

An Introduction to Tabernacle Baptist Church of Litchfield, NH An Independent Fundamental Baptist Church

Who We Are:

There are many ways to attempt to define who we are and what we believe. The phrase *Independent Fundamental Baptist* is one of them. Each of the three words in this phrase is used specifically to define certain aspects of what we believe.

As *Baptists*, we are first and foremost people of the Bible. It is the one and only source and authority for all we believe. An acrostic can be made from the word "BAPTISTS" to define a set of doctrines known as the Baptist Distinctives. These doctrines are:

- Biblical Authority
- Autonomy of the Local Church
- Priesthood of the Believer
- Two Church Ordinances (Baptism and the Lord's Supper)
- Individual Soul Liberty
- Saved and Baptized Church Membership
- Two Church Offices (Pastor and Deacon)
- Separation of Church and State

As *Fundamentalists*, we adhere to the 14 Fundamentals of the Faith which were put forth in the early part of the 20th Century in answer to the modernist¹ movement. They are:

- inspiration of the Bible
- depravity of man
- redemption through Christ's blood
- true church made up only of believers
- coming of the Lord bodily to set up His reign
- the Trinity
- fall of Adam
- need of the new birth
- full deliverance from guilt at salvation
- assurance of salvation
- centrality of Christ in the Bible
- walk after the Spirit
- resurrection of both believers and unbelievers
- ripening of the present age for judgment

As *Independents*, we believe in a self-governing, self-propagating church free from any control (denomination, convention, association, etc.) outside of our own membership.

¹ Modernism: A belief that truth can only be known through human reasoning or modern experience.

What We Believe:

The various sections of this document elaborate on the doctrines of what we believe, how we implement our beliefs in our relationship to each other, and how we implement our beliefs in a legal corporate body in 21st Century America.

I. The first section of this document is our *Articles of Faith*:

Christian religious organizations of all sizes from individual churches with only a handful of members to denominations having millions have attempted at various times to set forth statements of what they believe. Historically, these statements were most often aimed at answering the doctrines of other groups. Often called “confessions” in times past, they were important in helping define the differences between the denominations.

In the post-modern,² secular humanist,³ ecumenical⁴ 21st Century it is as important as ever to declare boldly what we believe. In spite of the ecumenicalist’s attempts to cover them over, the traditional battles still rage between the denominations, and rightfully so, for the differences are real. In addition, our beliefs are under attack by the world as they have not been since the early days of Christianity.

The doctrines presented in our Articles of Faith are set forth for the specific purposes of:

- Accurately reflecting the eternal truth of God’s Word,
- Unifying the body of Christ through a common message,
- Confirming and strengthening the convictions and beliefs of the church, and
- Providing a foundational teaching structure for the education of new believers.

They do not comprise a complete statement of everything we believe, but rather, are a listing of the core doctrines sufficient to define the stand of Tabernacle Baptist Church. No article states everything we believe on the given doctrine, but is an outline. The details are in the Bible. As articles of faith, they are not intended to be comprehended completely by human logic. When we incorporate them into our lives by faith, they become a structure upon which to build a dynamic and vibrant church of the living God.

II. The second section is the *Fundamental Baptist Statement*:

The Fundamental Baptist Statement has been a part of the statement of the beliefs of Tabernacle since the founding of the church. It was intended to bring together, in summary form, a few of the beliefs of the church that addressed the major challenges to the church at the time of its founding. Although we face some different challenges today, we still face those addressed in this statement, and it stands as a proclamation of some of the specific aspects of who we are. It is good for us to remember our foundations.

² Post-modernism: A belief that truth is relative.

³ Secular Humanism: A belief that man is the supreme being of the universe.

⁴ Ecumenicalism: A movement to bring unity between denominations and religions.

III. The third section is the *Church Covenant*:

The Church Covenant is an agreement between the members of the church to live in a Christ-like manner. It addresses how we are to support the church as a whole, how we are to conduct our personal lives, and how we are to relate to each other as individuals.

IV. The fourth and final section is the *Constitution*:

The Constitution is the legal document that defines our type of government and how we will conduct our business.

A Final Word:

It is one thing to record our beliefs in a nice concise manner for everyone to read and understand. It is another for every member of Tabernacle Baptist Church to live out these beliefs so that a lost and dying world can see Jesus Christ in our lives and hear from us how they too can have eternal life through His name. It is our solemn prayer that this document will in some way contribute to that cause.

