

Sherman Bible Chapel  
Deposit, NY

**Church Constitution  
and Bylaws**

*August 2022*

## Preamble

So that things may be done decently and in order in accordance with the accepted tenets of other churches of like precious faith, and that we may more readily help each other in our Christian service, we declare and establish this constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

## Article 1

### Section 1 - Name

This congregation of believers shall be known as the SHERMAN BIBLE CHAPEL.

### Section 2 - Purpose

1. This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes as the establishing and maintaining of religious worship, and any other ministries that the church may pursue.
2. The church shall also ordain and license men to the Gospel ministry; evangelize the unsaved by the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; educate believers in a manner consistent with the Scriptures; maintain missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country; and engage in any other ministry that the church may decide to pursue in obedience to the commands of God.

## Article 2

### WHAT WE TEACH

**The Triune God** – There is one true and living God. Inexpressibly glorious and infinite in all attributes. This God alone is worthy of all glory and honor. This God, as one being, exists eternally as three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All three persons are revealed to possess attributes of deity, including, but not limited to: Eternality, All-knowing, All-powerful, Goodness, Justice, Purity, Truth, and Life. *Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7; 1 Corinthians 8:4; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14*

**The Father** – He is a Divine Person of the Holy Trinity, the creator of Heaven and Earth, is coequal and coeternal with the other two Divine Persons. *Genesis 1; John 17; Ephesians 3:9; Ephesians 4:6*

**The Son** – He is a Divine Person of the Holy Trinity, through whom all things were made, is coequal and coeternal with the other two Divine Persons. *John 1:1-18; John 17; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2*

**His Incarnation** – The eternal Son of the Divine Trinity humbled Himself by being born in the likeness of men, He did so without altering His Divine nature or surrendering any of His Divine attributes. He took upon himself a full human nature yet without sin. He did this by means of being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin, Mary. Truly God and Truly Man. *Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 4:15; Hebrews 7:26*

He lived a life of complete and perfect obedience to the Law of God, fulfilling it and bringing it to its culmination. *Matthew 5:17-20; John 4:34; John 5:19, 30; John 6:38*

He was crucified, dead, and buried. His death is substitutionary for all who place their faith upon Him for salvation. For their sins, His atonement is sufficient. *John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Peter 3:18*

On the third day He rose again from the grave, showing that justification had been accomplished. His resurrection is a guarantee of the future resurrection to life for all who believe on Him. *Matthew 28:6; Romans 4:25; Hebrews 7:25*

He ascended to the Father and is coming again to judge the living and the dead. *John 5:25-29; Acts 17:30-31*

**The Holy Spirit** – He is a Divine Person of the Holy Trinity, the giver of life, is coequal and coeternal with the other two Divine Persons. *Isaiah 40:13-14; Acts 5:3-4; Acts 28:25-26; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 10:15-17*

**The Scriptures** – The full and verbal inspiration of all the Hebrew Scriptures (39 books of the Old Testament) and the Greek Scriptures (27 books of the New Testament) as originally given. That these alone, being in themselves the complete Scriptures, are without error and wholly reliable in both fact and doctrine. They are the final authority and perpetual sufficiency in all matters of faith, church order, and both personal and social conduct. God sees to it that His Scriptures will not fail to accomplish what He intends them to. *Psalms 119; Proverbs 30:5-6; Isaiah 40:6-8; Matthew 5:17-20; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21*

**Mankind** – God made man upright, innocent, in His own image, and for His own glory. Through deception and disobedience in the Garden of Eden, Man has departed the way of life and is now enslaved to sin and death. He has not the ability to return to the way of life on his own and is now totally depraved. As all were in Adam that day, all bear the nature of fallen humanity. They are sinners, unable and unwilling to restore in themselves a love of God, the way of life, or the glory of God. *Genesis 2:7, 16-17; Genesis 3:1-19; Isaiah 43:7; John 3:36; Romans 3:9-23; Romans 5:10-13; Ephesians 2:1-3; Colossians 1:16; James 3:9; Revelation 4:11*

