

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

of Marion, New York

CONSTITUTION

AND

ARTICLES OF FAITH

"To the praise of the glory
of His grace..."

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH OF MARION, NEW YORK.

ARTICLE II - COVENANT

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the public confession of our faith, having been immersed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We purpose, 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 attend its services regularly; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to give it a sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin; to give faithfully of time and talent in its activities; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel throughout all nations.

We also purpose to maintain family and private devotions; to train our children according to the Word of God; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct; to avoid all gossip, backbiting, and unrighteous anger; to abstain from all forms of activity which dishonor our Lord Jesus Christ, cause stumbling to a fellow believer, or hinder the winning of a soul to Christ; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ, our Savior; and to give Him preeminence in all things.

We further purpose to encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return; to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to seek it without delay.

We moreover purpose that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church of like faith and order where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. In the event there is no such church, we shall seek, with the Lord's help, to establish one.

Therefore, it shall be the purpose of this church to maintain public Christian worship; the teaching and study of the Bible as the complete and inerrant Word of God; the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; the administration of the New Testament ordinances; the spiritual growth of its members; and the winning of the lost to Christ.

ARTICLE III - DOCTRINE

The Doctrine of this church shall be in conformity with that generally accepted by fundamental Baptist Churches, and expressed in our STATEMENT OF FAITH, as follows:

STATEMENT OF FAITH

SECTION 1: THE SCRIPTURES

We believe in the authority and the sufficiency of the Holy Bible, consisting of the sixty-six (66) books of the Old and New Testaments, as originally written; that it was verbally and plenary inspired and is the product of Spirit-controlled men, and therefore is infallible and inerrant in all matters of which it speaks.

We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian unity, and the supreme standard by which all conduct, creed, and opinions shall be tried.

(II Tim 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21)

SECTION 2: THE TRUE GOD

We believe that there is one and only one living and true God, and infinite Spirit, the Maker and supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

(Ex 20:2-3; Isa 44:6; Matt 3:13-17; I Cor 8:6; II Cor 13:14; Col 1:16-17; I Tim 2:5; I John 5:7; Rev 4:11)

We believe in the absolute deity of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; that He is both the Son of God, and God, the Son; existing from all eternity, co-equal with the Father and the Spirit; that He was begotten of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner, born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can be born of a woman; that His humiliation did not consist of laying aside His deity; that He was crucified, buried, and risen bodily from the dead, and is ascended into Heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest, interceding for us.

(John 1:1-4; I John 5:20; Gen 3:15; Isa 7:14; 9:6; John 8:58; 17:5; Micah 5:2; Gal 4:4; Matt 28:6-7; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2-6, 39; John 20:27; I Cor 15:3-4; Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11; Heb 2:17; 5:10; 7:25; 8:6; 12:2; I Tim 2:5; I John 2:1)

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with God the Father, and God, the Son' that He was active in the creation; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement; that He bears witness to the Truth; that He is the Agent in the new birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses to, sanctifies, and helps the believer, indwelling every true child of God from the moment of salvation.

(John 14:16,17,26; Matt 28:19; Heb 9:14; Luke 1:35; Gen 1:1-3; John 3:5-6; 15:26; 16:7-11; Eph 1:13; Rom 8:9)

SECTION 3: THE DEVIL, OR SATAN

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, the Devil; that he was created by God as an angel, but through pride and rebellion became the enemy of his Creator; that he became the unholy god of this age, and the ruler of all the powers of darkness, and the adversary of every Christian; and is destined to the judgement of an eternal justice in the lake of fire.

(Job 1:8,12; 2:1-3,5; Eph 6:11; I Cor 2:11; Isa 14:12-15; Ezek 28:11-17; II Cor 4:4; Matt 4:1-3; I Peter 5:8; Rev 20:10; John 14:30; 16:11; Eph 2:2)

SECTION 4: CREATION

We believe the Biblical account of the creation, of the physical universe, angels, and men; that this account is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate, creative acts of God, and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, the first parents of the entire human race.

