

ARTICLE I. COVENANT AND DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Section 1. Church Covenant

Having been, as we believe, brought by divine grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, as our Savior, and to give ourselves wholly to Him, we do now solemnly and joyfully covenant with each other to walk together in him, with brotherly love; to His glory as our common Lord. We do, therefore, in His strength engage:

That we will exercise a Christian care and watchfulness over each other, and faithfully warn, exhort, and admonish each other as occasion may require;

That we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but will uphold the public worship of God and the ordinances of his house;

That we will not omit private and family prayer, nor neglect the great duty of religiously training our children, and those under our care, for the service of Christ and the enjoyment of Heaven;

That, as we are the light of the world, and the salt of the earth, we will seek divine aid to enable us to deny ungodliness and every worldly lust and to walk circumspectly in the world that we may win the souls of men;

That we will cheerfully contribute of our property according as God has prospered us for the maintenance of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, for the support of the poor and to spread the Gospel over the earth;

That we will in all conditions, even till death, strive to live to the glory of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Section 2. Doctrinal Statement

1. The Holy Scriptures. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God breathed. (II Timothy 3:16, 17; II Peter 1:20, 21; John 16:12, 13)
1. The Godhead. We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deuteronomy 6:4; II Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 28:19)
3. The Person and Work of Christ.
 - a. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men. (John 1:1, 2, 14; Luke 1:3, 5)
 - b. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice; and, that our justification

is made sure by His literal physical resurrection from the dead. (Romans 3:24, 25; I Peter 2:24; Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 1:3-5)

- c. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, and is now exalted to the right hand of God, where, as our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9-10; Hebrews 9:24; 7:25; Romans 8:34; I John 2:1, 2)
4. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them into the day of redemption. (John 16:8-11; II Corinthians 3:6; I Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13, 14)
 - b. We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who guides believers into all truth; and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit. (John 16:13; I John 2:20, 27; Ephesians 5:18)
 5. The Total Depravity of Man. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and, that man is totally depraved, and of himself utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Genesis 1:26, 27; Romans 3:22, 23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12)
 6. Salvation. We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. (Ephesians 2:8-10; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 1:18, 19)
 7. The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers.
 - a. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1, 38, 39; I Corinthians 1:4-8; I Peter 1:5)
 - b. We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word; which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Romans 13:13, 14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15)
 8. The Two Natures of the Believer. We believe that every saved person possesses two natures with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit: and that all claims to eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural. (Romans 6:13; 8:12, 13; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 3:5-9)
 9. Separation. We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful

pleasures, practices and associations is commanded by God. (II Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 12:1, 2:14:13; I John 2:15-17; II John 9-11; II Corinthians 6:14-7:1)

10. Missions. We believe it is the obligation of the saved to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind. (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; II Corinthians 5:19, 20)

11. The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts.

- a. We Believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of all His gifts; and, that the gifts of evangelists, pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today; and, that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established. (I Corinthians 12:4-11; II Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12)
- b. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will, for the sick and afflicted. (John 15:7; I John 5:14, 15)

12. The Church.

- a. We believe that the church, which is the body and espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born again persons in this present age. (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:25-27; I Corinthians 12:12-14; II Corinthians 11:2)
- b. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28-32; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11)

13. The Ordinances.

- a. We believe that every saved person should give witness to his new life by receiving water baptism by immersion. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 2:41; 18:8)
- b. We believe that every saved person who is living a life of victory over sin should partake of the Lord's Table, thus remembering the Lord's death till He come. (I Corinthians 11:23-26)

14. Dispensationalism. We believe in the dispensational view of Bible interpretation but reject the extreme teaching known as 'Hyper-Dispensationalism,' such as that teaching which opposes either the Lord's Table or water baptism as a Scriptural means of testimony for the Church in this age. (Ephesians 3:2-4; Romans 6:14).

