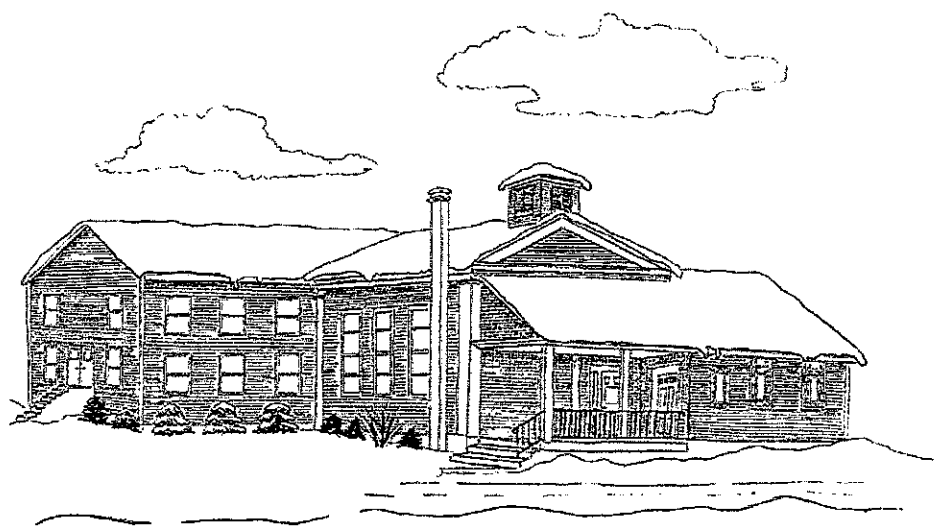


Grapeville Baptist Church



ESTABLISHED 1815

CHURCH CONSTITUTION

**THE
CONSTITUTION
OF THE
GRAPEVILLE
BAPTIST CHURCH**

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE GRAPEVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.

ARTICLE I

This church, which was built in 1815 and was known as the East Branch of the Greenville Church, met on September 26, 1825, for the purpose of collecting names of the brothers and sisters of said church who desired to be set off as a separate and independent body known by the name of the First Baptist Church of New Baltimore.

At a meeting of the Greenville Church as this matter was investigated, it was resolved that the East Branch do as they choose. A meeting was called for November 17 at the New Baltimore meeting house (Grapeville Church) to constitute this body into a separate and independent body. The church was so constituted on November 17, 1825.

At a meeting held February 27, 1875, the name was changed to the Grapeville Baptist Church, which name has been maintained to the present time.

This church was incorporated in January, 1966.

ARTICLE II

Purpose

A group of "BORN AGAIN" Christians, guided by the HOLY SPIRIT, agree to seek the establishing of a Baptist Church for worship and the maintaining of said house of worship. The purpose of this Church is to be solely for the declarative honor and glory of God.

1. Leading souls to Christ (pointing them first to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world).
2. For the building up of the spiritual life of its members through fellowship and the study of the scriptures.
3. Encouraging young people called of God into Christian service.
4. Spreading the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth.

ARTICLE III

Articles of Faith

1. We believe that the Bible is the complete and infallible Word of God, divinely inspired, and that it is the supreme and final authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice (II Timothy 3:16; Revelation 22:18-19; II Peter 1:20-21).
2. We believe there is only one eternally living and true God, subsisting in three distinct persons, FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT, the Almighty Maker, Preserver, and Governor of all worlds, who will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ in the last great day (Deuteronomy 6:4; II Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 28:19-20; John 1:3; Genesis 1:1; Nehemiah 9:6; Hebrews 1:3; Acts 17:30-31; Revelation 20:11).
3. We believe in the reality and the personality of Satan, who as Lucifer was the most beautiful angel in God's creation, perfect in all his ways until iniquity was found in him. We believe he is the son of the morning, the prince and the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, and the one who caused our first parents' sin (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Ephesians 2:2).
4. We believe God made man in His own image and that by Satan's subtle intervention, our first parents disobeyed God's command and by their disobedience subjected themselves and their posterity to a state of hopeless despair, having neither ability to help themselves nor disposition to seek relief from their Creator (Genesis 1:26-27, 3:1; Romans 1:18-32; 5:18-19).

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Articles of Faith

5. We believe that God the Father by his divine grace moved in love and appointed Jesus Christ His Only Begotten Son, who is very and eternal God as well as man, to become the Mediator between God and man to be accomplished by the shedding of His Blood on Calvary's Cross, which is the only effective sacrifice for sin (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 5:8; Phillipians 2:5-11; I Timothy 2:4-6; Hebrews 9:22, 10:1-14).

