

Revised 01-28-2018

Constitution of Faith Church of Linden

PREAMBLE

The Bible admonishes us saying, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40). To this end we, the members of Faith Church of Linden, solemnly and sincerely set forth the following Constitution by which we willingly and cheerfully agree to be governed.

ARTICLE I. NAME

The Name of this Church shall be Faith Church of Linden.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

Faith Church of Linden exists to bring glory to God by changing lives through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We reach out, serve, worship, teach and fellowship together, striving to live out the Gospel in love.

ARTICLE III. CHURCH 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 baptized by immersion 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.

Church Life

We will 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 love; 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; and 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.

Personal Life

We also will strive, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to maintain family and private devotions; to train our children according to the Word of God; to seek the salvation of our families and neighbors (Luke 10:27); to walk in a God-pleasing manner 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 sharing of the Gospel with others; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ, our Savior; and to give Him preeminence in all things.

Living with Others

We further purpose in our heart 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; and 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 practice 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.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

A. Requirements for Membership:

Any person who professes faith in Christ as Savior and Lord; gives clear evidence of a change of heart; embraces the doctrine and practice held by this church; and has been baptized by immersion following their salvation may be received into its membership.

B. Reception of Members:

All persons applying for membership in this church shall meet with the deacons and relate his or her personal statement of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, baptism and agreement to abide by Faith Church's Doctrinal Statement, before being recommended to the church for membership.

Membership privileges shall begin in accordance with church vote. The Right Hand of Fellowship shall be given by the pastor, the deacons and all members present.

C. Review of the membership roll shall be conducted by the pastor and the deacons annually.

1. The purpose of this review is to make the pastor(s) and deacons aware of the needs and/or changes in the lives of the individual members.
2. Those members who have shown no interest in the church for a period of six months or more through lack of attendance and involvement unless providentially hindered shall be removed from the church roll. Before removal they should be contacted unless circumstances indicate that it is impossible or not necessary to contact the member under review.

D. Restoration and/or Discipline of Members. The deacons with the pastor shall constitute the discipline committee of the church and have sole charge in determining covenant violations and discipline.

1. The reasons for church discipline are; for the glory of the Lord; for the purity of the church; and for the good of the individual.
2. The intent of discipline within the church is loving correction that leads to restoration.
3. In all cases where there is an unrepentant and/or ongoing lifestyle and/or heresy of doctrine that clearly opposes the doctrine and practices set forth in the Scriptures and delineated in our doctrinal statement, the following procedure shall be used: The person should first be dealt with as directed by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-16. If this fails to lead to a restoration of fellowship, charges shall be put in writing and placed in the hands of the individual and he (or she) summoned to meet with the board of deacons within two weeks. After a fair and impartial meeting of all the witnesses accessible and all the facts ascertainable, if the majority of the board of deacons believes the individual member to be guilty, said party shall be recommended to the church for dismissal upon majority vote of the church. Failure on the part of the accused to appear shall not prevent the deacons examining the case and rendering a decision in accordance with the testimony received.
4. No information concerning parties not under discussion may be heard. No member may be excluded where the genuine fruit of repentance is evidenced.
5. When the unrepentant offending party is excluded from the membership and the Lord's table, all relationship with him or her from that point is only for the purpose of restoration (except for family members) (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:15). The entire church body should recognize a responsibility to "say the same thing" in loving effort to restore the offending one and to maintain the church's testimony and harmony.
6. The pastor and deacons are directed to move promptly in the safeguard of the purity and peace of the church when anyone is obstructing the work in any way.

ARTICLE V. OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH**A. Senior Pastor**

1. Call: He shall be a man of God who is in full agreement with and willing to abide by the constitution and doctrinal statement of Faith Church of Linden. Notice of a meeting to call a senior pastor shall be announced from the pulpit for two Sundays preceding the meeting. A vote from two-thirds of the quorum attending such meeting shall be necessary to constitute a call. He shall be elected for an indeterminate term.
2. Duties: It shall be the duty of the senior pastor to preach regularly at the church, to administer the ordinances of the Gospel (Baptism and the Lord's Supper) and to perform the various duties incumbent of his office. He shall be the moderator of the church and preside at all its business meetings. He shall be ex-officio member of all committees and organizations which includes the privilege of voting. The senior pastor is responsible and in charge of the pulpit and various services of the church.
3. Termination of Office: The senior pastor shall continue in office until he resigns or until his ministry is terminated by two-thirds vote of the quorum attending such a meeting called for that purpose. In the event of resignation or termination of the service of the senior pastor, he shall receive a minimum of one month's severance pay.
4. Pulpit Committee: Immediately upon the termination of the service of the senior pastor, the board of deacons shall become the pulpit committee. Their first responsibility shall be to seek the Lord and His total guidance and will concerning the selection of a senior pastor. The committee shall examine a prospective pastor (one at a time) concerning his doctrine and practice. Upon a majority vote of this committee, a prospective pastor may be invited to come to the church so that he might better know the church and the church members can get to know him. This will be accomplished through his preaching, teaching and interaction with the people. Following this relationship activity, and upon majority vote of the pulpit committee he may be invited to a return visit as a candidate. When this is done, a business meeting of the church will be held following this man's reappearance, at which time he will be voted on as a candidate. If the vote carries he will then be invited to come as senior pastor of the church. If the Candidate accepts the invitation, then he would become the senior pastor of Faith Church of Linden.