15. The Personality of Satan. We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the fall; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and, that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6, 7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; Revelation 20:10)

16. The Second Advent of Christ. We believe in that 'Blessed Hope' the personal, imminent, pre-tribulation, and premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to earth with His saints, to establish His Millennial Kingdom. (I Thessalonians

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

17. The Eternal State.

- a. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matthew 15:46; John 5:28-29; 11:25-26; Revelation 20:5, 6, 12, 13)
- b. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; Revelation 20:4-6; II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; I Thessalonians 4:16, 17)
- c. We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment. (Luke 16:19-26; Matthew 25:41-46; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 6, 7; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 20:11-15)

18. Marriage and Family (*amended January 2013*). We believe that marriage was ordained by God at creation as the sacred union of one man and one woman. Christian marriage is a representation of Christ's relationship to His church. We also believe that children are a blessing from the Lord. Thus all human life is sacred and worthy of protection from the moment of conception. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:24; Psalm 127 and 128; 139:13-16; Matthew 19:1-10; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4)

RECOGNIZING THAT WE ARE LIVING IN A DAY WHEN MEN HAVE DEPARTED FROM THE FAITH, WE THEREFORE, AS A SAFEGUARD AGAINST MODERNISM AND UNBELIEF, DECLARE THAT THE ABOVE DOCTRINAL STATEMENT IS NEVER TO BE CHANGED NOR AMENDED. (I Timothy 4:1; II Timothy 4:3; II Peter 3:3)

ARTICLE II. THE NAME

The name of this Church shall be: 'Avoca Bible Church' of Avoca, Wisconsin.

ARTICLE III. OBJECT

The object of this church, being exclusively organized for religious, charitable, and educational purposes, is the salvation of souls, the edification of Christians through the teaching of God's Word, the world-wide proclamation of God's saving grace expressed in the shed blood and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary, the promotion of Godly worship, the defense of "The Faith Once Delivered," and cooperation with Christian activity functioning in harmony with God's Holy Word—the Bible—until He come.

ARTICLE IV. CHURCH AFFILIATION

The Avoca Bible Church shall never be subject to the dictates of any ecclesiastical body. It is to oppose ecclesiastical autocracy wherever found, making no compromise with those who would substitute the ideas of fallible men for the divinely-given teachings of the word of God.

We Maintain fellowship with those who practice a separated stand for ‘the faith once delivered unto the saints’.

As a safeguard against ecclesiastical dictatorship, modernism, unbelief, and compromise, this article is never to be changed nor amended. (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Jude 3; Revelation 1:9)

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Persons who have accepted Christ as their Savior, and give assurance of their desire to live a consistent Christian life, and who give assurance of their willingness to abide by the Constitution and show evidence of a satisfactory attitude toward the doctrinal standards of this Church, shall be eligible for membership.

Section 2. Persons can be received into membership upon confession of faith, restatement of faith, or a statement of faith with letter, conditioned upon an examination satisfactory to the Official Board of the Church.

Section 3. Members are expected to conscientiously strive to live according to light revealed to them by the Holy Spirit through God’s Word, and to wholeheartedly support the services and activities of the Church as God may reveal his will to them.

Section 4. It shall be within the province of the Official Board to order a review of the Church membership whenever they deem it necessary. At this time members who seem to manifest inconsistency or flagrant sin in their Christian lives, a wrong attitude toward the Church’s doctrinal standards, or show indifference toward the life and work of the Church shall be investigated for the purpose of remedying any weakness in their Christian lives. It shall be within the province of those investigating to recommend to the Official Board that the person (or persons) in question be dropped from the membership roll.

Section 5. Letters transferring membership may be granted by the Official Board only when the church to which transfer is desired is stated and when such request is made by a member in good standing.

Section 6. The name of any person dropped from the roll of the Church shall be reported at a regularly convened congregational meeting.

ARTICLE VI. GOVERNMENT

Section 1. The government of this Church is vested in its voting membership and executed through the Official Board.

Section 2. The Official Board shall be the executive of the congregation in its dealings with the pastors, employees, affiliated organizations, branch works and any outside denominations and organizations.

Section 3. The Official Board shall have supervision over the business transactions and general work of the Church, its organizations and branch works.