6. We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1:18-20; Luke 1:31).

7. We believe in the personality of the Holy Spirit, who is the third person of the Godhead, whose work is completely in connection with those who have been redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ. We believe His Work to be to indwell, to baptize and to seal into the Body of Christ, and to infill the Christian; to present the church, which is the Body and Bride of Christ, unto Him at His coming (Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 22:17; Ephesians 1:13; John 16:13-15; Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:22; II Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 7:4; Ephesians 5:31; II Corinthians 11:2).

8. We believe that God raised Jesus bodily from the dead (Ephesians 1:20) on the third day according to the Scriptures (I Corinthians 15:4), and that because He arose (Luke 20:28) all men shall rise (John 5:28) the believers unto life, being at the Second Coming of Christ (I Corinthians 15:23; Revelation 20:6) (Revelation 20:11-14) and unbelievers at the Great White Throne Judgment.

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Articles of Faith

9. We believe in the imminent, personal, pre-tribulation, pre-millennial return of Christ whose coming shall be silent and in the clouds to take His Church to be with him, also that Jesus will come again at the end of the tribulation in power and great glory, to reign for a thousand years with His Church over the Earth (Titus 2:13; I Corinthians 15:51-57; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 4:1-2, 19:11-16).

10. The Early Sign Gifts of the Church – We believe that God gives spiritual gifts to all believers. Some gifts of the Holy Spirit are permanent and are to be used throughout the Church Age. Other gifts were temporary and were given in the Apostolic Age for the purpose of founding the Church. Having fulfilled their purpose, they are not necessary and are not given today. We believe the temporary gifts include the gifts of apostleship, prophecy (foretelling), miracles, healings, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues (Rom. 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:13-14; II Cor. 12:12; Heb. 1:1-2; Heb. 2:3-4; Eph. 4:7-12). We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, according to His own will, for the sick and afflicted (I Cor. 12:7-11; Eph. 4:7-12; II Cor. 12:12; James 5:15).

ARTICLE III

Articles of Faith

11. Security of the Believer – We believe that once a person has truly been born again, that person can never lose their salvation (John 3:16;10:27-29; Ephesians 1:13-14).
12. We hold the state of marriage to be an expression of biblical standard and the union of a man and a woman. Violation of this sacred trust includes areas such as fornication, adultery, homosexuality, and co-habitation prior to marriage (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 3:34, Matthew 19:4-5, Romans 2:1, 2, 26, and 27, I Corinthians 6:9-10, Ephesians 5:3).

ARTICLE IV

Ordinances of the church

The church has two ordinances, namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, neither of which is saving ordinances (Ephesians 2:8-9). Baptism is observed at the beginning of the Christian life, and the Lord's Supper is observed throughout the Christian life.

A. Baptism

1. Baptism comes from the Greek word "baptizo", which means to dip, to plunge, or to immerse, as in the purpose of dying.
2. All believers are obliged to be baptized (Matthe28:18-20; Romans 6:1-6; Colossians 2:12).
3. The ordinance of baptism will be administered by the Pastor of the church or by a supply pastor in such time as the church is without a pastor.
4. Baptism is a public declaration of faith in Christ by the believer before man. It is his outward demonstration of an inward act, and is a picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. The Lord's Supper

1. Institution – The Lord Jesus administered This ordinance to His disciples just prior to His crucifixion (Matthew 26:26-29).
2. Obligation in Observance – In reference to the bread and to the cup the Lord Jesus commanded; This do in remembrance of Me (I Corinthians 11:23-28). This is to be observed regularly until His second coming.

ARTICLE IV

Ordinances of the church

3. Participation – Only those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Personal Saviour from sin and who are in fellowship with Him, shall participate (I Corinthians 11:28-30).
4. Definition – The elements used in observing the Lord's Supper is symbolic in meaning, reminding us of the broken body and shed Blood of Jesus Christ. It is to be observed "in remembrance of Him" and that is where it ends.

ARTICLE V

Principles of Practice

1. We believe that a Christian church consists of regenerated believers in Christ and that only such persons ought to be admitted (Acts 2:47; I Corinthians 1:2).
2. We believe that Christ has instituted two ordinances: Baptism and the Lord's Supper (see Article IV), neither of which is a saving ordinance. They are to be observed in the church by regenerated persons until His second coming.
3. We believe that baptism is by immersion in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and was practiced by the Apostles, and that none will be received into church membership without first being baptized.
4. When advice and wisdom are desired in case of difficulty, the church may send letters to other Baptist churches asking them to send delegates to meet with a delegation from this church, and the report of such council shall be laid before the church for further action.