**Salvation** – Man is saved only and wholly by the grace of God, through faith alone on Jesus Christ alone, to the glory of God alone. The mechanism of salvation is imputation: the one being saved has their sins imputed (credited) to Christ, and Christ's righteousness is imputed (credited)

to them. *John 1:12; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 2:8-10; Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24*

**Election** – Before the world was, God chose each of His saints from among fallen humanity. He predestined them to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will. *Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1-2*

**Justification** – Those whom God elects; He justifies. This means that He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, obtain His righteousness as a gift. All such are saints. *Romans 3:20-26; Romans 4:6; Romans 5:1; Romans 8:28-33*

**Ongoing Sanctification** – As a saint (Christian) lives, their lives begin to reflect their holy standing and position in Christ; this is a constant progression in this life, never fully achieved until the life to come. This is the work of the Holy Spirit indwelling; He brings about this fruit of salvation through new desires and new loves. Such good works are neither salvific before justification nor after. *John 17:17-19; Romans 6; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:23*

**Security** – Those who are saved by Christ are kept by Christ. He loses none of His sheep. *John 5:24; John 6:37-40; John 10:27-30; Romans 8:1; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24*

**The Church** – There is one holy, universal assembly. All saints, before and after Christ, are members of this invisible body through faith in God's salvation. Christ is her Head, her Savior, her Redeemer. As the Church is the body of Christ, no one is in the church who is not in Christ; no one is outside of the church who is in Christ. *1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:22; Ephesians 2:14-18; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 12:22-24*

**The Local Church** – The visible and local assembly is a necessary and good expression of the universal church. It is made up of those professing faith in Christ who willingly assemble under the care and responsibility of her leadership for the worship of God, the ministry of the Word, the observance of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, and, when needed, church discipline unto restoration. *Acts 2:42-47; Acts 14:23; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 10:25*

**Baptism** – Those professing faith in Christ are to be baptized. Baptism by immersion after salvation is the only biblically mandated practice for this. It symbolizes the burial of their old life with Christ and the raising to walk in the newness of life in Christ. *Acts 2:38-42; Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-7*

**Lord's Supper** – Also called "Communion", is the proclamation and celebration of Jesus' death until He comes again. All professing saints are welcome to the table. Those who have not professed faith in Christ are warned to not eat or drink as they are not worthy to do so. *Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 1 Corinthians 11:28-32*

**Local Church Discipline** – In accordance with the commands of Christ in Matthew 18, proper church discipline must be carried out when ongoing, unrepentant sin is in the life of one in the local assembly. The goal is restoration through gentleness and truth. *Matthew 18:5-14; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Galatians 6:1; Titus 1:10-16*

**The Resurrection and New Creation** – The Lord Jesus Christ will return to gather His church, both living and dead, from this world and make all things new. This will entail the resurrection from the dead of all of mankind: His church to everlasting life in the presence of the Almighty God, the rest of mankind to shame and everlasting contempt in the lake of fire, which is the second death. This present and first heaven and first earth will pass away; A new heaven and new earth, in which righteousness dwells, will ever be the dwelling of God with His people. *Isaiah 65:17-25; Matthew 25:41; John 5:28-29; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 21 and 22*

**Other Doctrines** – There are many other true and important doctrines of Scripture. The above are the main and central ones that we teach.

## Article 3

### Local Church Membership

#### Section 1 – Qualifications

Upon a majority vote of the members present at any church service or meeting, membership shall be extended to all who profess faith in Christ alone for salvation that the elders recommend for membership.

#### Section 2 – Duties of a Member

Upon becoming a member of this church, each purposes to love, honor, and esteem the other members of this church; to recognize the authority of the elders in the spiritual affairs of the church; to support the church in prayer, service, time, and finances as the Lord enables. All members will be held to and expected to hold themselves to a biblical standard of life.