Section 4. The official Board shall hold in trust, titles to air property belonging to the Church. It shall not encumber with loan, transfer, sell or purchase any real estate for the Church except by express authorization conveyed through a majority vote of the membership present and voting at a Constitutionally called business meeting.

Section 5. The Official Board shall have authority to appoint individuals or committees for the transaction of its business.

Section 6. The Official Board shall have authority to call congregational meetings for the purpose of recommending such actions as call for a vote of the membership, and for the purpose of receiving advice or instruction from the membership.

Section 7. The Official Board shall handle and consider suggestions, recommendations and grievances upon the part of any member or organization affiliated with the Church provided they are presented in written form with signatures.

Section 8. The Official Board shall direct the examination and reception of applicants for Church membership and pass upon their fitness.

Section 9. The Official Board shall perform such other duties as may be defined by this constitution and shall at all times be subject to the majority vote of the Congregation.

Section 10. The deciding factor in any vote taken in an Official Board meeting shall be a majority vote of the members present and voting.

Section 11. The officers shall be selected by a nominating committee and elected by vote of the membership.

Section 12. During the month of November the Official Board shall appoint a nominating committee whose duty it shall be to place in nomination at the annual business meeting of the church, candidates for election to the elective offices of the Church. This committee is to submit a slate of two candidates from each elective office except for assistants to any office and it shall be understood that in such offices that the one receiving the second highest votes shall be the assistant.

The Nominating committee shall consist of three members including its chairman, to be chosen from and representing as follows: One from the elders, one from the deacons, and one from the membership.

The Nominating Committee shall place in nomination at a regularly called meeting of the membership a candidate for election to fill vacancies in the elective offices of the Church. It shall be within the province of the membership to accept or reject in part or whole the Committee's report by majority vote. In the event the report is rejected in part or whole, this committee shall continue to function, unless otherwise ordered by the membership until a slate submitted is fully accepted by the membership.

The Nominating Committee shall thoroughly investigate the qualifications and capabilities of every man considered for office. When a majority of the Committee are agreed to consider a candidate, the proposed candidate shall be examined in a regularly called meeting of the Committee. A member of

the Committee shall read to the candidate for nomination the constitutional requirements for the office in question, and when considering one as an Elder or Deacon shall read from the Bible the Scriptural requirements set forth in this Constitution for that particular office. The Committee shall examine the candidate as to his loyalty to the Constitution, his Christian life and especially his willingness and ability to live in accordance with any standards maintained by the Church or Official Board. No candidate shall be placed in nomination unless agreed upon by three or more members of the Committee.

The Committee shall require any candidate placed in nomination to sign the doctrinal statement and any standards that may be established by the Church or Official Board.

It shall be impossible for the committee to place in nomination any candidate who cannot answer in the affirmative and does not subscribe in writing to the following questions:

1. Have you publicly confessed Christ as personal savior and experienced the new birth set forth in John 3:3; Titus 3:5?
2. Are you in hearty agreement with the doctrinal statement of this church and Constitution?
3. Are you endeavoring to live a surrendered, prayerful Christian life, especially as regards loyal obedience to the moral precepts taught in the Word of God for believers (James 4:4; Titus 2:11-15), including:
 - a. Separation from the world (I John 2:15-17)
 - b. Freedom from membership in oath-bound religious or social secret organizations. (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1)
 - c. A moral conduct beyond reproach and freedom from carnal indulgence, such as the use of intoxicating liquors, tobacco in all its forms and narcotic drugs, all of which are harmful, a stumbling block and out of harmony with a dedicated life, as set forth in: Romans 8:12, 13; 12:1,2; 13:14; 14:21. Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:1-10; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 3:5-9.

Section 13. In case of vacancies in offices on the Official board, the Board shall appoint a nominating committee to submit candidates for unexpired terms to the congregation for election; said committee to be composed and function in accordance with Section 12 of Article VI. In even an unexpired term be six months or less, said vacancy can be filled at the discretion of the Official Board.

Section 14. No person shall be allowed to become a regular Sunday School teacher, a leader of young people's societies, missionary societies or any other auxiliary functioning with this Church, except they be approved by the Official Board in accordance with Section 12, Article VI of this Constitution.

