

CONSTITUTION

of

Cornerstone Baptist Church

Placing our trust wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, and believing in the teachings of the Holy Bible as the plenary and verbally inspired Word of the Living God, we have joined ourselves together with one another as a body of baptized believers, and we adopt this constitution as a declaration of our convictions so that we may carry on the Lord's work decently and in order.

Article 1: Name

The name of this organization shall be Cornerstone Baptist Church of East Durham. Our first meeting as a body of believers was held on 8 March, 1998.

Article 2: Purpose

Guided by the Holy Spirit, we, as a group of born-again Christians, agree to establish and maintain a Baptist Church for the purpose of evangelism, education, outreach, discipleship, and ministry. The stated purpose of this church shall be to bring glory to God by loving Him with all our hearts, and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

To this end, we will deliberately seek the unsaved and present them with the truth of the gospel; we will grow in the faith; we will minister to our community in the name of Jesus Christ; we will train workers to carry on the ministry; we will provide opportunities for the church to disciple each other, and we will create opportunities for fellowship, edification, and accountability.

Article 3: Doctrinal Beliefs

1. We believe that the Bible is the complete and infallible Word of God, verbally and literally inspired as found in the original manuscripts, and is the supreme and final authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice. 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21
2. We believe in one God eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. John 14:16, Matthew 3:16-17
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, and that Jesus Christ is True God and True Man without sin. Matthew 1:20, Luke 1:35
4. We believe that Jesus Christ is the one all-sufficient mediator between God and man. 1 Timothy 2:5
5. We believe in the personality of the Holy Spirit and that His ministry is to reveal Christ to men in the regeneration and sanctification of their souls. John 16:7-11, John 14:17
6. We believe that man was created in the image of God, and that he sinned and thereby incurred spiritual death, which is everlasting punishment. Genesis 1:26, Genesis 3:3
7. We believe in the vicarious death of the Lord Jesus Christ for our sins, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the grounds of His shed blood, in the resurrection of His body, His ascension into Heaven and His personal and visible return to the earth. 1 Peter 1:19, 1 Corinthians 15:3

8. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, both the just and the unjust, the righteous going to everlasting life in glory with Christ and the wicked to everlasting punishment. Acts 24:15, John 5:28-29
9. We believe that salvation is the gift of God and is received and experienced only through personal faith in Him. Ephesians 2:8-9, Acts 16:31
10. We believe that the immersion of Believer in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is baptism as set forth in the New Testament. Romans 6:1-11, Matthew 3:13-17
11. We believe that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper commemorates His death until He comes. Matthew 26:26-30, I Corinthians 11:23-30
12. We believe that each local church has the right to be independent and autonomous and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority. Acts 6:2-3, Acts 4:18-20
13. We believe that each Christian has the privilege and responsibility to serve and exercise their spiritual gifts for the family of God each according to their spiritual gifts for the betterment of each other, our church, and our community at large. Romans 12: 1-8

Article 4 – Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Holy Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and his angles, 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:

1. To walk together in Christian love;
2. To strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort;
3. To promote its prosperity and spirituality;
4. To sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines;
5. To give sacred preeminence over all institutions of human origin;
6. To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all the nations;
7. To maintain family and private devotions;
8. To religiously educate our children in all matters of faith and in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior;
9. To seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances;
10. To walk circumspectly in the world;
11. To be just in our dealings, faithful in our commitments, and exemplary in our conduct;
12. To avoid all gossip, back biting, and excessive anger;
13. To avoid the use of any and all mind altering illegal drugs, including excessive use of alcohol; and to seek help if when tempted or struggling with these issues;
14. To protect our children from all forms of sexual sin and perversions such as are common to unregenerate man, by not being involved with the reading, viewing, or purchase of pornography;
15. And to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

Article 5: Affiliation

We believe that the Cornerstone Baptist Church of East Durham, New York, has the power to rule and govern itself, and to choose its own officers. This shall be an independent Baptist church, without interference from any ecclesiastical or political authority.

Article 6: Membership

Section 1: Qualifications

This church will consider for active membership any person who has been born again (John 3:7) through faith in Jesus Christ as his personal savior; who is in agreement with the doctrinal beliefs (as expressed in Article III), who agrees to be bound by the provisions of this constitution; and who has upon that profession of faith been baptized by immersion (Section 3 of Article 6). The elders may waive the qualification of baptism by immersion if there is a demonstrable medical need, as long as the provision of baptism has been met.