ARTICLE V

Principles of Practice

5. Any member, who in the judgment of the church, gives evidence that he is called of God to the work of the ministry, after preaching in the hearing of the church, may be licensed to preach the Gospel of Christ.
6. If the church should decide that one of its licensed preachers has the Scriptural qualifications for ordination, a council may be called for the examination of the candidate.
7. We believe that the local body of believers has the power to rule itself, ordain its pastors, choose its officers, and to receive and discipline its own members, and must be free from all outside ecclesiastical or political authority.

ARTICLE VI

Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and angels, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love;

To promote the prosperity and spirituality of the church;

To sustain worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines of the church;

To give the church a sacred pre-eminence over all other institutions;

To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel to all nations;

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions;

To encourage and educate our children in the ways of the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:5-9)

To seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances;

To walk circumspectly in the world;

ARTICLE VI

Church Covenant

To be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment;

To avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger;

To abstain from the sale or use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage;

To abstain from all forms of activity which defiles our body, the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19-20), e.g. smoking and nonprescription drugs;

To be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour;

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love;

To aid each other in sickness and distress;

To cultivate Christian sympathy and courtesy;

To be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay;

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

ARTICLE VII

Membership

1. Qualifications

This church will welcome into its membership any person who has been “Born Again” (John 3:1-9) through faith in Jesus Christ as Personal Saviour, who is in complete agreement with the Doctrinal Beliefs, covenant of this church, and who has upon the profession of faith been baptized by immersion. Individuals may also be received into membership of this church by letter from another church of like faith and practice who have been baptized by immersion. Any person described by Romans 1:21-32, Proverbs 6:6-19 will not be considered for church membership.

2. Reception

Having received instructions from the Pastor in Scriptural teaching, all individuals desiring to unite with this church must meet with the Pastor and Deacons; the Deacons recommending to the church their acceptance into membership, if advisable. The candidate is to give his testimony (including salvation experience, baptism, and motive for joining this body) before the Pastor and Board of Deacons previous to a motion being made to accept him.

3. Classification

A. Active Members – a member who is in fellowship and actively supports the ministry of this church.

ARTICLE VII

Membership

B. Inactive Members – a member whose name has been transferred from the active membership after a reasonable length of time (1 year) because he has ceased support of the ministry of the church, whereupon he loses his vote in all church business. These may be reinstated as active upon resuming support of the ministry of the church.

4. Duties

Members are expected to be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life as set forth in our church covenant and Articles of Faith.

5. Rights

Active members 18 years of age or over may act and vote on buying or selling church property and in all corporate transactions of the church. Active members under 18 years of age may vote in all other business.

6. Transfer of retirement of members

A. A member in good standing may on request and by vote of the church be granted a letter of transfer to any church of like faith or practice.

B. Any member may request his name to be withdrawn from the membership of this church.

C. The Pastor and Deacons shall act as a committee to revise the church roll one month prior to annual meeting.

ARTICLE VIII

Discipline of the Church

1. In case of personal offense, the church shall act only after the offended one has carried out the commands of Matthew 18:15-17, encouraging the offender to obey Matthew 5:23-24.
2. In case of major misconduct, earnest effort shall be made to restore the offender to fellowship according to Galatians 6:1.
3. In case of continued sin, the offender shall be notified when the matter in question is to be brought before the church.
4. Meetings of discipline shall be closed to all but members.

ARTICLE IX

Church Officers

All officers of the church, the Sunday School Superintendent, and presidents or leaders of all organizations of the church shall be active members of the church in good and regular standing.

1. Pastor

The Pastor of this church shall be an ordained Baptist minister, or a ministerial student, in which case he must be a licensee.

He must accept the Doctrinal Statement and covenant of the church. He shall indicate his belief without mental reservation. He shall faithfully preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, administer its ordinances, preside at all prayer meetings and meetings of worship unless otherwise provided for whether such meetings are held on the Lord's day or during the week; and perform such other duties as pertain to his position as leader of the Lord's people.

He shall be chosen in such a manner as time and occasion require and the church directs. On or soon after entering the duties of pastorate, he shall be received into membership as any other member. This pastoral relation may be terminated by 30 days notice from either the Pastor or the church.

He shall meet regularly with the Board of Deacons; once a month if possible. He shall be a member ex-officio of all church boards and committees.

