



# MERRIMACK VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

## Church Constitution

Comprised of:  
The Confession of Faith  
&  
By-Laws

Enacted: 2/5/2023

# CONFESSION OF FAITH

## **The Holy Scriptures**

**We believe** the Holy Scriptures to be the Old and New Testament to be the complete and final revelation to man. That they are the Word of God and not just contain the Word of God. That they are the verbal, plenary, inspired Word of God, the Final Authority for faith, and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God-breathed. (II Tim. 3:16,17; II Peter 1:20,21; Matt.5:18; John 16:12,13)

## **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. (Deut 6:4; II Cor.13:14; Col 1:16,17; Matt.28:19)

- a. The Father: We believe in God the Father, the only true God, who created all things and in whom we live and have our being. (John 17:3; Rev. 4:11; Acts 17:28)
- b. The Son: We believe in the:
  1. Virgin birth of Christ. (Isa 7:14; Luke 1:35)
  2. Deity of Christ. (John 8:58; Rev 1:8)
  3. Miracles of Christ. (John 2:11; John 11:43,44)
  4. Sacrificial death of Christ for our redemption as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice. (I Cor.15:1-6; I Peter 2:24)
  5. Literal bodily resurrection of Christ for our justification. (Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12)
  6. Intercessory priesthood of Christ as intercessor, representative and advocate. (Heb 9:24, 7:25; Rom 8:34; I John 2:1,2)
  7. Premillennial, Pretribulational return for the Church by Christ. (John 14:3; I Thess 4:13-18; I Cor 15:52)
  8. Coming again of Christ to rule and reign on the earth for a thousand years during the millennial kingdom. (Rev 20:3-6; I Cor 15:24,25)
- c. The Holy Spirit: We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person; equal to God the Father and God the Son, and of the same nature, that He was active in the Creation, and in His relation to the unbelieving world; He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of unrighteousness, and of judgment to come, that He bears witness to the truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the agent in the new birth, that He seals, fills, motivates, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, and controls the believer. (John 14:16,17,26; Matt 28:19; Luke 1:35; Gen 1:1-3; John 16:8-11; Acts 5:30-32; Rom 8:14,16,26,27)

## **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, totally unable to change his lost condition. (Gen 1:26,27; Rom 3:22-23,5:12; Eph 2:1-3,12)

## **Salvation**

**We believe** John 3:7 teaches one must be born from above and that this salvation is the gift of God, not of works, 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. (Eph 2:8-10; John 1:12; Eph 1:7; I Peter 1:18,19)

### **The Two Natures of the Believer**

**We believe** that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for victory of the new man over the flesh through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit; and, that all claims to the eradication of the flesh in this life are unscriptural. (Rom 6:13;8:12,13; Gal 5:16-25; Eph 4:22-24 ;Col 3:10; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 3:5-9)

### **Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers**

**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; Rom 8:1,38,39;I Cor 1:4-8; I Peter 1:5)

**We believe** that it is the privilege of the 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. (Rom 13:13,14; Gal 5:13; Titus 2:11-15)

### **Separation**

**We believe** a Christian is separated to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 1:1)

**We believe** a Christian should walk free of all known sin and worldly activities in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon his Saviour and Lord. (II Cor 6:14-17,7:1; I John 2:15-17)

**We believe** a Christian should obey the command of Scripture to "come out from among them" and be separate from religious apostates, and to such doctrinal principles held dear to this Church, maintaining a separated position from liberals, neo-orthodoxy, neo-evangelicalism and Pentecostalism. (Tit 3:10; I Tim 6:5, II Thess 3:6,14; Rom 16:17)

### **The Church**

**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 of this present age. (Eph 1:22-23, 5:22-27; I Cor 12:12-14; II Cor 11:2)

**We believe** that the local church has the right of self-government free from interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations. (Rom 1:1-4, Acts 13:1-4)

**We believe** that the local church's scripturally designated officers are pastor (elders or bishop) and deacons. (I Tim 3:1-13)

In our belief on the matter of policy, government, discipline and benevolence, the will of this local church is final. (I Cor 6:1-3,5:11-13)