Articles of Faith

Tabernacle Baptist Church of Litchfield, NH

Article

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Articles of Faith

Tabernacle Baptist Church of Litchfield, NH

NOTE: An asterisk (*) before a scripture reference means that it is a reference that contains a quotation in the article.

1. Of the Scriptures

A. *Inspiration:* We believe that the Holy Bible (the collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation) is supernaturally inspired (literally, “breathed by God”).¹ It was written by men of God who lived in past ages, who were moved by the Holy Spirit in their work² in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally free from error.³

REFERENCES:

1. Acts 1:16, 2 Tim 3:16-17.
2. Acts 28:25, 2 Pet 1:19-21.
3. Psa 19:7-11, Mt 5:18.

B. *Authority:* We believe the Bible is the true Word of God without corruption or error. It is and shall remain until the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man.¹ The Bible stands as the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.² The Bible is, and always will be, the ultimate authority for Christians and the church. There are no additional revelations from God outside of the closed collection of books called the Bible.³

REFERENCES:

1. Psa 119:89, Prov 30:5-6, Lk 16:31 & 24:25-27, 1 Pet 1:23.
2. Psa 119:105, Isa 8:20, Lk 24:44-45, Jn 5:39, 5:45-47, 12:48, & 17:17, Rom 3:4 & 15:4, Eph 6:17.
3. Gal 1:8-9, 1 Jn 4:1, Rev 22:18-19.

2. Of the True God

A. *The Nature of God:* We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God¹ and that He is an infinite, intelligent Spirit.² He is the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth.³ He is inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love.⁴

REFERENCES:

1. Gen 17:1, Ex 20:2-3, Jer 10:10, 1 Cor 8:6, Eph 4:6.
2. Jn 4:24.
3. Psa 83:18, Psa 90:2, Rev 4:11.
4. Ex 15:11, Psa 147:5, Mk 12:30, Rom 11:33, 1 Tim 1:17, Rev 4:11.

B. *The Person of God:* We believe that in the unity of the Godhead, there are three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,¹ equal in every divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.²

REFERENCES:

1. Matt 28:19, 1 Jn 5:7.
2. Jn 15:26, 1 Cor 12:4-6, 1 Pet 1:2.

- 1) God the Father: God the Father is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. He reigns with providential care over all His universe. As the Creator, He presides over human history according to the purposes of His will. “. . . the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.”

REFERENCES: *Gen 1:1, 2:7, Ex 15:11, Psa 19:1, Jer 10:10, Mt 6:9-13 & 23:9, Mk 1:9-11, Eph 4:6, *1 Jn 4:14.*

- 2) God the Son: God the Son, Jesus Christ, is co-equal, and eternally co-existent with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit and was active in creation.¹ In His incarnation Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived without sin. Being fully man while remaining fully God, He came to save sinners from eternal damnation in Hell.² By His sacrificial death on the cross He paid the price for all sin and offers eternal life to all who believe.³ In victory over death and sin He rose physically from the dead on the third day to declare Himself as God and lives forevermore to make intercession for the saints.⁴

REFERENCES:

1. *Jn 1:1-5 & 14, Col 1:16, Heb 1:2.*
2. *Lk 19:10.*
3. *Jn 3:16, Phil 2:4-11.*
4. *Rom 1:4, 1 Jn 2:1, Rev 1:17-18.*

- 3) God the Holy Spirit: God the Holy Spirit is a divine person, equal with and of the same nature as God the Father and God the Son.¹ He was active in the creation. In His relation to the unbelieving world, He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled.² He convicts of sin, judgment, and righteousness. He bears witness to the Truth of the gospel in preaching and testimony.³ He is the agent in the new birth and seals, indwells, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, and helps the believer.⁴

REFERENCES:

1. *Mt 28:19, Jn 14:16-17 & 26, Heb 9:14.*
2. *Gen 1:1-3, 2 Thess 2:7.*
3. *Jn 15:26-27, Jn 16:8-13, Acts 5:30-32.*
4. *Mt 3:11, Jn 3:5-6, Acts 1:8, Rom 8:14-16 & 26-27, Eph 1:13-14, 2 Thess 2:13, 1 Pet 1:2.*

3. Of Origins

A. *The Creation:* We believe in the Biblical account of creation. It is to be accepted literally, not symbolically or figuratively. Man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness. Creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through time from lower to higher forms. All animal and vegetable life was made directly, and God's established law was that each living thing should bring forth only after its own kind.¹

In addition to being the Creator, God continues to be active in His creation. By His power, He is the sustainer and preserver of all life. "All things were created by him and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."²

REFERENCES:

1. Gen 1:1, 1:11, 1:24, 1:26-27, & 2:21-23, Ex 20:11, Jer 10:12, Jn 1:3, Acts 4:24, Heb 11:3, Rev 10:6.
2. Neh 9:6, Acts 17:23-26, *Col 1:16-17.