(Gen 1; 2:7,18; Col 1:16-17; John 1:3; Psa 33:6,9; Heb 11:3; I Tim 6:20)

SECTION 5: THE FALL OF MAN

We believe that man, in the person of the first Adam, was created in innocence (in the image and likeness of God), but by voluntary transgression fell from this sinless and happy state (and all men sinned in him), in consequence of which all men are totally depraved, are partakers of Adam's fallen nature, and are sinners by nature and conduct, and therefore are under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

(Gen 1:26,27,31; 2:16-17; 3:1-6,8-12; Rom 1:18-32; 3:10-19,23; 5:10-19; 7:18; Psa 51:5; John 3:6,19; Eph 2:1,3,4,18; Jer 16:12; I Cor 2:14; Col 2:13; Gal 3:22; I John 5:19)

SECTION 6: SALVATION

We believe that the salvation of sinners is divinely initiated, and wholly of grace through the mediatorial offices of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who, by the appointment of the Father, voluntarily took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, and honored the divine law by His personal obedience, thus qualifying Himself to be our Savior; that by the shedding of His blood in His death He fully satisfied the just demands of a holy and righteous God regarding sin; that His sacrifice consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the Sinner's place, the just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that having risen from the dead He is now enthroned in heaven, and uniting in His wonderful Person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior.

We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation. Repentance is a change of mind and purpose toward God, prompted by the Holy Spirit, and is an integral part of saving faith.

(Jonah 2:9; Isa 53:4-7; Eph 1:4; 2:8-9; John 6:37; Acts 13:39,48; 15:11; 16:30-31; Rom 3:24-25; 10:9-11; John 3:16; Matt 18:11; Phil 2:7-8; Heb 2:14-17; I John 4:10; I Cor. 15:3; II Cor 5:21; I Peter 2:24; Titus 3:5-7)

SECTION 7: GRACE AND THE NEW BIRTH

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and sins is made a partaker of the divine nature, and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about by our sovereign God in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine Truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life.

(John 3:3-8; II Cor 5:17,19; II Peter 1:4; Rom 6:23; Eph 2:1,5; Col 2:13; I John 5:1; Acts 16:30-31)

SECTION 8: JUSTIFICATION

We believe that justification is the judicial act of God whereby He declares the believer righteous on the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ; that it is bestowed not in

consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's shed blood.

(Acts 13:39; Rom 4:5,24; 5:1,9; Gal 2:16; Phil 3:9; Isa 64:6)

SECTION 9: SANCTIFICATION

We believe that sanctification is the divine setting apart of the believer unto God, accomplished in a three-fold manner: first, an eternal act of God, based upon redemption in Christ, establishing the believer in a position of holiness at the moment he trusts the Savior; second, a continuing process in the saint as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to the life; third, the final accomplishment of this process at the Lord's return.

(Heb 3:1; 10:10-14; John 17:17; II Cor 3:18; I Cor 1:30; Eph 5:25-27; I Th 4:3-4; 5:23-24; I John 3:2; Jude 24-25; Rev 22:11)

SECTION 10: THE SECURITY OF THE SAINTS

We believe that all who receive Christ as their personal Savior are born from above and are eternally secure in Christ in a relationship forged by God, which He will not break, and which cannot be broken by anyone, including ourselves. The Christian has no license to sin (Rom 6:1-4). The presence of sin will break the fellowship, but not the relationship between the Christian and God, and may bring the Christian under divine chastisement.

(Phil 1:6; John 10:28-29; Rom 8:35-39; Jude 1)

SECTION 11: THE CHURCH

We believe that a local church is an organized congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers are pastors and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures. We believe that the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel; that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; that on all matters of membership, of polity, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

(Phil 1:1; I Cor 11:2; Acts 2:41-42; 6:3-8; 8:4; 15; 20:17-28; I Tim 3:1-13)

We believe in the unity of all New Testament believers in the church which is the body of Christ.