### **Marriage and Sexuality**

**We believe** that the term marriage has only one legitimate meaning, and that is marriage sanctioned by God, which joins one man and one woman in a single, covenantal union as delineated by Scripture. Marriage ceremonies performed in any facility owned, leased, or rented by this church will be only those ceremonies sanctioned by God, joining one man with one woman as their genders were determined at birth. Whenever there is a conflict between the church's position and any new legal standard for marriage, the church's statement of faith, doctrines, and biblical positions will govern. (Gen 2:24, Eph 5:22-33, Mark 10:6-9, 1Cor 7:1-9)

**We believe** that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage as defined above. We believe that any other type of sexual activity, identity, or expression that lies outside of this definition of marriage, including, but not limited to those that are becoming more accepted in the culture and the courts, are contradictory to God's nature design and purpose for sexual activity. (Gen 2:24, Gen 19:5, Lev 18:1-30, Rom 1:26-29. 1Cor 5:1; 6:9-10, 1Thess 4:1-8, Heb 13:4)

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct genders together reflect the image and nature of God, and the rejection of one's biological gender is contrary to God's will. (Genesis 1:26-27)

### **The Ordinances**

We recognize two ordinances of the church of this age - The Lord's Supper and Water Baptism. They are not to be regarded, however, as a means of salvation, nor as means of grace by which special merit is obtained.

- a. The Lord's Supper- This ordinance shall be observed as often as the Pastor shall decide. All who have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and are walking in fellowship with the Lord shall be welcome to join in this service - unless they are under the discipline of the Church. ( I Cor 11:17-34)
- b. Water Baptism-When administered by this Church, baptism shall be by immersion at the request of those who have personally acknowledged Christ as Savior. (Act 8:36-39; 10:47,48; I Cor 1:14-17)

### **Missions**

**We believe** that Matt 28:18-20 is for Christians today and 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, by their service, prayers and gifts.  
(Mark 16:15; Act 1:8; II Cor 5:19,20)

### **The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts**

**We believe** that God is sovereign in the bestowal of all His gifts; and, that the gifts to the church of evangelist, pastor teacher is sufficient for the perfection 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 Cor 12:4-11; II Cor 12:12; Eph 4:7-12)

**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)

### **Satan**

**We believe** that Satan is an actual 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; Isa 14:12-17; Matt 4:2-11;25:41; Rev 20:10)4

### **Coming Events**

**We believe** in that "Blessed Hope", the personal, imminent, pretribulational and premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to the earth, with His saints, to establish His Millennial Kingdom. ( I Thess 4:13-18; Zech 14:4-11; Rev 19:11-16; 20:1-6; I Thess 1:10; 5:9; Rev 3:10)

### **The Eternal State**

**We believe** in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matt 25:46; John 5:28,29; 11:25,26; Rev 20:5,6,12,13)

**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 resurrection, when spirit, soul, and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Luke 23:43; Rev 20:4-6; II Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23; I Thess 4:16,17) We reject all theories of soul sleep and 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; Matt 25:41-46; II Thess 1:7-9; Jude 6,7; Mark 9:43-48; Rev 20:11-15)

### **Creation**

**We believe** in the Genesis account of creation, and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms; that all animal and vegetable life was made directly, and God's established law was that they should bring forth only "after their kind". (Gen 1:1; Acts 4:24; Acts 17:23-26; Jer 10:12; Neh 9:6; Gen 1:26,27; 2:7; 2:21-23; 1:11; 1:24; I Cor 11:7; Col 1:16,17; Heb 11:3; John 1:3; Rev 10:6; Rom 1:20)

### **Civil Government**

**We believe** that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except only in things opposed to 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. (Rom 13:1-7; II Sam 23:3; Exod 18:21,22; Acts 23:5; 5:29; 4:19,20; Matt 22:21; 10:28; 23:10; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13,14; 2:17; Dan 3:18,18; Phil 2:10,11; Psa 72:11)