ARTICLE IX

Church Officers

2. Deacons

They shall be chosen as nearly as possible for their administrative ability and spiritual life as defined in the Scriptural qualifications for Deacons (I Timothy 3:1-13). The church shall elect the Deacons by a majority of two-thirds of the members present and voting. The Deacons shall be elected to a three-year trial term, then if re-elected may serve another term. The number of deacons is to be determined by the need and the choice of the church.

The Deacons, with the Pastor, shall constitute a committee on membership, a committee on visitation, assist baptismal candidates, be responsible for the preparation and distribution of the elements of the Lord's Supper, assist the Pastor, and in his absence see that a leader is provided for services and a pulpit supply for the Lord's Day.

3. Trustees

There shall be 5 Trustees; two to be elected each year to serve a term of three years; the fifth to be elected every third year for a term of three years. Immediately after the annual election of officers, the Board of Trustees shall meet and organize and elect a chairman and secretary. Trustees shall receive, hold in trust, and manage for the use of the church real estate and other property which it has and also all bonds, mortgages, investments and future legacies

ARTICLE IX

Church Officers

and gifts which may at any time become the property of the church. They shall keep the church edifice and parsonage and other buildings in good repair throughout and adequately insured against fire and liability. They shall act as the legal representatives of the church and shall be responsible for executing legal documents. They may provide for ordinary supplies up to a total of \$300.00 without a special vote of the church.

The Board of Trustees shall be a body of corporate, known as the Trustees of the Grapeville Baptist Church as provided in the original certificate of incorporation recorded in the office of the Registrar of Deeds of Greene County of New York State.

The election of trustees, their term of office, their authority, and methods of conducting business shall be in accord with the provision of the statutes of the State of New York.

The Board of Trustees shall institute and maintain a system of finance consistent with the Scriptures (II Corinthians 9:7; I Corinthians 16:2). There shall be no form of commercialization in the church in any department.

The Board of Trustees shall recommend an annual church budget at the annual meeting. The Trustees shall first have the authority of the church by a majority vote before:

- a. borrowing money or placing debt on the church,

ARTICLE IX

Church Officers

- b. changing any bond or investment of the church,
- c. buying or selling any real estate of the church

4. Clerk

The clerk shall be elected by the church annually by ballot. The clerk shall keep a faithful record of the proceedings of the church at its business meetings. The clerk shall post a notice of such meetings, including the purpose, in the church bulletin at least two weeks in advance of such meetings, this notice to be read from the pulpit two Sundays in advance.

The clerk shall call to order all meetings, leaving floor open for nomination for moderator. The moderator, so elected serves only for the day. The church clerk serves as clerk of the meeting.

The clerk shall keep a registry of membership of the church with the date of reception and removal. The clerk shall issue letters of transfer or dismissal voted by the church; preserve on file all communications, documents, and official reports; and notify all persons elected to offices and committees within two weeks of their election. The clerk shall report on all communications intended for the church and also conduct, as may be necessary, its correspondence.

ARTICLE IX

Church Officers

5. Treasurer

The treasurer shall be elected preferably from the Board of Trustees by the church bi-annually by ballot. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive all monies from the financial secretary. The treasurer shall keep a true and fair book of all accounts and give a written report quarterly to the church. The treasurer shall pay promptly all bills of regular expense of the church.

6. Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall be elected by the church bi-annually, overlapping terms with the treasurer by ballot. It shall be the duty of the financial secretary to receive all monies, count all offerings with the assistance of the treasurer, and keep a record of all monies received. After making the proper record of the monies received, the financial secretary shall turn over the offerings to the church treasurer, and give a report to the church quarterly of the monies received.

7. Missionary Treasurer

The missionary treasurer shall be elected annually by the church by ballot. It shall be the duty of the missionary treasurer to receive all monies for missionary purposes and keep a record of money received. The missionary treasurer shall send money received each month as instructed by the missionary budget accepted by the church at the annual meeting and any money designated for special missionaries or work. The missionary treasurer shall give a written report to the church quarterly.

ARTICLE X

Committees

1. Missionary Committee

The Missionary Committee shall consist of the Pastor, Missionary Treasurer, the Chairman and one member of the Ladies Missionary Ministries, the Sunday School Superintendent or his assistant (representing the Sunday School and the D.V.B.S. missionary program), and two members of the church elected at the annual meeting. The Pastor shall preside at its first meeting at which time a chairman shall be elected and such other divisions of the work made as may seem necessary.

It shall be the duty of this committee to promote the missionary spirit of the church by all means and measures that promise the largest fruitage in missionary zeal and funds. It is the duty of this committee to furnish speakers, work, etc... for the monthly fellowship suppers.