(I Cor 12:12-13; Eph 1:22-23; 3:1-6; 4:11; 5:23-24; Col 1:18; Acts 15:13-18)

SECTION 12: ORDINANCES

We believe that there are two church ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water, and is properly called "believer's baptism". It sets forth in a beautiful and solemn emblem our identification with the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, through Whom we died to sin and rose to a new life. We believe that Baptism is to be performed under the authority of the local church; and that it is a prerequisite to the privileges of church membership.

(Acts 8:36, 38, 39; John 3:23; Rom 6:3-5; Matt 3:16; Col 2:12)

The Lord's Supper is the commemoration of our Lord's death until He comes, and our continual fellowship with Him, and should always be preceded by careful self-examination. We believe that the Biblical order of the ordinances is baptism first, then the Lord's Supper (that participants in the Lord's Supper should be immersed believers).

(I Cor 11:23-32; Matt 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-42)

SECTION 13: SEPARATION

We believe in obedience to the Biblical command to separate ourselves unto God, from worldliness, modernism, apostasy, and any individual or group that threatens or interferes with the church's ministry to glorify Jesus Christ as the Son of God, in His person and work.

(II Chr 19:2; Matt 7:15-20; Acts 20:28-31; Rom 16:17-18; II Cor 6:14-7:1; I Th 1:9-10; II Th 3:6, 14; I Tim 4:1-2; 6:3-5; II John 7-11; Rev 18:4-5)

SECTION 14: CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in those things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming King of Kings.

(Rom 13:1-7; I Sam 23:3; Ex 18:21-22; Acts 23:5; I Tim 2:1-3; Matt 22:21; Acts 4:19-20; 5:29; Dan 3:17-18)

SECTION 15; THE RETURN OF CHRIST

We believe in the imminent, bodily, personal, pretribulational return of Christ at the Rapture, an event which can occur at any moment, and that at that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all shall be caught up to meet the Lord before the seven years of the Tribulation.

(I Th 4:13-18; I Cor 15:42-44; 51-54; Phil 3:20-21; Rev. 3:10)

We believe that the Tribulation, which follows the Rapture of the Church, will be culminated by the revelation of Christ in power and great glory, Who will sit upon the throne of David, and establish the millennial kingdom.

(Dan 9:25-27; Matt 24:29-31; Luke 1:30-33; Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-9; Acts 2:29-30; Rev 20:1-4, 6)

SECTION 16; THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that only those who are justified by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in God's esteem; while all who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse, and therefore stand condemned before God; and that this distinction holds among men both during life and after death, in the everlasting conscious joy of the saved, and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in a literal hell.

(Mal 3:18; Gen 18:23; Rom 6:16-23; 7:6; I John 5:19; Prov 14:32; Luke 16:25-26; Matt 25:34-41; John 3:18; 8:21; Rev 20:14-15)

ARTICLE IV - ASSOCIATIONS

Since a New Testament church cannot join anything outside of itself, but can only affiliate therewith on the grounds of fellowship, this church declares itself to be in fellowship with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. We reject fellowship with any church or group which does not accept the authority of the whole Word of God, or which permits the presence of modernism, or modernists.

ARTICLE V - ORDINANCES

SECTION 1: BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

Those professing saving faith in Jesus Christ as personal savior shall, by the pastor, or some person designated by the church, be immersed in water, in accordance with the Scriptural teaching.

Baptism by immersion is a prerequisite to church membership.

SECTION 2: THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper (Communion) shall be served to the assembled church by the pastor, deacons, or other persons approved by the deacons. It will be served on the first Sunday evening of each month, or at the discretion of the deacons.

Since it is the Lord's Table, none who are His shall be barred.

ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1: QUALIFICATIONS OF MEMBERS

The membership shall consist only of those individuals who have:

- professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, giving evidence in their lives of being new creatures in Christ Jesus (II Cor 5:17);
- been scripturally baptized (immersion following their salvation);
- declared themselves in accord with the principles, practices, and doctrines of this church as stated herein;
- and whose names appear on the membership roll of this church.

No one who is (or becomes) a member of a secret society will be permitted to unite with (or retain membership in) this church. (John 18:20)

SECTION 2: RECEPTION OF MEMBERS

Candidates for church membership shall appear personally before the pastor and deacons to be interviewed in relationship to their Christian experience. Having been recommended by the deacons, and having given personal testimony before the church, the names shall then be submitted to the church for its action. Three-fourths (3/4) of the votes cast shall be required for reception into membership.