B. *The Devil Or Satan:* We believe that Satan was once holy and enjoyed heavenly honors but, through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and drew after him a host of angels.¹ He is now the malignant prince of the power of the air, the unholy god of this world.² We hold him to be man's great tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, the chief power behind the present apostasy, the lord of the antichrist, and the author of all the powers of darkness.³ However, despite his present power, he is destined to final defeat at the hands of God's own Son, and to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire, a place prepared for him and his angels.⁴

REFERENCES:

1. Ezek 28:14-17, Isa 14:12-15, 2 Pet 2:4, Jude 6, Rev 12:7-9.
2. Jn 14:30, Eph 2:2.
3. Mt 4:1-3, Mk 13:21-22, Lk 22:3-4, 2 Cor 11:13-15, 1 Thess 3:5, 2 Thess 2:8-11, 1 Pet 5:8, 1 Jn 2:22 & 4:3, 2 Jn 7, Rev 12:10 & 13:13-14.
4. Mt 25:41, 2 Thess 2:8, 2 Pet 2:4, 1 Jn 3:8, Jude 6, Rev 19:11, 19:16-20, & 20:10.

C. *The Fall of Man:* We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker. By voluntary transgression he fell from his sinless and happy estate.¹ In consequence of Adams sin, all mankind are now sinners,² not by constraint, but by choice, and therefore, under just condemnation without defense or excuse.³

REFERENCES:

1. Gen 3:1-6, Rom 1:28 & 3:10-19.
2. Rom 5:12 & 19, Gal 3:22, Eph 2:1-3.
3. Ezek 18:19-20, Rom 1:20, 1:18, 1:32, & 5:12.

4. Of Institutions

A. *The Church of God:*

- 1) Definition: We believe that a New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local, autonomous congregation of baptized believers associated together by a covenant of faith and the fellowship of the gospel.¹ The church is subject only to the authority of its Head, Jesus Christ, through the Holy Ghost, and is solely governed by His laws.² The members of the church exercise the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word.³ The local church will determine all matters of membership, policy, government, discipline, and benevolence.⁴

REFERENCES:

1. Acts 1:15-22, 2:41-42, 6:3-6, & 13:1-3, Jude 3-4.
2. Eph 1:22-23, & 5:23-24, Col 1:18.
3. Eph. 4:11, 1 Cor 12:4-11, 2 Cor 8:23-24, 1 Tim 3:8-13.
4. Acts 1:15-26 & 15:22.

- 2) Mission: The true mission of the church is found in Christ's instructions: first, to make disciples; second, to baptize them into the church; third, to instruct them as He has commanded.¹ It is scriptural for a church to cooperate with other churches in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the gospel. Each church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation.²

REFERENCES:

1. Mt 28:19-20, Mk 16:15, Acts 1:7-9.
2. 1 Cor 5:11-13 & 6:1-3, Jude 3-4, 1 Pet 5:14

- 3) Offices: There are two offices that God has appointed in the church. The pastor is the overseer and shepherd of the church, and deacons are the servants of the church.

REFERENCES: 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9.

- 4) Ordinances: There are two ordinances God has commanded the church to obey. They are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

- a) Baptism: Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a born-again believer in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.¹ Baptism is a solemn and beautiful demonstration of faith in the crucified, buried, risen and coming Savior. It pictures the believer's death to sin and resurrection to a new life.²

REFERENCES:

1. Mt 3:6, 3:16, & 28:19-20, Acts 8:36-39.
2. Acts 2:41-42, Rom 6:3-5, Col 2:12.

- b) The Lord's Supper: The Lord's Supper is an observance qualified by doctrine and faith in which born-again believers, by the sacred use of unleavened bread and grape juice, are to commemorate together the death of Christ. The Lord's Supper should always be preceded by solemn self-examination as it represents the continuing relationship of the believer with Christ.¹