#### Section 3 – Privileges and Limits of Membership

This church functions, not as a democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the elders. Membership in this church does not afford those individuals with any property, contract, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. The elders shall oversee and conduct all aspects of this church. The deacons shall give counsel and assistance to the elders as requested by them. The membership of the church has certain limited areas of exercising a vote. Members may not vote to initiate any church action but rather the vote of a member is to confirm and ratify the direction of the church as determined by the elders and the deacons.

#### Section 4 – Discipline of a Member

Consistent with our “What We Teach” section, church discipline will be carried out in accordance with the clear directions of Matthew 18:15-17.

The actions of church discipline are to be gentle and clear.

The goal of church discipline is to be repentance and restoration of relationship if possible as well as the protection of the church.

### **Section 5 – Termination of Membership**

1. Members may request a letter of transfer to another church.
2. Members inexcusably absent for a period of six months are considered inactive. Inactive members continuing in inexcusable absence for another six months forfeit their membership. During their inactive period, they lose all voting rights. Inactive members may regain their active status when they have begun attending again to the satisfaction of the Elders.
3. Gaining membership in a second church when you do not have a second residence will automatically remove you from membership in this church.
4. A member may request to terminate their membership.

## **Article 4**

### **Elders and Deacons**

Sherman Bible Chapel functions as an elder-led church.

Elections of elders or deacons takes place at the annual church administration meeting. Exceptions to this norm may be made by the elders.

A majority vote of the members present and voting at a duly called meeting is needed for election.

### **Section 1 – Elders**

The qualifications of an elder are outlined in 1 Timothy 3:2-7.

The elders lead this church in all matters. They are to promote the spiritual welfare of the church; conduct the religious services; perform all other work of the church. They are responsible for caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries, have the supervisory authority over all the teachings of the church, and have the authority to appoint the members of the various committees at the annual church administration meeting. They shall consider applications for church membership and disburse the benevolence fund at their discretion.

All hired and volunteer church staff are under the supervision of the elders.

**Term** - the relationship between an elder and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice or less by mutual

consent. The severance of the relationship between an elder and the church may be considered at any regular church administration meeting, provided notice to that effect shall have been given from the pulpit to the church two Sundays prior. A 3/4 majority of the members present and voting shall be required to decide the matter. The removal of an elder due to church discipline will follow the same practice as for any other member.

### **The Teaching Elder (a.k.a. “Pastor”)**

He is not the leader of the elders nor over them in any way; he is a fellow elder. He is typically a vocational minister of the gospel.

The teaching elder is the primary teacher of the church; he shall have the specific responsibility of the pulpit to conduct the regular and special worship services of the church.

He shall serve as the president of the corporation and shall moderate all business sessions of the church unless he asks another elder to fill this role. If he is absent or incapacitated, the moderator shall be another elder.

### **Other Vocational Elders (a.k.a. “Associate Pastors”)**

Subject to the approval of the church membership, the elders may appoint other vocational and paid elders to the elder team.

## **Section 2 – Deacons**

The qualifications of a deacon are outlined in 1 Timothy 3:8-13

The deacons shall assist the elders in caring for the physical needs and the various ministries of the church.

**Term** - a deacon’s term of service shall be three years. Upon completion, they are eligible to be reelected for an additional three years. After these six years, a one-year leave of absence is required before becoming eligible for reelection. Exemptions to this must be approved by the elders.

## **Section 3 – Joint Responsibilities of the Elders and Deacons**

The joint powers of the elders and deacons together shall be:

1. to make the financial decisions of the church in relation to all paid staff salary/hourly rate and benefits; to oversee the proper use of the church funds.
2. to purchase, hold, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church; to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church.
3. to sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of and to mortgage, pledge or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church; to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for indebtedness, in the name of the church,

promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges.

4. to exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church corporation if such action is mandated by a vote of the church membership.

## Article 5

### Corporate Officers

#### Section 1 – The Four Corporate Officers

As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the church, there are four corporate officers of Sherman Bible Chapel. *All corporate officers must be either an elder or a deacon of this church unless the elders make an exception to include a member at large.*

President - Typically, this role is filled by the teaching elder.