SECTION 3: DISMISSAL OF MEMBERS

Paragraph A: Letter

A letter of dismissal may be granted to any member in good and regular standing, upon recommendation of the deacons, and vote of the members present at a business meeting. The letter shall be addressed to some particular church known to be of like faith and practice.

Paragraph B: Certificate of Standing

Members not in good and regular standing, or those desiring to unite with a church not of our like faith and practice, may be given a Certificate of Standing, to date.

SECTION 4: DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

Paragraph A: Responsibility

The purpose of church discipline is to maintain its spiritual and doctrinal purity. Preceding any disciplinary action, Matt 18:15-17 shall be followed.

The matter of discipline of the membership shall be in the hands of the deacons, assisted by the pastor. It is specifically directed that the deacons, in safeguarding the purity and peace of the church, move with special promptness and vigor against anyone who is obstructing the work, or disturbing the peace of the church by slander, falsehood, gossip, conspiracy, or other unfair and unchristian methods.

In cases of expulsion from membership, final action must be taken by the church. Three-fourths (3/4) of the votes cast are required for expulsion from membership. No member shall be expelled until every effort has been made, including, if physically possible, personal visits to reclaim him (her) for Christ and the church.

Paragraph B: Inactive List

Members failing to support the church by their attendance within a period of three (3) months, without legitimate excuse, shall be listed as inactive by the deacons, after contacting the member. Inactive members may be reinstated to active membership by their regular attendance, and a satisfactory statement to the deacons of their intent to fulfill their duties as members. Members classified as inactive for more than one (1) year may be removed from the church membership roll, subject to Paragraph A of this section.

SECTION 5: DUTIES OF MEMBERS

Paragraph A: Covenant Obligations

The Church Covenant sets forth the obligations assumed by every member of this church. Frequent reading of the Covenant is recommended to every member.

Paragraph B: Church Loyalties

Loyalty to Christ and to the church requires that every member attend regularly the services of worship; maintain honorable business relations with the church and all men;

and make regular, cheerful contributions, as the Lord has prospered him, toward the expenses and missionary interests of the church.

(I Chr 29:14, 16; Acts 4:32-35; I Cor 16:2; II Cor 9:6, 7)

It is the duty of members to honor and esteem their pastor, and his family; to pray for them daily, in love, manifesting a tender regard for their welfare and reputation.

(I Tim. 5:17-19; I Th 5:12, 13)

It is recognized that a Baptist church must be a democracy in which the majority shall prevail. It is recognized further, that while the minority has the right of private opinion in all questions, and the right of appeal in a constitutional and proper manner, they shall not have the right to engage in secret or open propaganda, or of deliberately disturbing the peace and interrupting the work of the church. It is further recognized that when the church, by regular order and proper vote, has determined upon a course of action, that course becomes the duty of every member of the church.

ARTICLE VII - THE PASTOR

SECTION 1: QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PASTOR

The pastor of this church shall be a man who has indicated in writing to the clerk of the church, or the chairman of the pulpit committee, his agreement with the Constitution of this church. He must also meet the qualifications as set forth in the New Testament for his office as pastor, elder, and bishop of the local church.

(Acts 20:17-32; I Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:3-9; I Pet 5:1-4; I Cor 8:9-13; 10:31, 32)

No man who is a member of, or in sympathy with, a secret society, nor a divorced man (whether unmarried or remarried), nor a man married to a divorced or unsaved woman shall be pastor of this church.

SECTION 2: CALLING A PASTOR

The procedure for calling a pastor shall be as follows:

1. Upon recommendation by the pulpit committee, the candidate shall be presented to the church, and minister in the pulpit.
2. Notice of the meeting to vote on the proposed candidate shall be given from the pulpit for the two (2) Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. This meeting shall be scheduled for the Wednesday immediately following his ministry in the pulpit.

3. The election requires an affirmative vote, on the first ballot, of three-fourths (3/4) of the voting members present. The candidate shall not be reconsidered for this vacancy.