REFERENCES:

1. Mt 26:26-28, Mk 14:22-24, Lk 22:19-20, Acts 2:42, 1 Cor 10:16 & 11:23-28.

B. Marriage and the Family. We believe that God intended that mankind would “be fruitful and multiply” through the institution of marriage.¹ In the eyes of God, marriage is a lifelong, undefiled commitment between one man and one woman.²

Each member of the family has a place. The husband is called to be the head of the family, as Christ is the head of the church.³ The wife is to honor God through her relationship with her husband and children.⁴ Parents are to teach their children the ways of the Lord through both word and action.⁵ Children are commanded to honor and obey their parents in the Lord, and to continue to honor them all the days of their lives.⁶

REFERENCES:

1. *Gen 1:27-28, 2:24, & 9:1.
2. Gen 2:24, 1 Cor 6:16, & 7:1-40, Heb 13:4.
3. Eph 5:23 & 25, Col 3:19.
4. Eph 5:22 & 24, Col 3:18.
5. Deut 6:6-7, Prov 22:6, Eph 6:4, Col 3:21.
6. Ex 20:12, Eph 6:1-3, Col 3:20.

C. Civil Government: We believe human government has been appointed by God for the interest and good order of human society.¹ Christians are commanded to pray for those who rule them and to honor them conscientiously.² We are called to obey the law as long as it does not oppose the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience and the coming Prince of the kings of the earth.³

REFERENCES:

1. Ex 18:21-22, 2 Sam 23:3, Rom 13:1-7.
2. Mt 22:21, Acts 23:4-5, Titus 3:1, Heb 13:17, 1 Pet 2:13-14.
3. Psa 72:11, Dan 3:17-18, Mt 10:28 & 23:10, Acts 4:19-20 & 5:29, Phil 2:10-11, 1 Pet 2:17.

5. Of Salvation

A. Repentance and Faith: We believe that repentance and faith are necessary actions for the conversion of a sinner to Christ. Repentance and faith are both solemn obligations and inseparable graces wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God.¹ Being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger, helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy while at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior.²

REFERENCES:

1. Mk 1:15, Lk 13:2-3, Acts 2:37-38 & 20:21.
2. Psa 51:1-7 & 17, Isa 55:6-7, Lk 12:8 & 18:13, Rom 10:9-11 & 13.

B. Atonement for Sin: We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly by grace through faith in the Son of God, who, by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature.¹ Being without sin, He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins.² His atonement did not consist of setting an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place. The Just died for the unjust. Christ, the Lord, bore our sins in His own body on the tree.³ Having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection. He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior.⁴

REFERENCES:

1. *Jn 1-14 & 3:16, Acts 15:11, Rom 3:24, Gal 4:4-5, Eph. 2:8-9, Phil. 2:6-8.*
2. *Isa 53:4-7, Mt 18:11, Rom 3:25, Heb 2:14, 1 Jn 4:10.*
3. *Isa 53:11, Jn 10:18, 1 Cor 15:3, 2 Cor 5:21, Gal 1:4, Phil 2:8, 1 Pet. 2:24 & 3:18.*
4. *Isa 53:12, 1 Cor 15:20, Heb 7:25, 9:12-15, & 12:2, 1 Jn 2:2.*

C. *Grace in the New Creation:* We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again. New birth is an instantaneous new creation in Christ Jesus, not a process.¹ In the new birth the one who was dead in trespasses and sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God's grace. This new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension. It is solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth,² so as to secure a voluntary obedience to the gospel as evidenced by repentance, the holy fruit of the Spirit, and a newness of life.³

REFERENCES:

1. *John 3:3-7, 2 Cor. 5:17, 1 John 5:1.*
2. *Rom. 6:23, 2 Cor. 5:19, Eph 2:1 & 8-9, Col. 2:13, 2 Pet. 1:4.*
3. *John 1:12-13 & 3:8, Gal. 5:22-23.*

D. *Freeness of Salvation:* We believe in God's electing grace that makes the blessings of salvation free to all that call upon Him by faith.¹ Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel. This rejection "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."²

REFERENCES:

1. *Isa 55:1 & 6-7, Mt 11:28; Jn 6:37, Acts 2:38, Rom 8:29-30 & 10:13, 1 Thess 1:4, 1 Pet 1:2, Rev 22:17.*
2. *Jn 3:15-18, 3:36, & 5:40, Eph, 2:4-5, *2 Thess 1:8-9, 1 Tim 1:15.*