### **Authority of this Confession of Faith**

This Confession of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the Confession of Faith accurately represents the teachings of the Bible and, therefore is binding upon all members, staff, and volunteers, with allowances made within the following areas for School Board members, staff, faculty, and community members of South Merrimack Christian Academy, not including the SMCA Administrator, for the mutual benefit of the greater Christian community's involvement in this ministry of the church:

- The order and timing of events surrounding the literal return of Jesus Christ
- Separation from particularly named groups
- Church governance structures
- Methods of practicing church ordinances
- Cessation of spiritual gifts
- Exact process of creation under God's direction

All literature, whether print or electronic, used in the church shall be in complete agreement with the Confession of Faith, with all exceptions to be approved by the Pastor-Teacher. All activities permitted or performed in any facilities owned, rented, or

leased by this church or engaged in by any member of the church staff (volunteer or paid) and all decisions of the leadership of this church shall not conflict with the Confession of Faith. In all conflicts regarding interpretation of the Confession of Faith, the Pastor-Teacher and Deacons, on behalf of the church, have the final authority.

# **BY LAWS**

## **Article 1 – Name**

The name of this church shall be Merrimack Valley Baptist Church of Nashua, New Hampshire. Also referred to as 'MVBC' within these By-Laws.

## **Article 2 – Purpose**

### **Salvation of Souls**

Salvation of souls; the meeting together for godly worship, edification and fellowship; the sending forth of the Gospel for world evangelization; establishing a testimony to the historic Christian faith in opposition to modernism and worldliness.

### **Ordain Men**

To ordain men who qualify by the standards set forth in the Word of God and in accordance with the Constitution and By Laws of this Church.

### **Establish Churches**

To establish New Testament churches, and until they are indigenous, they shall fall under the authority of this local church and shall have the same rights and privileges by law.

### **The Organization**

This church is organized to operate exclusively for charitable, religious, educational purposes, including, making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations, as specified in the IRS Code Section 501 (c) (3). In an effort to facilitate the charitable purposes the church may maintain and operate, but not be limited to; building or buildings as the cause shall require including parsonages, Christian day schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, missionary advisory/support boards, print shops, day-care centers, camps and nursing homes.

### **Conduct Business**

In accordance with its purpose, this church may purchase, own, sell, hold, lease, rent, mortgage, and encumber real and personal property, including the construction of buildings, and churches. This church shall also conduct financial affairs which may include borrowing funds, and issuing notes, bonds or debentures. This church will seek to accomplish our purpose; to establish individual or specific trust for purposes consistent with those articles of associations and in harmony with the scriptures to carry on Christian missionary or charitable work of the church. No part of the net earnings of the organization shall be distributable to its members, officers, trustees or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in the furtherance of the purpose clause.

## **Independent, Fundamental, Bible Believing**

It is the purpose of the original organizers of this Church that it shall be, and forever remain, an independent and autonomous organization, adhering to the fundamental and premillennial doctrines of the Christian faith, as set forth in the Holy Bible. Cooperation and fellowship with other local independent, fundamental churches shall be maintained as long as it shall not violate its baptistic and separatist position.

## **Article 3 – Organizational Structure**

### **The Pastor-Teacher**

1. The Pastor-Teacher shall meet the requirements of I Timothy 3:1-7
2. The Pastor-Teacher is the de facto leader of Merrimack Valley Baptist Church, its organizations, and ministries. For the purpose of MVBC's incorporation status, the Pastor-Teacher is to serve as president of the church corporation and provide work direction to all Staff Members.
3. The Pastor Teacher shall have primary responsibility to perform, oversee, direct, and assign ministerial duties to Staff Members, Deacons, and Volunteer Leaders.
4. The Pastor-Teacher shall have primary Personnel Management responsibilities for MVBC's Senior Staff, as well as other staff members and employees, excluding those within SMCA and IBMGlobal.

### **The Deacons**

1. Each Deacon must meet the requirements set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13. The Deacons shall cooperate with the Pastor-Teacher and assist the Pastor-Teacher and staff in the performance of their duties.
2. Deacons may be required to perform ministerial duties as required.

