

Constitution

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Slate Belt Church Constitution

PREAMBLE:

We, the members of the Slate Belt Baptist Church, in orderly manner do hereby establish the following principles by which we mutually agree to be governed in the affairs of our church.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this church shall be Slate Belt Baptist Church of Pen Argyl, Pennsylvania.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

This church is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue law) including, but not limited to purposes as are specified in the Holy Bible for a New Testament church, for such purposes, the establishing and maintaining of religious worship; the building, maintaining and operating of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, camps, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, cemeteries, and any other ministries that the church may be led of God to establish.

ARTICLE III: DOCTRINES

Its doctrines, which are expressed in our Articles of Faith, shall be preached from the pulpit and upheld in practice.

ARTICLE IV: CHURCH GOVERNMENT

This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its only head and the Bible as its only infallible guide in matters of faith and government. Its government is vested in its assembled membership. The church may fellowship with organizations of like faith and practice, but no rules or commitments shall be made to such bodies which call for more than voluntary action on the part of the church.

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Becoming a Member

A. Anyone professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior; giving evidence of a changed heart; declaring himself in accord with the principles, practices and doctrines of this church; and not a member of any secret society ([John 18:20](#)) or group advocating civil disobedience ([Romans 13](#)) may become a candidate for church membership.

B. The pastor or deacons must explain the membership procedure to all candidates. All candidates should have opportunity to meet and ask questions of the pastor before joining. After being examined and approved, the candidate must give a testimony of salvation before the church.

C. All candidates shall be received on profession of faith not on the basis of a letter from another church.

D. All candidates shall receive, read, and agree to submit to the authority of the Constitution of the church and Articles of Faith in applying for membership.

E. No candidate can become a member if five percent (5%) of the voting congregation objects. Those that object must appear before the pastor, deacons, and the candidate to give just reason. If reasons are not justifiable; the deacons can recommend the candidate to the church for membership and the church can overrule the objectors.

Section 2: Composition

A. The membership of this church shall be constituted of persons who have professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and given evidence of regeneration and of conduct worthy of their profession, whose convictions are in harmony with the faith and practice of this church as set forth in the Articles of Faith, and who have, after baptism by single immersion, been voted into membership of the church.

B. Membership can be terminated by (1) death, (2) admission to a church of like faith and practice, (3) discipline, or (4) a written request of the members. Further, when members, without just cause or reason, shall fail to attend or manifest any interest in the church for a period of 6 months, they will be considered as an inactive member. When members shall fail to attend or manifest any interest in the church for a period of one year, they will be dropped from the membership of the church. Before any member is dropped from the membership, he/she shall be officially notified, then their names shall be brought before the congregation to officially remove them from the rolls.

Section 3: Voting Members

A voting member shall be an active member in good standing with the church, regular in attendance at the services of the church, unless providentially hindered, and at least 18 years of age. All references in this document to voting members or members present and voting are construed to mean eligible voters at least 18 years of age.

Section 4: Discipline of Members

A. Discipline is an essential requirement to be a true disciple of Christ ([Matt. 16:24](#)). It was commanded by Christ ([Matt. 18: 15-20](#)), and practiced by the apostles ([I Cor. 5](#)). Therefore, discipline must be part of the ministry and practice of each local church as a matter of obedience to God, not convenience or preference.

B. Our ultimate purpose in discipline is to glorify God by obeying His commands to practice discipline. In our dealing with spiritual offenses, we will conform to the pattern of [Matthew 18: 15-20](#). This process will include whenever possible:

1. Private Reproof ([Matt. 18:15](#)).
2. Private Confrontation ([Matt. 18:16](#)).
3. Public Announcement ([Matt.18:17a](#))

This step will involve the deacons and the congregation so that as a whole they may have the opportunity to help the erring brother come to repentance and restoration through counsel and prayer ([Gal. 6: 1-2](#); [II Thess. 3:15](#)).