4. The candidate shall be notified of the decision. A letter shall be written by the chairman or secretary of the pulpit committee promptly following the vote.

SECTION 3: DUTIES OF THE PASTOR

The pastor is shepherd of the flock, overseer of the work of God, preacher and teacher of the unsearchable riches of Christ and the chief executive officer of the church. He shall give himself "to prayer and to the ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:4), and shall perform the duties of an elder and bishop as set forth in the Scriptures. He shall oversee the work of the Bible School and all other sub-organizations of the church; and shall serve as member ex-officio of all boards, committees, and organizations of the church and their respective committees.

SECTION 4: SALARY AND VACATION

The pastor's salary and vacation shall be agreed upon by both parties involved. The church shall make effort to properly support its pastor to the best of its ability. The pastor will be given at least three (3) weeks vacation each year. The pastor shall, with the deacons, make arrangements for the continuation of the pulpit ministry in his absence.

SECTION 5: TERMINATION OF MINISTRY

The pastor shall continue in office until he resigns or is dismissed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the total voting membership present and voting at a special meeting called for that purpose. Public notice shall be given on two (2) Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting.

The pastor shall give the church not less than thirty (30) days of notice of intent to resign. The church shall give the pastor not less than sixty (60) days of notice of dismissal.

ARTICLE VIII - ELECTED OFFICERS

SECTION 1: ELECTED OFFICES

The elected offices of the church are the deacons, Bible School Superintendent, treasurer, financial secretary, and clerk. The term of office for deacons is three years. The term of office for all other officers is one year.

SECTION 2: QUALIFICATIONS OF OFFICERS

Each officer must be a member of this church, at least 21 years of age.

All officers must be spiritually mature (I Tim 3:6), of unquestioned Christian character, loyal to the Word of God, dedicated and devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the spiritual welfare of this church. They shall also be faithful and diligent, in attendance and participation, in both regular and business meetings of this church. Their moral conduct shall be beyond reproach, and free from carnal indulgences. In the light of I Tim 3, the home and family relationships must be considered, as well as individual qualifications.

In addition, the deacons shall meet the qualifications listed in Acts 6; I Tim 3; and Titus 1:5-9.

The offices of deacons, and Bible School Superintendent, shall be filled by men (I Tim 3:1-13; 2:12).

Any officer unable or unwilling to fulfill the duties of the office, shall resign from that office. If and when any officer refuses to subscribe to the Covenant, Articles of Faith, or Constitution of this church, the resignation of that officer will be requested by the deacons.

SECTION 3: ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Officers will be elected at the annual business meeting. No officer should remain in the same office for more than three (3) consecutive terms. A year should intervene following the third consecutive term.

The number of deacons shall be three (3), six (6), nine (9), or twelve (12), determined by the needs of the church, and the availability of qualified men. The exact number of deacons will be decided at the February quarterly business meeting. The election of deacons shall be arranged so that one-third (1/3) of their number are elected annually.

If a vacancy occurs in any elected office, the deacons should appoint the person to fill that office until the next annual business meeting.

SECTION 4: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Paragraph A: Deacons (Trustees)

It is the duty of the deacons to assist the pastor to:

- promote the spiritual welfare of the church;
- be his counsellor;
- exercise special and prudent watch-care over the church membership;
- seek out such members as need assistance, and minister to them;
- inquire into the fitness and qualifications of applicants for membership;
- visit the sick;

– supervise the preparation of the elements of the Lord's Supper.

They should appoint a chairman, and a secretary of their number, and keep minutes of their monthly meetings in a permanent record.

They constitute a pulpit committee in securing pulpit supplies, and in recommending candidates for the pastorate.

They, with the pastor, constitute the discipline committee.

They should provide a summary report of their activities to the church at the annual business meeting, or as requested by the church.

They should provide ushers for all services.

They are the legal trustees of the church: Agreeable to the Act of Incorporation, and the laws of New York State, the deacons will act as trustees, and represent the church as its agent.