### **Senior Staff Members**

1. Each Senior Staff Member must meet the requirements set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13. Senior Staff Members shall cooperate with the Pastor-Teacher and assist the Pastor-Teacher and other staff in the performance of their duties.
2. Senior Staff members, shall receive day-to-day work direction from the Pastor-Teacher.
3. Senior Staff Members shall, among other duties, be required to lead public devotions, conduct prayer meetings, preach the Word of God, as well as provide counsel to members, attendees, and visitors, as well as perform other ministerial duties.

### **South Merrimack Christian Academy (SMCA)**

1. SMCA shall be a semi-autonomous organization of MVBC as defined below:
2. SMCA's School Administrator shall provide primary work direction and have personnel management responsibilities for educators, employees, and other staff within this organization.
3. SMCA's School Administrator shall have the responsibility to hire new employees with consent of the SMCA School Board.
4. SMCA's School Administrator shall oversee the raising of funds for the operational budget of SMCA, with the consent of the SMCA School Board.
5. SMCA's School Administrator to perform ministerial duties as needed.



6. The School Board shall work at the direction of the Pastor-Teacher in fulfilling the work of the ministry, to advise the Pastor in the operational aspects of the Christian school ministry, and to assume the following duties and responsibilities:
  - a. Present an annual recommendation to the congregation in the form of a school budget.
  - b. Implement the budget as approved by the church, with authority to approve expenditures not in the budget which, in total, do not exceed 5% of the annual school budget within the given fiscal year. In years where the projected income does not meet the approved budget with a greater than 5% deficit the school administrator is expected to address the shortfall by cost-cutting measures and use of the reserve funds. If use of more than 50% of the reserve funds is anticipated the school board must work with the school administrator to propose a solution to the church congregation.
7. The Board shall be composed of as many as 8 voting members: 1 ex-officio seat for the MVBC Pastor-Teacher, 1 assigned MVBC Pastoral Staff member, 1 assigned MVBC deacon, 2 MVBC church members, 3 seats open to be filled by other individuals after the other seats have been filled. The SMCA Administrator is a non-voting participant on this board.
8. The Pastor-Teacher may remove a School Board member.

#### **Independent Baptist Mission Global (IBMGlobal)**

1. IBMGlobal shall be a semi-autonomous organization of MVBC as defined below:
2. IBMGlobal's Director shall have primary personnel management responsibilities for employees, staff, and missionaries within this organization and provide primary work direction.
3. IBMGlobal's Director shall have the responsibility to hire new employees with consent of the Pastor-Teacher.
4. IBMGlobal's Director shall have the authority to dismiss IBMGlobal missionaries upon the approval of the Pastor-Teacher.
5. IBMGlobal's Director shall oversee the raising of funds for the operational budget of IBMGlobal,
6. The Pastor-Teacher shall be a permanent member of IBMGlobal's Board.
7. Two (2) or more Deacons shall be assigned to IBM'sGlobal's board to act as primary interface between the Deacon Board and IBMGlobal's Board.
8. IBMGlobal's Director may be required to perform ministerial duties as needed.

#### **Other Staff Members, Ministries, Groups, and Organizations**

1. All other staff members shall work at the direction of the Pastor-Teacher or his designee.
2. The Pastor-Teacher shall have the responsibility to hire non-Senior Staff Members within MVBC.
3. Other MVBC Ministries, Groups, and Organizations shall be formed at the discretion of the Pastor-Teacher, with consent of the Deacon Board. All other MVBC Ministries, Groups and Organizations shall operate at the direction of the Pastor-Teacher, his designee, or assigned Senior Staff Member.

#### **Volunteers**

1. Volunteer Ministry Leaders, Volunteer Sunday School Teachers, and other Volunteer workers shall work at the direction of the Pastor-Teacher, an assigned

Pastoral Staff Member, or Pastoral designee. Volunteers Leaders may be required to perform ministerial duties when called upon.

### **Temporary Positions**

1. As the need arises, the Deacons may vote to create temporary positions, committees, or organizations and appoint individual(s) to fill them.
2. Each appointed individual(s) shall serve until notice is given by the Deacons, or by resignation of the individual, at which time the Deacons shall appoint a successor if warranted.