E. *Justification:* We believe that justification is the great gospel blessing that Christ secures to all who believe in Him.¹ Justification includes the pardon of sin and the gift of eternal life on principles of Christ's righteousness.² It is not bestowed in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, rather His righteousness is imputed solely through faith in the Redeemer.³

REFERENCES:

1. *Acts 13:39.*
2. *Isa 53:11, Rom 8:1, Titus 3:5-7.*
3. *Hab 2:4, Rom 1:17, 4:1-8, 5:1, & 5:9, Gal 3:11, Heb 10:38.*

6. Of the Believer's Walk

A. *The Eternal Security of the Believer:* We believe that all who are truly born again are sealed with the Holy Spirit and kept in the hands of both the Father and the Son. No man can pluck them out. No power can "separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

REFERENCES: *Jn 3:16 & 10:27-29, *Rom 8:35-39, 1 Pet 1:3-6, 1 Jn 5:13.*

B. *The Priesthood of the Believer:* We believe that as Christians we are a peculiar people born into a royal and holy priesthood.¹ As believer priests, we have complete access to God through the blood of Jesus² for the purpose of worshipping and serving God and His High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.³ Additionally, we are called to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God: our body, our praise, our words, our deeds, our possessions, our gifts, and our intercession for others.⁴

REFERENCES:

1. *1 Pet 2:5 & 9.*

2. *Heb 10:19-22.*

3. *Mt 4:10, Heb 5:6 & 10.*

4. *Rom 12:1, Phil 4:17-18, 1 Tim 2:1, Heb 13:15-16, 1 Pet 2:5.*

C. *Individual Soul Liberty and Responsibility:* We believe that every individual has the liberty to choose what he believes is right in the religious realm. No one should be forced to assent to any belief against his will. However, this liberty does not exempt one from responsibility to the Word of God or from accountability to God Himself.

Every Christian has the privilege to study Scripture for himself and the duty to correctly understand it by interpreting it in its own context in a literal, grammatical, and historical perspective. However, no one has the right to twist Scripture out of its context to make it fit any private interpretation.

REFERENCES: *Rom 14:1-5, 1 Cor 8:1-13, 2 Cor 5:10, 2 Pet 1:20, 1 Jn 2:27-28, Rev 3:20.*

7. Of the End Times

A. *The Righteous and the Wicked:* We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked.¹ The righteous are justified through faith in the name of the Lord Jesus and are sanctified by the Spirit of God. The wicked are those who continue without repentance and faith and, as a result, are under the curse of God.² This distinction holds among men both in life and after death, in the everlasting bliss of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost.³

REFERENCES:

1. *Gen 18:23, Mal 3:18, 1 Jn 5:19.*

2. *Prov 11:31 & 14:32, Mt 7:13-14, Acts 4:12, Rom 1:17, 6:16-18, & 6:23, Gal 3:10, 1 Pet 4:18-19.*

3. *Mt 25:34 & 41, Lk 16:25, Jn 5:28-29, 1 Cor 15:22, Rev 20:14-15.*

B. *The Resurrection of Christ:* We believe that Christ rose bodily "the third day according to the Scriptures"¹ and ascended "and sitteth on right hand of God."²

REFERENCES:

1. *Mt 28:6-7, Mk 16:6, Lk 24:39, Jn 20:27, *1 Cor 15:4.*

2. *Mk 16:19, Lk 24:51, Acts 1:9-11, *Col 3:1, Rev 3:21.*

C. *The Rapture of the Church:* We believe that when the last trump shall sound, “the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then they which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.” The living saints shall all be changed “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” and shall put on an incorruptible, resurrected body.¹

REFERENCES: Jn 14:3, 1 Cor 15:42-44, & *51-53, Phil 3:20-21, *1 Thess 4:15-17.

D. *The Second Coming of Christ:* We believe that “This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven” – bodily, personally and visibly bringing His saints with Him.¹

REFERENCES: Mt 24:27 & 42 & 25:13, *Acts 1:11, 1 Thess 4:14, Heb 9:28, Jas 5:8.