B. Church Staff

1. Individuals who are part of the vocational church staff must be in full agreement with and willing to abide by the constitution and doctrinal statement of Faith Church of Linden.
2. When the services of paid personnel other than the senior pastor are needed, the church shall hear a recommendation from the pastor and deacons and may authorize the position and salary.
3. Pastoral Staff Members
 - a) The senior pastor shall recommend to the deacons the person to be employed in the position created. Upon the recommendation of the deacons, the prospective staff member may be called at a special or regular meeting of the church. Public notice and purpose of such meeting shall have been given (one) previous Sunday and a two-thirds vote of the qualified voters present are necessary for a call. Only one candidate may be considered at a time.
 - b) All staff members are directly responsible in the performance of their duties to the senior pastor or to the deacons when there is no senior pastor. Loyalty to the church and its leadership is expected. Each staff member shall understand that continuance of his or her ministry is subject to the senior pastor with agreement from the deacons.

4. Secretarial Staff Members

Upon creation of secretarial positions, secretaries will be hired by, directly responsible to, and terminated by the senior pastor with counsel from the administrative pastor (if there is one on staff) and the deacons.

5. Custodial and Maintenance Staff Members

Upon creation of custodial and maintenance positions, personnel will be hired by the senior pastor with counsel from the administrative pastor (if there is one on staff), the deacons or the property committee and shall be directly responsible to the senior pastor and or his appointee. This person may be terminated by the senior pastor with counsel from the deacons.

6. Dismissal of Staff Members. It is understood that dismissal of a staff member is not subject to church action or review.

7. Due to changing circumstances, it may be necessary to vary the number and titles of personnel employed as church staff.

C. Deacons:

1. Number and Term: There shall be as many deacons as the needs of the church may require. An approximate ratio of 1 deacon to 25 members will be maintained. Term of office shall be three (3) years. It would be best if the terms of the deacons were staggered in thirds so that not all of the deacons would retire in any given year.

2. Call:

- a) The deacons shall be men of spiritual maturity with qualifications corresponding to the divine instructions found in I Timothy 3:8-13.
- b) The deacon must be a member in good standing who is in full agreement with and willing to abide by the constitution and doctrinal statement of Faith Church of Linden.
- c) If the church lacks a sufficient number of qualified men to fill the offices of deacons, the offices shall be declared vacant.

3. Duties: It shall be the duty of the deacons to:

- a) Assist in serving the Lord's Supper.
- b) Assist the senior pastor in spiritual supervision of the church.
- c) Assist the senior pastor in the oversight of the membership discipline.
- d) To have charge over and care and be responsible for the upkeep of the church properties.
- e) Prepare, along with the treasurer and senior pastor, an annual budget to be presented to the church at a regular or special business meeting.
- f) Oversee, along with the treasurer and senior pastor, the implementation of the church budget.
- g) Establish the system for counting and recording all church offerings.
- h) Represent the church legally.
- i) Act upon the recommendations of the Missions Team in examining all missionary candidates and their mission boards.
- j) Serve as a pulpit committee when needed.
- k) Assist the senior pastor in examining candidates for church membership.

4. Following the Annual Election of officers the senior pastor will recommend a deacon from among the deacons to serve as chairman for the coming year. Upon confirmation by the deacons that individual will become chairman. If there is no senior pastor the deacons will select from among themselves a person to serve as chairman for the coming year. The chairman shall, in the senior pastor's absence, chair all deacon's meetings and membership meetings.