### **Pastor's Council**

The Pastor-Teacher shall convene the Pastor's Council which shall meet at least quarterly to evaluate and prayerfully consider the church progress and program. From the following appointed and elected positions the Pastor's Council shall be formed from the Deacons, Treasurer, and others as determined by the Pastor-Teacher and Deacons.

### **Other Duties to be Assigned:**

1. An MVBC staff member shall be appointed by the Pastor-Teacher for the purpose of recording all the proceedings during Congregational Business meetings.
2. An MVBC staff member shall be assigned to maintain the record of the membership of the church showing last known address, and the date and manner of their admission and removal.
3. An MVBC staff member shall be assigned to secure all records, papers and documents belonging to the church which need to be preserved. Such official papers shall not be removed without the knowledge and consent of the Deacons.

## **Article 4 – Covenant**

Having been led by the Holy Spirit and brought by Divine grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ and to give myself wholly to Him by receiving Him as Savior and confessing Him as Lord in baptism and testimony, I do now solemnly and joyfully covenant with God to promise, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to forsake the ways of sin and to walk in Christian love and in the paths of righteousness.

I will promise to exercise mutual care, as a member of the body of Christ toward other members, to promote the growth of the whole body in Christian knowledge, holiness and comfort; to strive with others for both the peace and purity of His Church; to sustain its worship and steadfastly cherish and His ordinances, disciplines and the doctrine of the Word of God; to contribute as a faithful steward such time, talent, and money, in the measure that Christ prospers me, that the responsibility of the local church and in the worldwide ministry of spreading the Gospel be faithfully discharged; all this to the end that I may stand perfect and complete in the will of God.

I also purpose to maintain family and private devotions, to teach the Bible to my children, to seek the salvation of my family and acquaintances, to walk circumspectly in the word to the end that I may win souls for the Lord Jesus Christ. I will endeavor to be a Christian example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity of life, remembering that God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love and a sound mind, that we are the light of the world and the salt of the earth, and that a city set on a hill cannot be hid.

I further purpose to give and receive admonition with meekness and affection; to remember each other in prayer, and to aid each other in case of sickness, and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, and always ready for reconciliation; to encourage one another in the blessed hope of our Lord's return. I moreover purpose that when I move from this congregation, I will involve myself, as soon as possible, with a local church where I can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of the Word of God.

## **Article 5 – Membership**

### **Qualifications for Membership**

1. Profess personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Gives clear evidence of having been born again.
3. Be baptized after salvation by immersion by this church or a church of like precious faith.
4. Have read and expressed agreement with MVBC's Church Constitution, Confession of Faith, and By-Laws, and have agreed to earnestly strive to live by its principles and tenants.

### **Becoming a Member**

1. The candidate shall express his or her desire to become a member to a Deacon or the Pastor-Teacher.
2. The candidate shall submit a signed MVBC membership application
3. The candidate shall be interviewed by a minimum of two (2) Deacons and the Pastor-Teacher.
4. Upon agreement by the Deacons conducting the interview process and the Pastor-Teacher, the candidate shall be presented to the Church and be received into membership.

### **Status of Member**

1. In order to maintain membership within MVBC, a member must attend at least one worship service during the previous six (6) months and not be under church discipline. The former requirement shall not apply to shut-ins, missionaries or servicemen serving in other areas. Other exceptions may be approved by the Deacon Board.
2. Only members 16 or older are qualified to vote.

### **Termination of Membership**

1. By death.
2. By a letter of recommendation and dismissal to unite with another church. Members moving from this area are urged to find and affiliate quickly with a church of like precious faith.
3. By erasure, any member not attending any worship service of this church for six (6) months without reason will be erased from the membership roll.
4. Upon request of the member.
5. By Church discipline.