The deacons shall not have the authority to sell, lease, give away, or dispose of church property in any manner to exceed three hundred dollars (\$300) in value, nor to mortgage or encumber the same with debt to exceed the above amount; except as the church shall order by a corporate act.

The deacons shall provide for the care of the church property; to hold, repair, invest, and preserve the same, including hiring and supervising the custodian. They shall superintend any improvements that are not entrusted to a special committee of the church.

The deacons shall present a proposed budget for the consideration and approval of the church at the annual business meeting.

Paragraph B: Bible School Superintendent

The Bible School Superintendent is in charge of the administration and promotion of the Sunday Bible School, and the Daily Vacation Bible School, and shall work in close cooperation with the pastor and deacons. He should select candidates for Bible School teachers and officers, as required. All candidates must be approved by the pastor and deacons. He should provide a report at the annual business meeting, and as requested by the church, or the deacons.

Paragraph C: Treasurer

The treasurer shall:

- disperse monies of the church as directed by the church or the deacons;
- keep a true and fair record of accounts;
- provide a report to the church at the annual business meeting, and as requested by the church or the deacons. The annual report should include the following information:

- 1) beginning and ending balances for all accounts,
- 2) show annual expenditures, compared to budgeted categories,
- 3) itemize all major expenses.

The treasurer's books shall be audited by the auditing committee before each annual business meeting, and as requested by the deacons.

Paragraph D: Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall:

- receive all monies and collections;
- count the receipts with the assistance of another church member;
- record and deposit the receipts to the credit of the church;
- keep a separate account of each envelope holder, and furnish statements annually, and whenever requested;
- provide a report to the church at the annual business meeting, and as requested by the church, or the deacons. The annual report should show the amount of monies and property received during the previous fiscal year, and show the source, if from other than individual contributions.

In the secretary's absence, the deacons shall appoint a church member to assume these responsibilities.

Paragraph E: Clerk

The Clerk shall:

- keep true and complete minutes of the proceedings of the church;
- maintain records;
- Keep a church calendar;
- keep a register of all members of the church;
- give notice of all scheduled business meetings;
- write letters of dismissal as directed by the church;
- perform other duties as requested by the church;
- provide a report to the church at the annual business meeting, and as requested by the church, or the deacons. The annual report should include current membership status, and highlights of the previous year.

ARTICLE IX - MONETARY PRINCIPLES

SECTION 1: SUPPORT

The systematic giving of money for the support of the work of the Lord is worship, as well as duty. It must be kept on the plane of voluntary, freewill offering, untarnished by any hope of material gain. No monies shall be raised for the support of the church and its various activities by any but the Biblical plan of tithes, offerings, and gifts, and sacrificial love considerations for Christ's work. This shall be construed to mean that church suppers, bazaars, and professional fund-raising organizations, etc., are not a scriptural means of raising money.

SECTION 2: OBLIGATIONS

No financial obligation shall be placed upon the church, either as a mortgage, note or outstanding bill, or in any other form, unless money is in hand to meet the same, except as stated in **ARTICLE VII, SECTION 4, Paragraph A**, or by a corporate act of the church.

ARTICLE X - SUPPORTED AGENCIES (MISSIONS)

SECTION 1: POLICY

It is the policy of this church to support missions engaged principally in establishing local churches. Other individuals, or organizations, recommended by both the Missionary Committee and the deacons, can be considered for support.

The missions, and any other agencies, must be in hearty agreement with our Statement of Faith, both in doctrine and in practice.

SECTION 2: SUPPORT

The amount of support should be recommended by the Missionary Committee, and approved by the deacons and the church.

The annual missionary budget should indicate all supported agencies, and designate their monthly or yearly amount of support.

ARTICLE XI - CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

All officers of church organizations, and all teachers in the Bible School, must be members of this church in good standing. Non-members may serve as officers or teachers at the discretion of the deacons.

No church organizations may support any work, or missionary, without receiving approval from the deacons and pastor.

SECTION 1: THE BIBLE SCHOOL

Paragraph A: Purpose

The purpose of the Bible School is to present the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, instruct in Christian living, and promote regular church attendance.