E. *The 1000 Year Earthly Reign of Christ:* We believe that “the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David”; and Christ shall reign a thousand years in righteousness until “he hath put all enemies under His feet.”¹

REFERENCES: Psa 72:8, Isa 9:6-7 & 11:4-5, *Lk 1:32-33, *1 Cor 15:25, Rev 20:1-3 & 6.

F. *The Future of Israel:* We believe that Israel is still God’s chosen people but is dispersed because of disobedience to God and rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. However, Israel will be re-gathered as a nation after the Rapture and many will be saved.

REFERENCES: Gen 13:14-17, Ezek 20:33-44 & 37:1-28, Rom 11:1-32.

FUNDAMENTAL BAPTIST STATEMENT

We believe in the pre-millennial, literal view of the scriptures. We are fundamental in theology and practice of the Word of God. We believe in using the King James Version of the scripture for all public services and are not in sympathy with the latter versions of the scriptures. We believe there is a great movement of apostasy in the world deceiving both saved and lost, a falling away of the basic fundamentals of the faith of Jesus Christ; and are not in sympathy with tongues, healings and revelations of man; after the closing of the canon in A.D. 96. We believe the greatest task of the church is to fulfill the Great Commission in winning the lost and instructing the saved; and all missionary efforts are to be channeled through the local body of believers, the church. We believe to be ecumenical in nature would consist of a compromise of the faith once contended for by the saints and will not be a part of such combining of denominations or inter-denominations but will always hold to the independent form of and view of fundamental, Bible-believing Baptists.

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 Ghost, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, 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 strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, through tithes and offerings, to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions, to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, back-biting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and 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 remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offence, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Saviour, to secure it without delay.

We, moreover, 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 this covenant, and the principles of God's Word.

CONSTITUTION OF TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH

ARTICLE I ORGANIZATION

Section 1 *Corporation*

This organization shall be the corporate body, known as Tabernacle Baptist Church and is located in the town of Litchfield, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire.

Section 2 *Purpose*

A. The purpose of this organization shall be to preach and teach the whole counsel of God's Word, reach sinners with the gospel of Christ, teach and edify believers that they may grow in grace, administer the ordinances (Baptism and the Lord's Supper) of the New Testament church, and spread the gospel at home and abroad.

B. This church is organized to operate as a Charitable, Religious and Educational organization as specified in the IRS Code Section 501 (c) (3). In an effort to facilitate this purpose the church may maintain and operate a building or buildings as the cause shall require including parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, print shops day-care centers, camps or nursing homes.

Section 3 *Associations*

This organization shall not affiliate with any group or church which is a member of the National Council of Churches, World Council of Churches, National Association of Evangelicals, or any group that is apostate or interferes with the sovereignty of this local church.

Section 4 *Membership*

A. Granting Membership

Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior as evidence of regeneration, having been baptized by immersion in an independent Baptist church, and accepting the faith and practice of this church, may be received into active membership. Active membership shall be granted upon voice approval of those members present.

B. Removal for Non-attendance

Any individual not attending a regular worship service of the church in the preceding six months will have a visit by the Pastor or their assigned deacon. Based upon that meeting and a review by the deacon board that person may be taken off the church roll.

C. Non-resident

Any person from this church who is serving as a missionary or evangelist may be kept on the active list without voting privileges.

D. Discipline

Any member of the church may be disciplined by the church. This is to be done using the procedure of Matthew 18:15-17 and any other Scripture which covers a particular problem. There shall be a discipline committee consisting of the Pastor and the Board of Deacons. All disciplinary action shall be initiated through this committee. This committee will investigate the matter, counsel the member as appropriate, and, if deemed necessary, make a recommendation for discipline to the church membership. If the Pastor or a deacon is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he shall not sit as a member of the discipline committee. As in 1 Corinthians 6, no non-member shall be present at any meeting where disciplinary matters are discussed or voted upon.

E. Transfer

If a member wishes to transfer his/her membership to a church of like faith and practice, a letter of recommendation shall be sent to the receiving church upon request.

F. Withdrawal

Any member who withdraws to a church of non-like faith and practice shall receive a notice of removal of their name from the church roll.

Section 5 *Officers*

The officers of this organization shall be pastor(s), deacons, trustees, and others as described herein or as deemed necessary by the church. The qualifications of the pastors and deacons shall be as outlined in 1 Timothy 3, Titus, and Acts 6. Paid personnel are considered full-time if they work more than 30 hours per week. Paid personnel working 30 hours or less per week are considered as part-time.

A. Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall be called by the church to serve an indefinite period of time with remuneration, support, and vacations to be determined by the church. Dismissal will be by a 2/3 vote of the church membership with a 30 day notice. The Senior Pastor shall preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God as the Lord leads him. He shall direct the administration of the church ordinances, direct the teaching ministries of the church and tenderly watch over the spiritual interests of the membership. All times for public worship and Bible study as well as the arrangements thereof on and off the property belonging to the church shall be under the control of the Pastor.

B. Associate/Assistant Pastors (Pastoral Staff)

Associate and/or assistant pastors may be called by the church at the recommendation of the Senior Pastor. They shall be called to serve for an indefinite period of time with remuneration, support, and vacations to be determined by the church. Their duties shall be assigned by the Senior Pastor. Dismissal will be by a majority vote of the church membership with a 30 day notice. As he sees fit, the Senior Pastor shall designate individuals (such as the Associate or Assistant Pastors, the Principal of Tabernacle Christian School, the Music Minister, etc.) as members of the Pastoral Staff.

C. Deacons

The deacons are selected by the church at the annual or a special business meeting and are under the direction of the church. They are responsible for the Deacon Family Ministry and assisting the pastor in the work of the church in carrying out its purpose.

1. The Chairman of the Deacons shall be president of the corporation.
2. In the event that the church is without a Senior Pastor, the Deacons shall be responsible for seeing that pastoral responsibilities are fulfilled and shall serve as the pastoral search committee.

D. Trustees

The trustees are the legal representatives of this organization. They are selected by the church at the annual or a special business meeting and are under the direction of the church. They are responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the facilities and equipment, a financial budget, auditing of books, and reports to be presented at the annual corporate meeting.

E. Support Staff

These positions are the church clerk, treasurer, financial secretary, and staff as the church wishes to add. Each is appointed by the pastor with the church's approval. Each is responsible to the pastor and church in setting up procedures and records in the dispensing of their duties.

F. Appointed Positions

These positions are program directors, teachers, teacher's assistants, etc. They are appointed by the Pastor or his designated representative. They are responsible to the Pastor and the church for carrying out their duties.

Section 6 *Meetings*

A. Annual Corporate Meeting

An annual corporate business meeting shall be held on the third Wednesday of February of each year. Notification of this meeting shall be given in accordance with state law. The fiscal year shall be January 1, to December 31, of each year. The purpose of this meeting shall be to receive reports, select deacons and trustees, and transact any necessary business. Robert's Rules of Order or similar procedure may be used.

B. Special Business Meetings

These shall be called in case of an emergency or an immediate need. The pastor, or deacons in the event of the death or resignation of the pastor, may call for such a meeting, which has been announced at a previous public meeting, to handle only the matter(s) for which the meeting is called.

Amended on: May 25, 2003

C. Public Services and Weekly Meetings

These shall be announced and consist of Sunday services, and weekday Bible study, and others that the church may add.

D. Voting

Only members 16 years of age or older are entitled to vote.

E. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of at least 50 members 16 years of age or older. The majority shall rule unless otherwise stated herein.

F. Moderator

The moderator shall be the pastor or the chairman of the deacons.

Section 7 *Committees*

Committees may be set up by the church and shall be under the faith and practice of this organization.

Section 8 *Ordinances*

There are two:

A. Baptism

Baptism is by immersion and only for those who have professed faith in our Lord Jesus Christ according to New Testament practice.

B. Lord's Table

The Lord's Table is to be done according to 1 Corinthians 11.

Section 9 *Missions*

Missionaries and evangelists must operate in agreement with our faith and practice in order to secure financial or any other form of support. Selection for support will be by church vote.

Section 10 *Departments*

The church may set up departments within itself in order to carry on the purpose of this organization.

Section 11 *Amendments and Bylaws*

A. Amendments

This Constitution shall not be amended unless 4 weeks public notice is given and a copy of the amendment is put on display. It may be acted upon at any business meeting.

Amended on: May 25, 2003

B. Bylaws

Bylaws shall be adopted, amended, or rescinded as deemed necessary for the decent and orderly operation of the corporation.

Section 12 *Dissolution*

In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, all of its debts shall be fully satisfied. None of the assets or holdings shall be divided among its members or any other individuals but shall be designated by corporate vote prior to dissolution to such non-profit religious corporations as are in agreement with the faith and practice adopted by this corporation.