Section 15. The Official board and each organization of the Church shall have the privilege of appointing its own chairman at the first meeting following their election.

Section 16. Voting members must have attained the age of 16 years.

ARTICLE VII. PASTORS AND OFFICERS

Section 1. There shall be elected as officers of the Church two or more elders, two or more deacons, a treasurer, and a Church clerk. The treasurer or clerk may also be an elder or deacon. These officers with the pastor shall constitute the Official Board.

Section 2. There shall be two elders for the first seventy-five members or less, and an additional elder when the membership has passed seventy-five. The same allotment shall apply to deacons.

Section 3. Term of office for the elders shall be three years. Term of office for the deacons shall likewise be three years. Term of office for Church Clerk, and treasurer shall be one year. The first election shall be as follows: one elder for three years, and one for two years; one deacon for two years and one for one year.

- a. An Elder or Deacon, upon completion of one full term in office, shall not be eligible for election to the office of Elder or Deacon during the year immediately following his term. This shall apply to any person elected to fill the unexpired term of an Elder or Deacon, provided said unexpired term is two years or more in length.
- b. Any Pastor's or Officer's service may be terminated for cause at any time by vote of the membership, after a fair and impartial trial, conducted under the supervision of the Official Board, at a meeting called in accordance with Section 4 or Article IX, or Section 6 of Article VI.
- c. All officers shall serve until their successors are elected, except as provided in paragraph b of Section 3 Article VII.

Section 4. A Pastor or any assistant or associate Pastor may be called, upon a vote of the membership, after recommendation by the Official Board, or by a committee appointed by the Official Board and membership. Pastors shall serve until their pastorate is terminated by resignation or by request of the membership. Pastors shall give a minimum of thirty days' notice before termination of their service. In the event the membership votes, the Pastor's or any assistant or associate pastor's service be terminated abruptly, the salary involved shall continue for thirty days.

ARTICLE VII. PASTORS AND OFFICERS

Section 1. The Pastor shall have general oversight of the Spiritual life, regular services and administration of the sacraments of the Church, shall be ex-officio member of the Board and committees connected with the Church or any of its organizations, act as moderator in the congregational meetings of the Church unless otherwise directed by this Constitution or ordered by vote of the Church, and shall conscientiously perform such duties as may be arranged between the official board and himself. If at any time his personal belief, preaching or teaching shall not be in full accord with the doctrinal standard and statement of this Church, his services as Pastor shall be terminated.

Section 2. Any assistant Pastor or Pastors or any employee of this Church shall perform such duties as may be designated by the Pastor, Official Board or its authorized representative.

Section 3. The Elders shall be responsible with the Pastor for the Spiritual welfare of the Church; they shall assist in ministering the sacraments of the Church and shall make the necessary provisions for same.

They shall be expected to visit the sick and sorrowing of the membership, investigate delinquents and endeavor to remedy any Spiritual weakness in the lives of its members. They shall faithfully perform all other duties designated by this Constitution or pertaining to their office. They shall endeavor by God's grace to live and serve in full conformity with the standards set forth in this Constitution for their particular office and especially as found in the Word of God. (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9)

Section 4. The Deacons shall have the care of the physical properties and finances of the Church and shall hold themselves in readiness to assist in guiding the Spiritual life of the Church, ministering its sacraments, and perform any necessary calling. They shall cooperate with the pastor in suggesting missionary or benevolent expenditures for approval of the Board. They shall endeavor by God's grace to live and serve in full conformity with the standards set forth in this Constitution for their particular office, and especially as found in the Word of God. (I Timothy 3:8-13)

Section 5. The Church clerk shall keep an accurate record of all congregational business meetings and any other meetings designated by the congregation or Official Board upon request of either body. He shall carry on and maintain complete record of all correspondence of the Church membership, admissions, dismissions, deaths, baptisms and ordination services and such other records as may pertain to his office. He shall also have in custody any other papers, records or other documents as directed by the congregation or Official Board.

