

CONSTITUTION

Revised 2019

Beulah Church (a.k.a. Beulah Baptist Church)

[How Beulah Church is organized and how it operates]

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PURPOSE

Beulah Church is a local assembly of Jesus Christ's followers who have professed faith in Him, (claim new birth), who believe baptism is a public acknowledgement of intent to follow Jesus, and have chosen to band together to share in a Jesus-following life.

The purpose of this church is to esteem God. We revere Him above all. We exist to worship Him with heart-praise, in fellowship with Him & one another, obeying Him by making disciples, equipping and employing His followers in ministry, and sending disciple-makers into the world, proclaiming His gospel.

Our purpose is grounded in the motivation from the Holy Spirit to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love all people as God in Christ Jesus loves us.

PRINCIPLES (Beliefs)

(foundational propositional truths):

The bible was written by God and transmitted to us through people of God whom He chose. All 66 books are the Word of God, infallible and inerrant in their original manuscripts. We do not worship the bible but we do worship its Author.

God is One existing in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each is co-equal & co-eternal.

Jesus is the Messiah (Christ) who was predicted to come in the Old Testament. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life being unable to sin, and he offered himself up as a vicarious sacrifice for the sin of every human in history, on the Cross. Jesus rose from the dead after three days just as he promised he would and he ascended to the right hand of the Father where he is making intercession for us now and preparing for our place.

The Holy Spirit does not have a body but resides in the world and in each believer, omnipresent. He restrains sin in the world, empowers disciples to live the Christlife, glorifies the Son and the Father, and preserves the saints.

Humans are made in the image of God. They are the supreme of all God's creatures. Every person is an eternal spirit with a temporary body. Every human is a sinner, unable to save self. Only the blood of Jesus can take away the penalty and power of sin.

People can be born again by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. No one can be reconciled to God by good works. People are saved from the penalty of sin through believing in Jesus, Son of God, Savior. Believers become disciples by following Lord Jesus, coming to love Him who first loved us.

The Church, that is all followers of Jesus, are charged to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love all other people as we love ourselves. This answers the great philosophic WHY. We are also commanded to go into all the world, starting where we are, expressing the gospel and baptizing those who become disciples of Jesus in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Church is commissioned to make disciples.

Every person conceived human will exist forever. All persons will receive a future body after the present body is given up. Those who are in Christ will enjoy everlasting life. Those who are not in Christ will suffer everlasting death. All sin was judged at the cross and paid for by Jesus. Those who believe in Jesus to save them will be saved and appear before Jesus at another judgment (Bema) for rewards according to works of love done in Jesus name.

PROPOSITIONS

Given the clear and revealed will of God we will endeavor to be people of godly love: loving the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and love our neighbors as ourselves. We return love to our Creator and Redeemer because He initiated love toward us.

We also propose to carry out the Great Commission, spreading the gospel near and far.

We will make the gospel clear without the tainting of man's effort for eternal life. We will proclaim that the new birth is by grace and through faith in Jesus' finished work on the cross. We will glory in the cross. Our sure hope will be in His resurrection.

As we occupy here in space and time, as His assignment, we will provide for the fellowship of believers. Beulah will be a place to belong and share our newness of Life. We will practice the “one another” injunctions in the New Testament as a way of sharing our Jesus-life together.

We will train disciples. We will make clear that becoming a disciple is not the means to eternal life (belief in Christ’s substitutionary death by faith is the means). But, once justified, the believer, having been freed from the penalty of sin, begins the work of following Jesus by living in the Spirit, learning and practicing a growing, grown up relationship with God--the means of power over sinful living.

We will provide for opportunity and equipping for each member to engage in the work of the ministry. Each member is to supply for the body of the church by giving time, talent, and treasure in proportion to the grace given him/her by God. We will equip the saints to do the work of the ministry. Each member is encouraged to serve the church family to build it up.

We will actively go outside the walls of our building and body life experience and demonstrate the love of Jesus. We will strengthen other believers outside our church family and on the way we will share the gospel by action and declaration.

PRECEDENTS

Beulah, as a local assembly, began in 1837 in this young community of Rome. Twenty-four years prior, under the endorsement of President Thomas Jefferson and the approval of the U.S. Congress, Ohio

became a state. Beulah became a new church the same year Queen Victoria ascended to the throne in England and Marshall Academy (eventually Marshall University) was founded.