Paragraph B: Organization

The Bible School shall function as part of the church, and not as a separate organization.

Any teacher whose conduct is contrary to the Covenant, Statement of Faith, or Constitution of this church shall, upon recommendation of the Bible School Superintendent, or the Bible School Council (Bible School teachers and officers), be referred to the deacons for necessary action.

All literature must be approved by the deacons and pastor.

All monies shall be turned over to the Financial Secretary of the church.

SECTION 2: SUBSIDIARY ORGANIZATIONS

No subsidiary organization of the church shall engage in any practice, or hold any policy contrary to the general position of the church itself. At each annual business meeting of the church, each organization should provide a report covering all activities and monies received and disbursed.

ARTICLE XII - COMMITTEES

SECTION 1: NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Paragraph A: Purpose

The purpose of the nominating committee is to recommend, for the annual business meeting, qualified and willing candidates to fill all vacant offices, and recommend messengers for the associational meetings.

Paragraph B: Selection

The nominating committee shall consist of two deacons and two voting members, selected

from among those present at the February quarterly business meeting.

Paragraph C: Duties

It is the responsibility of the nominating committee to consider recommendations from the congregation, and ensure that all members of the church are considered for all offices, subject to constitutional restrictions for each office.

They shall approach the proposed candidate as to his/her acceptance of candidacy.

Whenever possible, they should select two or more candidates for the same office.

Their recommendations shall be posted in the church building for at least two Sundays previous to the annual business meeting.

They shall provide ballot forms for the election of officers at the annual business meeting.

SECTION 2: MISSIONARY COMMITTEE

The missionary committee should consist of a deacon representative, chosen by the deacons, and three (3) church members, elected at the annual business meeting. They should be elected for a three-year term, one term ending each year.

The purpose of the missionary committee is to obtain missionary prospects, assist in the scheduling of missionaries and missions conferences, and maintain a missionary closet.

The missionary committee should provide a report to the church at each quarterly and annual business meeting, which includes a summary report of the mission activities for the previous quarter.

SECTION 3: AUDITING COMMITTEE

An auditing committee, consisting of three (3) members of the church, shall be appointed annually by the deacons to audit all accounts and certify all the records. They shall provide the certification of the same to the deacons at least one week prior to the Annual Business Meeting of the church. The auditing committee should provide a report at the Annual Business Meeting.

SECTION 4: OTHER COMMITTEES

The pastor, with the deacons, are authorized to appoint temporary committees, not covered by this Constitution. They will serve until the next Annual Election of Officers. Continuing committees must be elected by the church.

ARTICLE XIII - BUSINESS MEETINGS

SECTION 1: PROCEDURAL

Paragraph A: Business for Consideration

Any business item to be voted on by the church shall have been considered by the Deacons, or a constitutionally authorized committee acting in its scope. Any item from the floor should be brought back at the next business meeting, with a recommendation from the appropriate body.

Paragraph B: Voting Members and the Quorum

A voting member is an active member at least eighteen (18) years of age.

Thirty (30) percent of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.

Paragraph C: Order of Meetings

In the conduct of business, the rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order should govern all cases to which they apply. In exceptions, a majority vote shall establish the rule.

Paragraph D: Moderator

The pastor, his appointee, or in his absence, anyone whom the Deacons may select, shall serve as moderator at all business meetings of the church. The moderator shall be neutral in all matters of business, except when requested to give his comments.

SECTION 2: TYPES OF MEETINGS

Paragraph A: Annual Business Meeting

The official church fiscal year is from May 1 to the following April 30. The annual business meeting shall be held in two sessions:

- election of officers and adoption of the annual budget, on the third Wednesday of April;
- submission of annual reports and action on previous business, on the third Wednesday of May.

The dates of the annual business meeting may be changed at the discretion of the church.

Paragraph B: Quarterly Business Meetings

Quarterly Business Meetings should be held on the third Wednesday of August, November, and February. The date for a quarterly business meeting may be changed at the discretion of the church.

The purpose of the quarterly business meeting is for acting on seasonal business, submission of a brief report from the officers, and submission of recommendations from various committees.