5. Meetings shall usually be held monthly on a regular day chosen by the deacons. Special deacon's meetings and cancellation of meetings may be announced as necessary.
- D. All Other Officers and Committees shall consist of Church Treasurer, Church Clerk, Sunday School Superintendent, Sunday School Secretary, Nominating Committee, Christian Education Committee, Missions Team and other committees as needed.
1. Qualifications: A person holding any one of these positions must be a member in good standing who is in full agreement with and willing to abide by the constitution and doctrinal statement of Faith Church of Linden.
 2. Term: Persons holding these positions shall either be elected or selected annually for one year, other than appointed committees.
 3. Additional Elected officers,
 - a) Church Clerk (1);
 - (1) Keep a record of the proceedings of the church.
 - (2) Keep the church records.
 - (3) Keep a register of church membership.
 - (4) Dispatch all letters and correspondence authorized by the church.
 - (5) Present a report at all regular church business meeting.
 - b) Nominating Committee (3);
 - (1) Composition: The nominating committee shall consist of five members; two appointed by and from the deacons, and the rest to be nominated by and elected from the congregation at the regular annual election.
 - (2) Work: The committee shall prepare a slate of nominees to fill the designated offices. There shall be one or more (preferably two) nominees for each office and committee vacancy, providing qualified candidates are available. No nominee shall have his/her name posted until he/she has been consulted and so accepts the nomination. The slate of nominees shall be posted two weeks before the October annual election. There will be no nominations from the floor during the October annual meeting. Persons desiring to submit a nominee for a particular office should present the name in writing to the nominating committee during the month of September. Nomination forms will be available for those who wish to make recommendations to the nominating committee. This committee shall be a standing committee during the entire fiscal year and so shall act to fill any vacancies that may occur during the year.
 - (3) Recommendation:
 - (a) It is recommended that no one be nominated for any office unless they have been a member in good standing for one year.
 - (b) It is recommended but not necessary that after a deacon has served a three year term, that one year lapse before he is elected as deacon again.
 - c) Christian Education Committee (1);
 - (1) Composition: The Christian Education Committee shall consist of the superintendent or director of each of the church's educational agencies, which would include, but is not limited to Sunday School, Youth Program, Children's Church, Nursery, Children's Programs, Ladies Ministries, Men's Ministries, and Nursery. This committee would also include one member of the deacon board, and one member elected at large by the congregation.

(2) The committee's work is to:

- (a) Establish and clarify the educational goals.
- (b) Unify the educational program.
- (c) Evaluate each of the educational agencies in depth during each year.
- (d) Improve the educational outcomes.
- (e) Extend its educational ministry.
- (f) Vitalize the spiritual impact of each agency.

4. Selected Officers.

- a) Treasurer. The treasurer shall be chosen annually by the deacons whose responsibilities would include:
 - (1) Oversee the accurate recording of all funds and expense money of the church.
 - (2) Oversee the collection, depositing and disbursement of all funds of the church on order of the church.
 - (3) Oversee the recording of all contributions to the church.
 - (4) Present monthly reports to the board of deacons.
 - (5) Present a status update at all regular church business meetings.
- b) Christian Education Director. Until the time it becomes a staff position, the Christian Education Director shall be chosen annually by the deacons. This person will work under the Senior Pastor and will:
 - (1) Be the Chairman of the Christian Education Committee.
 - (2) Have general supervision over the total Sunday School.
 - (3) Work with the Pastor and Christian Education Committee, in the selection of teachers, materials and program of the Sunday School.
- c) Sunday School Secretary. The secretarial staff of the church will perform the duties of the Sunday School Secretary.
 - (1) Shall keep all Sunday School records.
 - (2) Shall be responsible, in cooperation with the Superintendent, to order Sunday School materials.
 - (3) Assist the Sunday School Superintendent whenever necessary.
 - (4) Present a report, as needed, at all the regular church business meetings.
- d) Youth Director. Until the time it becomes a pastoral staff position the Youth Director shall be chosen annually by the deacons. This person will work under the Senior Pastor and will:
 - (1) Seek to develop a ministry team that will work with the Youth Director.
 - (2) Oversee the selection and teaching of material that is used for the instruction that takes place in the youth ministry.
 - (3) Along with the ministry team, develop an annual calendar for the youth ministry.
- e) Children's Director. Until the time it becomes a pastoral staff position the Children's Director shall be chosen annually by the deacons. This person will work under the Senior Pastor, and with the Christian Education Director and will:
 - (1) Seek to develop a ministry team that will work with the Children's Director.
 - (2) Oversee the selection and teaching of material that is used for the instruction that takes place in Children's Church.
 - (3) Develop the ministry service calendar for the Children's Church.

f) Missions Team

(1) Size and Selection

- (a) The Team is selected by the Senior Pastor and/or the Missions Pastor along with the existing team members and then approved by the deacons.
- (b) The Senior Pastor and/or the Missions Pastor are ex-officio members of the Missions team which includes the privilege of voting.
- (c) The team will consist of five to twelve members.
- (d) Each member is asked to serve for a three-year term. When the three year term is finished the team member may be asked to serve another term. Team members could possibly serve for many years.
- (e) The Senior Pastor and/or the Missions Pastor along with the existing team members will select a chairperson each year from within the team. This individual is responsible for the oversight and proper functioning of the Missions team.