4. Public Exclusion ([Matt. 18: 17b](#)).

5. Once initiated, the process of private reproof, private confrontation and public announcement will continue to the church hearing even after a request to terminate membership is received, if there is no evidence of true repentance.

C. This process will also be the pattern for dealing with personal disputes between members in harmony with [1 Cor. 6](#).

ARTICLE VI: ORDINANCES

Section 1: Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper shall be regularly observed by the church no less than bi-monthly, and shall be scheduled at the discretion of the pastor. Following each Lord's Supper, a deacon fund offering shall be received for distribution to those in need. Distribution and genuine need will be under the discretion of the deacons.

Section 2: Baptism

Baptism is a public profession of salvation as well as a symbol of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. It shall be administered upon request, at the discretion of the pastor and deacons. We believe Christian Baptism to be the immersion of the believer in water, one time backward, by the pastor or an administrator approved by the pastor.

ARTICLE VII: ELECTED SERVANTS

Section 1: Definition

A. The pastors, deacons, and treasurer of the church are the elected servants of the church and are subject at all times to its corporate action. Due to the nature of his position, the pastor, while conducting his pastoral duties, shall have freedom of action and ministry while primarily accountable to God and yet be responsible to the church body of which he is an equal part.

B. In order to fulfill the requirements under Pennsylvania Corporate Law for Non-Profit organizations, the president of the corporation shall be the chairman of the deacon board; the secretary of the corporation shall be the secretary of the deacon board; and the treasurer of the corporation shall be the treasurer of the church.

C. The elected servants functioning as officers of this church will consist of the pastor, assistant pastor(s), deacons, and treasurer. The pastors are officers by virtue of their position. The deacons and treasurer shall be elected by the members. The president and secretary are deacons who shall be elected by the board of deacons. All elected positions shall be initiated by the pastor when the need for these positions becomes evident and qualified candidates for the positions appear ([Acts 6 :1-7](#)).

Section 2: Qualifications

All elected servants shall be members of the church for at least one year, and at least 25 years of age, except for pastors and assisting pastors. A non-member cannot serve in any elected or appointed capacity in this church.

Whenever dismissal proceedings may be in order against any elected servant, other than assistant pastors, on grounds of proven immorality, heresy in doctrine, apostasy, or failure to properly attend his

duty, he/she may be dismissed by a majority vote of the membership present and voting at an administration meeting.

Section 3: Pastor

A. Qualifications

He shall be an ordained or licensed Baptist minister, subscribing without reservation to our Articles of Faith. He must display personal qualifications for the office as described in [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#); [Titus 1 :6-9](#). He shall not be a member of any group or fellowship associated with spiritual compromise or any group embracing the ecumenical movement.

B. Duties of the Pastor

He shall endeavor as a minister to hold forth the Word of God as a faithful servant. He shall have the general oversight of the spiritual life, regular services, and administration of the ordinances of the church; he shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees connected with the church or any of its organizations. He shall be responsible to the church for the administration, supervision and direction, programs and operation of the ministries and personnel including the assignment of positions and duties to the pastoral staff members and other employees. He shall approve and invite guest speakers who subscribe without reservation to the Articles of Faith.

C. Appointing a Pastor

When a vacancy occurs in the pastorate, the board of deacons shall form a pulpit committee, headed by the chairman of the deacon board, to seek a suitable pastor. This committee must approve each candidate by an eighty (80) percent majority before presenting him to the church. Only one candidate at a time may be presented to the church for a vote. He shall be elected by secret ballot, and it shall require an eighty (80) percent majority of voting members present to elect him.

D. Dismissal

1. The pastor shall be free to resign as he is led of the Holy Spirit, but out of Christian courtesy he shall give not more than sixty (60) days and not less than thirty (30) days written notice to the church.
2. If, at any time, the pastor fails to fulfill the moral and/or doctrinal qualifications of his office, or fails to properly attend his duties as pastor of the church, the deacon board shall meet with the pastor and hear the case. After this hearing, the board will dismiss the charges or sustain them by majority vote. If sustained, the board shall then call a congregational meeting in accord with this constitution and recommend the dismissal. After the pastor is heard, the congregation shall dismiss or retain the pastor by a three fourths (3/4) vote. In the event the congregation votes to terminate abruptly, the salary involved shall continue for thirty (30) days, otherwise, his service shall be terminated by mutual agreement, not to exceed ninety (90) days.