Beulah began as a Baptist church and has been associated with the American Baptist Association. Both are recent entities. Denominations are extra-biblical and merely traditions. They are not prescribed in the bible. In the bible local churches were designated according to locations. For example, the church at Ephesus or the church at Rome were how specific local churches were identified. Beulah Church is located on Beulah Lane.

Baptist, as a denomination began in 1612. There is no homogeneous determination as to what it means to be Baptist. There are many doctrinal variations and ideas which renders the identity nearly meaningless. We are simply Christians.

We gather for worship on the first day of the week which has been the biblical tradition at Beulah since its inception. We baptize by immersion as do many denominations. We regularly observe the Lord's Table (communion) remembering the Lord Jesus' death by ingesting the symbols of His body and blood. Baptism and Communion were commanded to be observed by us by Jesus Himself.

POLITY

(How we are organized)

Beulah recognizes some to be pastors and some to be deacons. These are the two biblical offices. We also recognize other official ministers due to other needs in the church (example: trustees). Deacons care for people needs and Trustees care for the physical needs of the property of the church family.

The church family is made of members. These are disciples who have been born again. Other people identify with Beulah Church who attend the services or activities of the church family from time to time. Some of these people may be Jesus followers or considering His claims as Savior. Members are allowed to vote and serve in the church. But, the official church body is made up of its members.

Membership is formally acquired by requesting membership, professing faith in Jesus Christ, and having been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Beulah also has a committee or group of members who do the work of the ministry and who gather regularly to coordinate the work of the ministry. This council of members is known as the Church Board. These are elected by vote of the members in the annual church business meeting. There is no set number for any of these offices.

The Overseers of the church are the shepherds (pastors). In the New Testament churches, there were multiple shepherds who oversaw the ministry. These shepherds were also known as elders. The elders oversaw the ministry and equipped the saints to do the work of the ministry.

The model of shepherd and sheep is the model of leadership seen in the scriptures. The pastor is not the CEO. He does not practice chief-ship but least-ship. The model of counter-balancing branches of government is not seen in the scriptures for the church. There is not an executive branch, judicial branch, and legislative branch who compete to provide functional government. The model of the scriptures is pastors who shepherd and deacons who help pastors not neglect necessary ministry.

The Church Board is not the executive of the church. Unlike a board of directors, common in society (who direct), the Beulah Church Board is made up of the servants (ministers) of the church family. The purpose of the Board is to serve by:

- Reporting together the progress of their respective ministries, coordinating and communicating for unity
- Help give counsel to one another and the overseers providing wisdom, perspective, & prayer
- Provide consensus so as to give indication toward unity
- Build up one another and the church family doing their respective ministries.

The Beulah Church Board is made up of Pastors, Deacons, and other Officers (Church Clerk, Church Treasurer, Church Trustees, and other officers deemed necessary by the overseers). The Shepherds lead. The Deacons are not the check on the Pastors (Elders) nor are the Pastors lords of the Deacons (or others).

The church is actually directed by the Chief Shepherd, Jesus, and functionally operating by the prompting of the Holy Spirit in each member according to the spiritual gifts bestowed by Him. No office or officer is to usurp the place of Chief Shepherd or Holy Spirit.

Policies

Policies are standing courses of action that have been codified as precedents of operations. For example, it is the policy of the church that members may borrow certain equipment. It is the policy of the church that anyone wanting keys must get permission, training, and keys from the trustee of

building maintenance. Or, it is the policy of the church that only those who have cleared a background check be allowed to work with our youngsters.

True policies are written and maintained by the church clerk. The purpose of a policy is to relieve decision-makers of the necessity to make the same decision repeatedly. Once a policy is established everyone is to follow the policy. Exceptions are sometimes necessary and will be considered by the consensus of the church board. It is the policy of the church that officers serve one year terms. It is the policy of the church that officers begin serving January 1.

It is the policy of our church family to conduct one business meeting each year. It is the policy of the church that special business meetings may be held by petitioning the church board (and any member can make such request). How a policy is followed is determined by Procedures. It is the policy of our church family that the fiscal year begins October 1. But how that is carried out is by Procedure.

Ministry leaders begin their one-year term on Labor Day. Ministry leaders are appointed by the Pastor(s) and may serve more than one-year if s/he so agrees and requested to do by the Pastor(s). Ministry leaders are Nursery Coordinator, Youth Leader, etc. These positions are formed and recruited by the Pastor(s) as needed. Small group leaders serve by volunteering and being approved by the Pastor(s) for the duration of the group's stated purpose and duration.

In the case of a pastor vacancy the church board will temporarily do the administrative work of the pastor.