### **Church Discipline of Members**

1. To safeguard the testimony of this church, the Deacons and Pastor-Teacher shall have the responsibility to discipline any member who in life or teaching is out of harmony with the principles of the Word of God, this Constitution, Confession of Faith, or By-Laws. Members who seem to manifest unrepentant behavior inconsistent with the principles and tenants of this Constitution or display flagrant sin in their lives, a wrong attitude toward the life and work of the church shall be investigated and disciplined accordingly if found to be erring.
2. The purpose of discipline shall be to remedy the wrong, restore the erring one, preserve the purity and testimony of the church, and maintain the blessing of

God upon the endeavors of this church. Discipline may result in termination of membership.

3. All discipline shall be administered by a recommendation of the Pastor-Teacher and a vote of the Deacons, according to the pattern established in the Bible. (Matt 18:15-17; Gal 6:1; I Cor 5:1-13)

## **Article 6 – Meetings**

1. Unless otherwise scheduled, this church shall meet each Lord's Day for worship, both morning and evening. Other meetings may be scheduled as desired by the Pastor-Teacher or by vote of the Deacons.
2. The annual Congregational Business Meeting of the church shall be held in December and shall include a presentation of reports, adoption of budgets for the ensuing year, election of Officers, and other business topics as warranted. SMCA's budget may be voted upon during a separately held Congregational Business Meeting.
3. Special Congregational Business Meetings, which cannot wait for the annual Congregational Business Meeting, may be called by the Pastor-Teacher. All such meetings must be announced from the pulpit at least two (2) Sunday morning services before the special business meeting.
4. The fiscal year of the church shall be from January 1 thru December 31. The fiscal year of SMCA shall be from August 1<sup>st</sup> thru July 31<sup>st</sup>.
5. A ballot may be requested during any Congregational Business Meeting by any member qualified to vote.
6. A member quorum shall consist of 25% of the voting membership.
7. In all Congregational Business Meetings a member quorum and an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of members present shall be required to pass a proposed motion.
8. Proxy votes will not be allowed.
9. All business meetings shall open and close with prayer and be conducted in the Spirit of Christ.
10. The Pastor-Teacher shall act as moderator in all business meetings except when absent or when the subject of the meeting relates to the Pastor-Teacher. In such cases the Chairman of the Deacons shall preside or a temporary Chairman shall be elected by the Deacons.
11. The moderator shall determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure, and his decision is final and controlling.
12. For any meeting under this article, the moderator, in his sole discretion, shall have full and unilateral authority to require nonmembers (or children, if circumstances so warrant) to leave the meeting room and to order the immediate removal of any member or other person present who is deemed by the moderator to be disruptive to the proceedings by act or presence.

## **Article 7 – Officers**

### **Eligibility for Church Officers**

The church shall not install or retain an officer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith. All Officers need to be members in good standing.

### **The Pastor-Teacher**

The Pastor-Teacher shall be called at a special or regular business meeting of the church, public notice of such action having been given from the pulpit two (2) Sundays immediately preceding the date of the meeting, and two-thirds (2/3) of the ballots cast shall be necessary for his election.

The duties of the Pastor-Teacher in addition to those outlined in other portions of this Constitution shall be to:

1. Have the oversight of the total church. Acts 20:28
2. "Preach the Word." II Timothy 4:2
3. "Feed the flock of God." I Peter 5:2
4. "Watch for the soul as one that must give account." Hebrews 13:17
5. "Warn and teach" that every man may be mature in Christ Jesus. Col. 1:28
6. Have the oversight of the total church staff.
7. Be an ex-officio member of all church committees and organizations.
8. Officiate at such occasions as usually fall to the pastor of a church.
9. Supervise the administration of the ordinances.
10. It shall be his privilege, with the approval of the Deacons, to designate other "men of God" to supply the pulpit in his necessary absence, whether because of illness, vacation, other ministry or any other reason.

### **Resignation or Employment Termination of the Pastor-Teacher**

The Pastor-Teacher shall continue in office until he resigns or until his ministry is terminated at a special meeting called for that purpose in the following manner: A special Congregational Business Meeting of the church may be called by the Deacons upon a two-thirds (2/3) vote of all appointed Deacons for the purpose of conducting a 'vote of confidence' of the Pastor-Teacher. Upon a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote by all appointed Deacons, a special Congregational Business Meeting shall be scheduled.