Vice-President - Typically, this role is filled by another elder.

Secretary - The secretary (note: this is distinct from a hired staff position) is responsible to ensure proper records are kept. This officer is primarily responsible for oversight of any hired staff that typically carries out these duties.

Treasurer - The church treasurer shall account for all funds contributed to the church and shall disburse the same in accordance with the elders and deacons. He shall present a written report of itemized disbursements at the quarterly church administration meetings and make a general report for the year at the annual church business meeting.

One elder or deacon may hold more than one corporate office.

Immediately following the annual church administration meeting, the elders and deacons shall assemble and elect, from their own number, the four corporate officers of the church.

#### Section 2 – Oversight of Officers

Any officer who neglects their duties for a period of three months may be removed from his office at the discretion of the elders and another may be appointed by them to serve the remainder of the term.

#### Section 3 – Duties of Officers

All officers shall prepare a written report of their work for the annual church administration meeting. They shall surrender any record in their possession to the elders at the close of their term of office to be filed as a permanent record of the church. All such records are the property of the church.



## **Article 6**

### **Meetings**

#### **Section 1 – Meetings for Worship**

Unless otherwise determined by the elders, the church shall meet each Sunday morning for public worship. Other opportunities for instruction, study, and prayer are also to be made available periodically.

The Lord's Supper ought to be observed often.

#### **Section 2 – Meetings for Church Administration**

A monthly church administration meeting shall be held with the elders, as well as a separate joint monthly meeting with the elders and deacons. The regular church administration will be considered during these meetings. A quorum shall consist of the members present.

#### **Section 3 – Special Meetings**

The elders may call a special congregational meeting by giving notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called to the church from the pulpit at least two Sundays prior.

#### **Section 4 – Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the church shall begin January 1<sup>st</sup> and end December 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **Article 7**

### **Unauthorized Expenditures**

Any expenditures in excess of \$200 and not authorized in the regular budget must be authorized by the elders.

## **Article 8**

### **Ordination**

#### **Section 1 – Ordination Qualifications**

Any member of this church, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, may be ordained as a minister of the Gospel.

#### **Section 2 – Ordination Procedure**

1. Upon a conference with the elders, and after the elders have approved the candidate for ordination, they shall call a council to examine and pass on the qualification of the candidate. The ordination council shall consist of either elders of this church or ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate in the examination of the candidate.
2. If the candidate is recommended to ordination by the council, the ordination council may ordain the candidate on behalf of the church.
3. The elders shall arrange for the ordination service.

## **Article 9**

### **Tax-exempt 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 payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set for in Article 1, Section 2.

#### **Section 2 – Political Involvement**

No substantial part of the activities of the church shall be 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 church officers shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all of the assets of the church to such organization or organizations formed and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the church officers shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to like-minded organizations.

#### **Section 4 – Racial Discrimination**

The church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and therefore shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color or national or ethnic origin.

## **Article 10**

### **Designated Contributions**

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the elders.

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 1, Section 2.

## **Article 11**

### **Amendments**

This constitution may be revised or amended by a majority vote of the members present and voting at any regular church administration meeting, provided that said revision or amendment has been submitted in writing and announced from the pulpit fourteen (14) days before the vote is taken.

## Adoption

This Constitution was adopted by unanimous vote by the Board of Trustees at a duly called meeting of the Board in which a quorum was present on January 18th, 1997.

This Constitution and Bylaws were amended by unanimous vote on March 16th, 2008.

This Constitution and Bylaws were revised and amended by unanimous vote on June 22nd, 2014.

This Constitution and Bylaws were revised and amended by unanimous vote on October 5th, 2014.

This Constitution and Bylaws were revised and amended by confirmation vote on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

This Constitution and Bylaws supersedes any other Constitution and/or Bylaws of Sherman Bible Chapel.

Signed by all Elders and Deacons:

Ralph Smith (Elder) \_\_\_\_\_

Timothy Easley (Teaching Elder) \_\_\_\_\_

Ken Macumber (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_

Todd Bass (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_