Procedures

Procedures are the ways that policies are carried out. Every minister responsible for an area of operation will help others who are associated with that ministry by writing out procedures for the sake of unity, proper care, and communication. For example, the trustee of audio-visual ministry will help others who work in that ministry by writing out procedures on how to start up and shut down the equipment. Or, posting the schedule for operators, etc. Procedures help workers to know what is expected or how to do or care for something. Procedures must communicate if they are to be helpful. For example, what to do to care for a mower should not be assumed that workers know how and what to do to maintain equipment. Posted procedures is one of the ways we communicate clearly, protect our unity, and provide common care.

The church board sets the dates for the annual business meeting. It is our policy to split the business meeting into two parts: the discussion of the posted items coming up for a vote (held on Sunday night), and the vote itself which occurs by ballot on the next Sunday morning. The procedure as to who, what, where, when, etc will be spelled out in the bulletin.

Positions

Church Board This group of Beulah members are those elected by the church family to help the elders conduct the functional life of the church. At the core are the overseers (elders) who are functionally surrounded by the deacons who help the elders meet the needs of the people, especially when people are underserved by the elders. Around the pastors & deacons, trustees serve by providing stewarding care for the physical properties of the church. And finally, the board is completed by the service of the officers (moderator, clerk, treasurer, and financial secretary).

The Church Board meets monthly (or more if called by the elders) to report to one another the work that is ongoing by each member of the board. For example, each trustee is to report ongoing work or projects, resources that are needed to complete work, and plans for upcoming work to be done. Each board member is to report in each board meeting. By this, every person on the board is aware of all the actions in the church together. Reports are to be concise and preferred in writing (this especially help those who must be absent for a meeting). Written reports that are distributed prior to the meeting are requested so that board members can see issues prior to the meeting which saves meeting time). One of the primary purposes of the board meeting is communication. The board also formalizes decisions either by consensus or vote and the clerk records them.

Pastor(s) Those who recognize God's calling and who are called by the Beulah family and desire to serve (1Tim. 3:2) in the office of Pastor (also known as Bishop or Elder) will have oversight responsibilities of the church family. There shall be a lead pastor (shepherd) who will provide direction to the other elders. While several may have the spiritual gift of pastor, it will be those chosen by the congregation who will serve in an official capacity with authority according to the scriptures. The pastor(s) shall serve as the overseer(s) on the Church Board. The elders are responsible to protect the flock from false teachings, do shepherding care, instruct the believers from the scriptures, and give devotion to prayer. The qualifications for this office are found in 1 Tim. 3:1-7.

Deacons Those who are willing to be servants of the church family by helping the elders serve the needs of the underserved in the congregation as was done in Acts 6 when the widows were being neglected because the Apostles (who were serving as pastors) could not get all the shepherding work done. Deacons must be qualified according to 1 Timothy 3:8-12. The deacons serve on the church board but are not a board unto themselves. The number of deacons is according to the needs of the body and the number qualified and willing to serve.

Trustees These are members of the congregation who are willing to faithfully serve the Beulah family by stewarding its physical properties. These will be people elected by the congregation to serve in this capacity. The trustees are not the legal representatives of church matters but do serve on the church board along with elders, deacons, and officers. The trustees are not a board unto themselves. Examples of trustees are trustee of A/V equipment and ministry, or trustee of building maintenance, or trustee of bus maintenance. Trustees may wish to form ministry teams to help them accomplish their tasks (like mowing or operating sound equipment).

Officers These are members elected to serve in capacities needed by the church board to maintain records, schedules, and financial matters. The officers are:

The Moderator conducts meetings “decently and in order” (1 Cor 14:40). The moderator sets meeting agendas with the church board by preparing and disseminating agendas in advance of meetings (as is practicable) to inform and make efficient meeting business, and leads the meetings.

The Church Treasurer has charge of conducting the financial affairs of the church as its fiduciary. The Treasurer administers accounts payable, prepares and maintains the church budget, prepares reports, and gives the board advice about financial matters.

The Financial Secretary aids the church board and church family by functioning as the administrator of accounts receivable.

The Church Clerk serves the church family by securing, recording, and maintaining all business conducted in church business meetings and board meetings. The church clerk also conducts correspondence for the church and disseminates certificates of baptism, etc. The clerk issues written reports of business meetings to the board members in a timely manner.

CHURCH STAFF

From time to time the church may wish to add or eliminate church staff positions according to perceived needs. Paid staff are directed by the lead pastor.