Section 6. The Treasurer shall have charge of all moneys connected with the Church except the benevolences. He shall keep a checking account and account to the Church for all moneys received and disbursed. All checks shall be made out in the name of the Church over the signature of the treasurer. All Church officers or the Pastor shall have access to the books at any time. A financial statement showing the true status of all funds for the fiscal year of the Church shall be read at the Annual Meeting of the Church each year.

In the event the treasurer is unable to perform his duties, or there is a vacancy in this office, the duties of the treasurer may be taken care of by any person authorized by the Deacons until action is taken by the Official Board in supplying a substitute.

Section 7. The Church Clerk and treasurer shall be members in good standing, and whose spiritual qualifications shall meet the standards as set forth in the doctrinal statement of this Constitution.

Section 8. Within one month after each Annual Meeting, the Pastors and all elective officers shall be required to sign the doctrinal standards of the Church each year; said signatures to be filed with the Church Clerk.

ARTICLE IX. MEETINGS

Section 1. The fiscal year of this Church shall end on the thirty-first (31st) day of December each year and the annual meeting shall be held within two (2) weeks thereafter, the date to be determined by the Official Board and announced to the congregation at two (2) regular Sunday services on two (2) consecutive Sundays preceding the said meeting.

Section 2. At the Annual Meeting the minutes of the preceding Annual Meeting and the report of the Church Clerk shall be read. The Church's yearly financial report rendered, and the report from the

nominating committee submitted to the membership for action. Also such other business as may be necessary shall be transacted.

Section 3. Any regular or called meeting of the congregation may be constituted a meeting for the transaction of business, provided announcement of said meeting be given from the pulpit at two (2) regular church services on two consecutive Sundays preceding the said meeting. Sunday morning and evening services and mid-week prayer meetings shall be considered as the regular meetings of the Church.

Section 4. The Board shall call a special congregational business meeting upon the written request of ten percent of the members with power to vote, said meeting and its purpose to be announced as provided in Section 3 of Article IX, and convened within three (3) weeks after filing request with the official board.

Section 5. A majority vote of the members present and voting at any constitutionally called congregational business meeting shall be required for the election of officers or to render final decisions in any matter under consideration, except amendment to this constitution.

Section 6. the voting members present at any business meeting called in accordance with the requirements of this Constitution shall be considered a quorum for the transaction of business.

ARTICLE X. ORDINATION

When, in the judgment of the Official Board, a man is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of the Official Board to call a council for ordination.

The ordaining council shall thoroughly examine all applicants for ordination as to their call to the Christian ministry, education Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal belief, and demonstrated efficiency in Christian Service.

The following shall NOT be ordained to the ministry.

1. One who has not served six months as Pastor, assistant Pastor, or in definite Christian work in such manner as to convey reasonable evidence of God's call to the ministry.
2. One who is addicted to the use of intoxicating liquor, drugs, or tobacco in any form; or who belongs to a secret society; or one who brings disrepute upon his ministry through worldly practices and associations. (Romans 12:1, 2; II Corinthians 6:14-18; James 4:4; I John 2:15)

It shall be within the province of the Official Board to discipline, even to revoking the ordination credentials of any minister, ordained under this Constitution, if the said minister is found guilty of any of the above practices after an impartial trial conducted in the spirit of Christian love as set forth in I Corinthians 13.

The minister under trial shall have the privilege of appealing his case to the congregation within sixty days after the decision of the Board.

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at any regular or special meeting, provided the proposed amendment has been read to the congregation at each regular Church service for the two (2) Sundays preceding said meeting, and provided an exact copy of the proposed amendment has been conspicuously posted in the Church exits on the four (4) Sundays immediately preceding said meetings.

ARTICLE XII. DISSOLUTION

No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, director or officer of the corporation or any private individual; and no donor, member, director, officer of the corporation, or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporation assets. Upon dissolution, any assets of the corporation must be distributed to any organization which holds the same doctrinal views and maintains a separated stand for the Faith as set forth in the Constitution as found in Articles I-IV. Such an organization must be exclusively organized for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes as recognized by the Internal Revenue Service.