Section 4: Assisting Pastors

When the need for assisting pastors occurs, the pastor and the board of deacons shall examine the candidates and, upon approval, present them to the church. Assistants shall be presented by the pastor and voted into office by a seventy-five (75) percent vote of the members present and voting at any church administration meeting. Their qualifications must be the same as that of the pastor and their salary shall be agreed upon at the time of election of assisting pastors. The assisting pastor(s) shall be

responsible to the church through the pastor. They shall be ultimately under the supervision of the pastor for their duties. All assistant pastors answer to the authority of the pastor and all terminations are the responsibility of the pastor. Otherwise, the same policies apply to resignation and dismissal of assisting pastors which apply to the pastor.

Section 5: Deacons

The deacons shall be elected for a term of four (4) years. The deacon board shall be expanded upon the recommendation and vote of the congregation, not to exceed fifteen (15) deacons. The qualifications for deacons are shall be those set forth in [1 Timothy 3:8-13](#) and [Acts 6:1-6](#).

The deacons shall, at the pastor's request, assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual welfare of the church and in conducting the religious services and administering the ordinances. They shall serve the church through the pastor as custodians of the church property, spending money only as the membership approves. The deacons shall be responsible to keep the church property in repair and good condition. They simply hold the property in trust for the church to use for its legitimate purposes. They are responsible for the receipt and deposit of all tithes and monies.

The deacons shall also act as a review body over the general financial affairs and ensure that fiscal responsibility and integrity are being maintained by the pastoral staff. The deacons shall administer the deacon fund offerings and assist the pastor in visiting the sick, distressed, and widowed members of the church as well as those members being disciplined. The deacons shall also supply speakers for the pulpit when there is no pastor.

The deacon board shall be composed of the elected number of deacons and the pastor. They shall elect annually from among their number a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and treasurer. Meetings should be scheduled monthly or as often as needed by the chairman or pastor.

Section 6: Treasurer

The church treasurer shall be elected by the congregation for a period of three (3) years. The treasurer shall keep an accurate record of all monies received, pay all bills upon order of the pastor or deacons, have check-signing authority, prepare deposit slips for the tithes and offerings, and give a report on the state of the treasury to the church.

ARTICLE VIII: ELECTIONS

A. Nominating Committee for Elected Servants

The nominating committee shall be organized to recommend to the church one or more candidates for each vacant office. It shall be appointed by the board of deacons two months prior to the annual administration meeting. The names of the nominating committee members shall be posted on the bulletin board of the church. The nominating committee shall post their report on the church bulletin board no later than fifteen (15) days prior to the election at the annual administration meeting.

Members: The members shall consist of the pastor, chairman of the board of deacons, one other deacon and at least one (1) but not exceeding three (3) members of the church not in the immediate families of any officer of the church.

Vacancies: In case of any vacancy of church officers during the year, a special nominating committee shall be appointed by the board of deacons. If for some reason this committee fails to recommend to

the church at the next administration meeting candidates for the vacant offices (or office), the church shall then proceed to fill the offices (or office) with nominations from the floor.

Elections shall be held during the annual administration meeting and there shall be no nominations from the floor unless the person(s) nominated by ballot are disqualified or refuse to serve leaving no eligible nominees. In such cases, nominations from the floor must receive four seconding votes to qualify.

ARTICLE IX: MISSIONS

It shall be the policy of the church to proclaim the gospel and to support only missionaries and missions-minded institutions who are engaged in New Testament church planting evangelism. They shall be in hearty agreement with our articles of faith, both in doctrine and in practice and shall be approved by the church ([Acts 1:8; 13-14](#); [Matt. 28: 19-20](#); [Amos 3:3](#)). No missionary or mission board that is connected with spiritual compromise or the ecumenical movement shall be supported by this church at the discretion of the pastor.