Notice of a congregational vote of confidence meeting shall be given on two (2) successive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting. At such meeting, the Chairman of the Deacons or someone designated by the Deacons, shall state that a vote of confidence has been called for, but shall allow no public discussion of the matter and shall proceed to take a vote by ballot. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the members present shall be necessary to give a vote of confidence, which shall mean that the ministry of the Pastor-Teacher shall continue.

Should the vote of confidence not be sustained, it shall thereby be due notice to the Pastor-Teacher that his term of office shall cease at a time not more than two (2) months from date of vote. However, the Deacons shall have authority to terminate the Pastor-Teacher's ministry at any time within the two (2) months period should they deem it to be for the best interest of the church to do so. In such a case, the full two (2) months regular salary shall be allowed.

The Pastor-Teacher shall give to the church at least one (1) months' notice of the termination of his duties. The resignation of the pastor may be submitted to the church at any regular service and vote by the church is not necessary to make it effective.

### **The Deacons**

The role of the Deacon is to work at the direction of the Pastor-Teacher in fulfilling the work of the ministry, to advise the Pastor in the operational aspects of the ministry, and to assume the following duties and responsibilities;

- a. The Deacons shall:
  1. Elect a Chairman and Secretary from their number.
  2. Serve as a pulpit committee in the event the church is without a pastor.
  3. Examine all applicants for membership.
  4. Assist in administering the ordinances of the church.
  5. Visit the sick and sorrowing and investigate delinquents.
  6. Present an annual recommendation in the form of an election ballot and budget.
  7. Implement the budget as approved by the church and have the authority to make expenditures not in the budget up to 1% of the annual budget.
  8. Meet a minimum of once a month.
  9. Serve a term of three (3) years. Their term of office shall be arranged so that at least a third expire each year. A retiring Deacon shall not be eligible for re-election for one year after serving a full term.
  10. Nominate men to the Office of Deacon, to be approved by the Pastor-Teacher, and elected by the congregation during a Congregational Business Meeting.
  11. Consist as a Pastoral nominating committee and their decision must be unanimous before presenting to the church body for election.
  12. Chose at least two (2) Deacons for fulfilling the position as church trustees.
  13. Remove a Deacon by recommendation of the Pastor-Teacher and upon a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote by all appointed Deacons..
- b. Unless otherwise stated, in the matter of decision making and voting by the Deacon Board, a majority of active Deacons present shall represent a quorum, and a majority of votes in the affirmative shall result in the proposed motion being enacted.

### **Treasurer**

The church shall elect a treasurer for a two (2) year term. He may or may not be a Deacon and his responsibilities shall include the following:

1. He shall receive all funds and shall be responsible for the banking of such funds to the account of the church in a bank designated by the Deacons.
2. Pay or supervise paying of all bills approved by the budget. Any other church, missions, IBM Global expenditures must be approved by the Deacons. School expenditures outside the approved budget must be approved by the SMCA School Board within the defined thresholds.
3. He shall approve the annual written fiscal report and present it at the annual meeting.
4. He shall approve the quarterly report and submit it to the Pastor-Teacher, Deacons and post it on the church bulletin board.
5. Deacons may be appointed by the Pastor-Teacher to act as back-up to the Treasurer, if the Treasurer is unavailable to perform his assigned duties.

## **Article 8 – Personnel Guidelines**

### **Establishing a Senior Staff Position**

As the need is warranted, the Deacons, by affirmative vote, may propose the establishment of a Senior Staff position during any Congregational Business Meeting. A description of the role and responsibilities, and the approximate financial remuneration will be provided to the congregation. With a congregational quorum present and upon a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote by members present, the proposed position shall be established.

The Pastor-Teacher shall recommend individuals to fill open Senior Staff positions. Upon affirmative vote by the Deacons, an offer shall be extended for employment. Unless otherwise stated, the term of employment shall be considered permanent.