2. Pulpit Committee

When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate, the Church shall appoint a Pulpit Committee consisting of the Board of Deacons, one Trustee, the Church Clerk, one Sunday School officer, and one from the Ladies Missionary Ministry. Each shall be a member of the church in good and regular standing.

It shall be the duty of the Pulpit Committee to make careful and diligent inquiry concerning possible candidates for the pastorate of this church. Men shall be called for the purpose of supplying the pulpit for the

ARTICLE X

Committees

regular services of the church. When a supply speaker has been heard and the general feeling of the membership is that they would like to hear him again, he will be asked to return to fill the pulpit as a candidate for the pastorate. When such a man has been heard at least two times (more if possible), a meeting of the members shall be called by the Church Clerk and a vote taken to determine if he shall be called as pastor. If he is not called, other men may be considered in the order outlined above.

3. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of seven members elected annually by the church by ballot. It shall be their duty to meet preceding the annual meeting for the selection of a slate of officers and committee members to be presented to the church at the annual meeting.

4. Music Committee

The Music Committee shall meet quarterly to plan special music for the church, mission, and nursing homes. They shall see that a pianist is available for each service and oversee the music ministry of the church.

ARTICLE X

Committees

5. Remembrance Committee

This Committee shall consist of the Pastor's wife and the wives of the Deacons. It shall be the duty of this committee to send suitable remembrance in case of death or sickness of church members or the immediate family. They shall also see that flowers are provided for the church services.

6. Social Committee

It shall be the duty of the Social Committee to plan all social activities of the church, seeing at all times that they are in perfect accord with Scripture.

7. Church Care Committee

This Committee shall be composed of all the ladies of the membership. Ladies who are not members may volunteer for this committee if they desire. A chairman shall be chosen annually by ballot by the church. It shall be the duty of the committee to clean the church weekly and to semi-annually give a thorough cleaning of the church.

ARTICLE X

Committees

8. Youth Promotion Committee

This committee shall consist of the Pastor, the Youth director, and the Sunday School Superintendent. It shall be the duty of the committee to coordinate all youth activities. This committee shall also coordinate the educational program of the Sunday School, Junior Church, and Young People's Groups and oversee the camp program of the church.

9. Sunday School Teachers Committee

The Sunday School Teachers Committee shall consist of all Sunday School Teachers and helpers (or assistants), and the Sunday School Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. The chairman of this group shall be the Sunday School Superintendent.

It is the duty of this committee to have charge over all functions of the Sunday School Department, working in accord with all church doctrine, as recorded in Article III.

ARTICLE XI

Meetings

1. Sunday Service – Sunday Bible School, Morning Worship, Young People's and Evening Service.
2. Mid-Week Bible Study and Prayer Meeting
3. Communion Service – to be observed at least every two months, ordinarily to be held the first Sunday in every second month; February, April, June, August, October and December.
4. Covenant Meeting - to be at the time of the Mid-week Prayer meeting and to be the last Mid-week meeting before Communion.
5. Annual Church Corporate Meeting – This meeting shall be held at the church on the third Thursday of April. At such corporate meetings, the presence of at least six (6) qualified, voting members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum, and all matters or questions shall be decided by a majority of the qualified voters voting thereon. The qualified voters shall be active members of this church. The annual elections shall take place at this meeting.
6. Business Meeting – This meeting shall be held on the third Thursday of April and October. The church treasurer and financial secretary and all other financial offices will submit written reports, quarterly.

ARTICLE XI

Meetings

7. Special Business Meetings – These meetings may be called by the Pastor, Board of Deacons, or the Board of Trustees, or by a written request being presented to the church clerk and signed by seven members, five of which must be adult males who are active members. Advance notice of all business meetings shall be given two Sundays from the pulpit except under extraordinary circumstances. Questions of parliamentary rules of order not specifically provided for shall be determined by Roberts Rules of Order which are hereby accepted as standard.

ARTICLE XII

Finances of the Church

Funds necessary for all expenses shall be raised by voluntary contributions. (I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 9:7). Budgets shall be presented to the church for approval annually by the Board of Trustees and the Missionary Committee.

ARTICLES XIII

Amendments to the Constitution

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at any annual meeting of the Church, or at a meeting especially called for that purpose; the proposed amendment inserted in the call, but no changes shall be made in ARTICLES II, III, or V, except by a unanimous vote of the church members at the time of such change. The proposed amendments must be presented to the church in writing at the business meeting not less than one month before the time of the proposed action, and read from the pulpit on the Lord's Day next succeeding such proposal.