(2) Responsibilities

- (a) Provide leadership for Missions in the church.
- (b) Develop prayer support for the church's missionaries and Missions program.
- (c) Plan the church's yearly Missions calendar which would include an annual Missions conference and other Missions emphasis events throughout the year.
- (d) Educate the congregation about Missions in general and about Faith Church's Missions program in particular.
- (e) Develop the Missions budget and make recommendations to the deacons and the church.
- (f) Develop a Missions strategy for the church which would include policies and procedures for operation of the missions ministry.
- (g) Seek to create an "ownership" mentality in individuals and in the church for individual missionaries and their families.
- (h) Develop an awareness of each missionary's spiritual, physical, familial, financial and other needs in order to better partner with them in their mission.
- (i) Be intentional in the promotion and development of future missionaries from within our church congregation.
- (j) Encourage, support and/or get involved in Missions trips.
- (k) Evaluate and Review the Missions program of the church and make changes as necessary. This would include the evaluation of the Missions policy statement as well as the ongoing support for missionaries, organizations and projects.

(3) Meetings

- (a) The Missions Team will hold regular meetings.
- (b) The Missions Team can hold other meetings to consider special events, programs, support issues, etc.
- (c) The Missions Team can hold other meetings by phone contact whenever it is expedient and important to share needs and get approval.
- (d) Other directors shall be appointed by, and under the direction of the board of deacons as needed.
- (e) Other committees shall be appointed by, and under the direction of the board of deacons as needed.

ARTICLE VI. CHURCH MEETINGS

A. Types of Meetings:

1. Regular Church Services:

- a) Any meeting scheduled by the church, pastors, and/or deacons.
 - b) This would include but is not limited to regularly scheduled meetings for the purpose of Worship, Prayer, Fellowship, Instruction, and meetings scheduled for special reasons or events. The key thought here is that it is a church scheduled meeting.
2. The Lord's Supper shall be observed once each month on the first Sunday of the month, unless another time is designated by the pastor and/or deacons.
 3. Annual Meeting: The regular annual meeting of the membership will be held in January of each year. The treasure's report and all other relevant reports shall be presented at the meeting. The fiscal year of the church will close on the last day of December each year.
 4. A semiannual meeting is to be held midway through the fiscal year.
 5. The election of church officers is to take place in the month of October and those elected shall take office on January 1 of the following year.
 6. Special Meetings: May be called by the pastor and/or the board of deacons.
 7. Notice of each meeting of the membership is to be given, at minimum, the Sunday before and the Sunday of the said meeting, except for the reception of members. This notice is to be communicated via all available church media.

B. Voting:

1. All of the qualified members present at a properly notified meeting will constitute a quorum for the conducting of all church business.
2. Results of voting shall be determined by a majority vote except in matters pertaining to the call and release of a senior pastor, the Church Constitution and the mortgaging or selling of church property. Then it will require a 2/3 vote.
3. Qualified Voters: Includes all the members of the church who:
 - a) Are 16 years of age or older.
 - b) Have attended at least one-third (4) of the regular services [see Article VI, A., 1, a. & b.] of the church for a period of thirty (30) days prior to the said meeting. Exceptions may be considered by the deacons.
This is measured through an honor system whereby the members sign in at the start of each meeting indicating their own qualification based on the criteria stated above.

C. Parliamentary Rules:

1. All matters for consideration by the church should first be presented to the board of deacons, preferably in writing.
2. The parliamentary rules in conducting of a church business meeting shall be based on, but not limited to, "Robert's Rules of Order".

ARTICLE VII. GOVERNMENT

A. Autonomy:

The Faith Church of Linden, shall be and remain Independent and Autonomous. However, it may participate in fellowship and activity with organizations of like doctrine for the promotion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as long as it does not infringe upon the independence or autonomy of this church.

B. Financial Support:

The expenses of the church, including the staff salaries, and all expenses of the various societies and organizations of the church and Sunday School, shall be raised by the freewill tithes and offerings of God's people. This church will not condone nor permit the raising of funds in any other manner.

C. Amendments:

This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the membership of the church, or at any special meeting called for that purpose, provided a written notice containing a copy of the proposed amendment is posted in the church in a conspicuous place for at least two weeks prior to the meeting. A vote from two-thirds of the quorum attending such a meeting shall be necessary to amend the constitution.

D. Confession of Faith:

The Bible as the Word of God shall be considered the final authority in all matters in faith, and practice. The doctrine of Faith Church shall be that which is expressed in the Doctrinal Statement of Faith Church of Linden.

ARTICLE VIII. CANCELLATION

This constitution as revised and approved by the membership of Faith Church of Linden, on the 28th day of January, 2018, shall supersede and cancel the previous constitution.