ARTICLE X: COMMITTEES

Any required church committees may be appointed as deemed necessary by the pastor and board of deacons and presented to the church for ratification. All committees shall be appointed for a period not beyond the next annual election meeting, at which time they may be reappointed and again presented for ratification.

ARTICLE XI: MEETINGS

Section 1: Worship

The church shall meet, if possible, every Lord's Day for public worship and at least once a week for prayer, and at such times for religious purposes as the pastor recommends. All Sunday Schools shall be under the authority of the pastor.

Section 2: Administration Meetings

Notice shall be posted and/or announced two weeks before any administration meeting. The annual administration meeting shall be held on any day at the end of each fiscal year, if possible, between September 1 and October 15.

Section 3: Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall begin October 1 and end September 30.

Section 4: Order of Meetings

The intent of all administration meetings is that the majority rules and that the minority is given an opportunity to be heard. The pastor shall preside over all business meetings. All matters of disagreement over motions, procedures, length of discussion, etc. shall be decided by majority vote of the church.

Section 5: Quorum

When an annual administration meeting or a special administration meeting has been called according to Article XI, a quorum shall be at least one-quarter (1/4) or 25% of the voting members. No items can be acted upon when less than half (1/2) of the quorum or 12 % % of the voting members are present. If

during a legally called meeting, the number of voting members drops below ½ of the quorum or 12 % of the voting members, the meeting is to be adjourned and another meeting called.

ARTICLE XII: CHURCH PROPERTY

No person or group may use the church property or any part thereof for any gathering or activity except for spiritual, business, or social gatherings of the church, unless permission is first obtained from the deacon board.

ARTICLE XIII: LICENSING & ORDINATION

Section 1: Licensing

Since it is our hope that Spirit- filled men will be burdened to go out from among us to proclaim the gospel of the grace of God, such men may be given a commission to preach and to administer the ordinances. A license may be issued by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members present and voting at any administration meeting, provided the pastor and the board of deacons approve that the candidate has the Scriptural qualifications, suitable gifts, necessary training, and the blessing of God upon his public ministry.

Section 2: Ordination

When the church decides that one of its candidates possesses the Scriptural qualifications for ordination, the church shall call a council of ministers and brethren to examine the qualifications of the candidate and to recommend him to the church. After due consideration of the council's recommendation, the church shall decide to ordain the candidate by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members present and voting at any administration meeting.

Section 3: Women Candidates

We recognize that women may willingly serve in ministries of the church. While we recognize their gifts and talents and appreciate their contributions to the ministry, we also believe that Scripture teaches that women should not be ordained to the ministry; therefore, the church shall not endorse such applications ([1 Timothy 2:12](#)).

ARTICLE XIV: FINANCES

The program of this church shall be supported by the tithes and offerings of the members of the church.

Certain ministries of the church may be fully or partially supported by fees charged for tuition, programs, merchandise, trips, etc. The church shall not violate scripture in any methods for raising funds. Therefore, all fund-raising methods shall be approved in advance by the pastor and are subject to the same controls and procedures relating to the accounting for funds under the unified budget system.

ARTICLE XV: AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be altered or amended at any legally called meeting of the church by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of the members present and voting, providing the notice of such alterations or amendments is presented to the church in written form at least one month before the action is taken.

ARTICLE XVI: TAX EXEMPT PROVISIONS

As a tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code, we must comply with the following provisions:

Section 1: Private Inurement

No part of the net earnings of the Church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered and to make and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II, thereof. payments

Section 2: Political Involvement

No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The church shall not participate in, or intervene in (Including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Section 3: Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the church, the deacons shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all the assets of the church to another Independent Baptist church organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization under Section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code (Or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the deacons shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to organizations which agree with this church's doctrinal statement.

Section 4: Racial Discrimination

This church shall already have a racially non-discriminatory policy, and therefore, shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, national, or ethnic origin.