Section 2: Membership Categories

Voting Membership (members in good standing)

1: Active Membership: This category includes members who are eighteen (18) years or older, who regularly support the church in attendance, prayer, work, and in giving to its ministries.

2: Honorary Membership: This category allows missionaries, college students, military personnel, pastors, and home bound individuals to retain membership while unable to attend regularly. They shall have the same voting privileges as active members. Members in this category shall not be used to determine the quorum.

Non-Voting Membership

1: Inactive Membership: This category includes members who may worship with us occasionally, but do not consistently support the church in attendance, work, or financially supporting its ministries.

Voting members will be moved to this category after six consecutive months of non-attendance at the Sunday morning service, unless, upon being advised of this move, sufficient cause is demonstrated to justify continued absence.

Any member who remains in the inactive membership category for one (1) year will be removed from the church roll, unless upon being advised of intent of removal, extenuating circumstances are brought to the attention of the Board of Elders which would justify retention in the inactive category, subject to annual review.

2: Youth Membership: This category includes those who are twelve (12) years or younger who have completed the membership training class set up by the Pastor/Elders.

Non-Membership

This category includes people who regularly support this church by attendance and giving but are not voting members. Because of their regular support of the church in attendance, prayer, work, and in giving to its ministries, they may attend Church business meetings, but shall not have a voice at these meetings. At the discretion of the Church leadership, special guests may be invited to address specific issues.

Section 3: Reception

Prospective members, having received instruction from the pastor and/or elders in the scriptural teachings regarding our distinctive principles, and desiring to unite with this church, must meet with the board of elders, and upon their recommendation shall testify before the church. This testimony shall state their faith and desires for fellowship with the church. After a majority vote of the church members

present and voting, they shall be accepted into the church membership.

Section 4: Responsibilities

Members are expected:

1. To be faithful to all duties essential to the Christian life;
2. To seek to win the lost to Christ;
3. To attend regularly the services of the church;
4. To give systematically to the financial support of the church's total ministry;
5. To share in the church's missionary interests and its total ministry;
6. To seek diligently the spiritual advancement of the church.

Section 5: Rights

Members in good standing may act and vote on buying or selling church property, and in all corporate transactions of the church, at any church meeting.

Section 6: Church Roll

Transfer of membership:

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

Status:

The pastor, elders, and church clerk shall act as a committee to update the church roll each year prior to the annual meeting. The committee's recommendation shall be acted upon by the church members at the annual meeting. The church roll shall indicate a person's membership status at all times.

Reinstatement:

Reinstatement to active membership, upon establishing a record of attendance and support, may be requested by a non-voting member after six months of regular attendance. Upon the recommendation of the elders, he will be reinstated to the active member list.

Article 7: Clergy

The pastoral staff of Cornerstone Baptist Church shall consist only of men called to pastoral ministry, who have had their calling affirmed by the body of Christ as evidenced by formal ordination or licensure. While we affirm that both man and woman were created in the image of God, equal in standing and gifting before God, distinctions in masculine and feminine roles and responsibilities in the church are part of God's created order.

The pastoral staff of Cornerstone Baptist Church, whether compensated or not, must be in complete and unequivocal agreement with these positions. Prospective candidates for pastoral staff must be in complete and unequivocal agreement with this as well to be considered for pastoral ministry. If at any time a member of the pastoral staff of Cornerstone Baptist Church changes his understanding on these matters and can no longer be in complete and unequivocal agreement with the spirit of these stipulations, he shall immediately inform the board of elders and step down from his position of leadership.

Article 8: Marriage

The pastoral staff, including elders, of Cornerstone Baptist Church shall under no circumstances counsel toward, perform, or make church facilities available for same sex marriages or ceremonies.

The pastoral staff of Cornerstone Baptist Church, whether compensated or not, must be in complete and unequivocal agreement with these positions. Prospective candidates for pastoral staff must be in complete and unequivocal agreement with this as well to be considered for pastoral ministry. If at any time a member of the pastoral staff can no longer be in complete and unequivocal agreement with the spirit of these stipulations, he shall immediately inform the board of elders and step down from his position of leadership.