Article IX - Church Year

The official and fiscal year of the church shall begin the first day of January and close the thirty-first day of December.

#### Article X - Property

The property of Orwell Bible Church shall forever remain in the control of its members.

#### Article XI - Amendments

This constitution and by-laws (with the exception of Article III, which cannot be materially altered) may be amended at any business meeting or special meeting called for that purpose by two-thirds majority of the vote of those present and voting. The proposed amendments shall have been submitted in writing and publicly displayed for a period of at least two weeks immediately preceding the vote of the church.