The nominating committee should be elected at the February quarterly business meeting.

Paragraph C: Special Business Meeting

A special business meeting may be called at any time, by the pastor or the deacons. Public notice and description of the subject shall be given on the Sunday immediately preceding the meeting.

Meetings held for the calling or dismissing of a pastor, or for corporate business, shall be given public notice on the two Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.

No other business than that stated in the notice may be transacted.

Routine business may be transacted when necessary, without regard to the above requirements.

ARTICLE XIV - GENERAL

SECTION 1: USE OF THE CHURCH PROPERTY AND NAME

Use of the property for other than regularly scheduled meetings must first be approved by the deacons.

All gatherings off of the church property, held in the name of the church, must first be approved by the deacons.

No secret society will be permitted to hold services in the church.

All guest speakers must be in hearty agreement with our Statement of Faith; both on doctrine and practice, and must have the approval of the pastor and the deacons.

SECTION 2: CHURCH POLITY

The church polity not treated herein shall be governed by the principles set forth in The

SECTION 3: MESSENGERS

The following messengers should be elected at the Annual Election of Officers, who will, in addition to the pastor, represent the church at the annual associational meetings:

- The Empire State Fellowship of Regular Baptist Churches: 2 messengers
- The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches: 1 messenger

ARTICLE XV - AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1: DOCTRINAL

The doctrinal basis of this church, as stated in **Article III** of this Constitution, may not be amended or changed.

SECTION 2: OPERATIONAL

This constitution, except for **Article III**, may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present and voting at any annual or special business meeting. Notice of the proposed amendment shall have been presented and recorded in the minutes of a business meeting at least two (2) months prior to the vote.

A written notice, including the proposed amendment, shall be distributed to each voting member at least one (1) month prior to the meeting at which the action is desired. Notice of the meeting shall be given from the pulpit for the two (2) Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.

ARTICLE XVI - RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION

SECTION 1: DEFINITION

This church shall be a religious organization. No member shall receive profit from the organization except, of course, as remuneration for services rendered.

SECTION 2: DISSOLUTION

This church, if dissolved, will designate any organization, in good standing with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, as recipient of such funds and assets, pursuant to Section 140 of the Religious Corporation Law.

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH OF MARION, NEW YORK

CONSTITUTION

INDEX

| ARTICLE | TITLE | PAGE |
|---------|--|------|
| I | NAME | 1 |
| II | COVENANT | 1 |
| III | DOCTRINE (STATEMENT OF FAITH) | 2 |
| | SECTION 1: THE SCRIPTURES | 2 |
| | SECTION 2: THE TRUE GOD | 2 |
| | SECTION 3: THE DEVIL, OR SATAN | 3 |
| | SECTION 4: CREATION | 3 |
| | SECTION 5: THE FALL OF MAN | 3 |
| | SECTION 6: SALVATION | 4 |
| | SECTION 7: GRACE AND THE NEW BIRTH | 4 |
| | SECTION 8: JUSTIFICATION | 4 |
| | SECTION 9: SANCTIFICATION | 5 |
| | SECTION 10: THE SECURITY OF THE SAINTS | 5 |
| | SECTION 11: THE CHURCH | 5 |
| | SECTION 12: ORDINANCES | 6 |
| | SECTION 13: SEPARATION | 6 |
| | SECTION 14: CIVIL GOVERNMENT | 6 |
| | SECTION 15: THE RETURN OF CHRIST | 7 |
| | SECTION 16: THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED | 7 |
| IV | ASSOCIATIONS | 7 |
| V | ORDINANCES | 7 |
| VI | MEMBERSHIP | 8 |
| VII | THE PASTOR | 10 |
| VIII | ELECTED OFFICERS | 11 |
| IX | MONETARY PRINCIPLES | 15 |
| X | SUPPORTED AGENCIES (MISSIONS) | 15 |
| XI | CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS | 15 |
| XII | COMMITTEES | 16 |
| XIII | BUSINESS MEETINGS | 18 |
| XIV | GENERAL | 19 |
| XV | AMENDMENTS | 20 |
| XVI | RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION | 20 |