### **Terminating Employment**

The services of any church or IBM Global staff member or employee may be terminated by recommendation of the Pastor-Teacher and affirmative vote by the Deacons. The services of any school staff member or employee may be terminated by recommendation of the School Administrator and affirmative vote by the SMCA School Board. Dismissal of a church, IBM Global, or school staff member is not subject to Congregational approval.

With the exception of the Pastor-Teacher, all paid personnel within MVBC and its organizations and ministries are considered either staff members or employees and are subject to this termination policy. Staff are directly responsible to their assigned Senior Staff Member, and/or the Pastor-Teacher, or designee in the performance of their duties.

## **Article 9 – Ordinations**

It shall lie within the province of this church with the Pastor-Teacher's approval to ordain to the Gospel ministry such men as can give a satisfactory account as to their conversion, call to the ministry, doctrinal belief, reputation and preparation and effectiveness for the same. Those who desire ordination may make application to the church.

A Council of Ordination shall be formed to examine the applicant as to this matter in a public meeting. This Council shall consist of the Pastor-Teacher, Deacons and a group of ministers selected and assembled by them for this purpose. Upon the completed examination of the candidate, and a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote by the Council of Ordination, the Council shall approve the candidate for ordination to the Church.

When so approved, a public ordination service shall be arranged by the Council of Ordination in consultation with the pastor or other representative of the church, and the applicant. The minutes of the Council of Ordination and of the public service shall be incorporated into the record of church meetings, and a Certificate of Ordination shall be provided for the newly ordained minister. Ordination shall follow in a public service after the following scriptural guidelines have been met. (Acts 20:28; 13:2,3; 1 Tim 3:1-7)



## **Article 10 – Finances**

### **Fund-Raising**

The policy of this church, with the exceptions outlined within this document for SMCA and IBMGlobal, shall be to raise all its moneys by freewill offerings. This shall include all the organizations and all the purposes for which the moneys are received.

All offerings shall be deposited as directed by the church Treasurer. Tax deductible receipts shall be given for all contributions allowed by the Internal Revenue.

### **Borrowing:**

1. All borrowing must be in accordance with the current laws of the state of New Hampshire.
2. All plans for borrowing must be recommended by the deacon board and approved by the membership.

### **Envelopes:**

Envelopes shall be made available to every member and others who request them. Members are urged to contribute to the current ministries of the church regularly and systematically, according as the Lord has prospered them.

### **Special Offerings and Designated Gifts:**

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. If the church receives a designated contribution for these funds or for any other designated purpose, the church will attempt to honor the designation; however, all designated contributions shall be deemed advisory rather than legally mandatory in nature-and shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the Pastor-Teacher and the Deacon Board. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article 2.

## **Article 11 – Continuance**

Inasmuch as many have given their time and energy in the establishment of this work, and the churches and individuals across the country have given of their moneys that this church might be founded upon sound Scriptural principles, it is hereby provided that in the event of division within the church over these principles and doctrines, the church and its property shall remain in the possession and control of those who adhere to these principles and doctrines, as set forth in this constitution.

## **Article 12 – Amendments**

This Constitution shall not be changed in its essence or meaning at any time in the future by any amendment to an article or provision of this Constitution in violation of the spirit and principle of this Constitution wherein it provides for the complete autonomy and self-government of this Church or the Confession of Faith herein contained; but this Constitution may be otherwise amended by the action of the membership assembled in Congregational Business Meetings for such purposes when a change will help the ministry of this church carry out its purposes and goals. Any proposed amendment must be duly publicized to the congregation at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which action is taken.

Amendments to the constitution shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of a member quorum present during a Congregational Business Meeting. Article 11 and Article 12 can never be changed.

## **Article 13 – Dissolution**

All of the property of this church is irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes and upon liquidation, dissolution, or abandonment of any of the property of the church, in whole or in part, said property will not inure to the benefit of any private individual, but will be distributed to an independent, fundamental, nonprofit organization and operated exclusively for religious and charitable purposes. Said recipient organization will be selected by the existing officers at the time of liquidation, dissolution or abandonment.