

# CHURCH CONSTITUTION

Austin Bible Church

# Church Constitution

## Austin Bible Church

Austin, Texas

### Article I - Name

The name of this Church shall be Austin Bible Church, a Texas corporation, having its principle place of worship at 8405 Cross Park Drive, City of Austin, County of Travis, State of Texas, hereinafter referred to as this church.

### Article II - Purpose

The purpose of this church is to seek and accomplish the will of God by means of the direction and enablement from the Word of God and the indwelling Holy Spirit; specifically:

To communicate the Word of God exegetically and categorically to believers in the Lord Jesus Christ so that each may be built up in Him and become spiritually mature (Ephesians 4:13; Colossians 1:28; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:2).

To equip all believers to make a clear declaration of the Gospel (good news) of the Lord Jesus Christ; and to spread the good news beginning in Austin and extending throughout the world (Matthew 28:19-20; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:18,20; Romans 10:17-18).

To defend the Faith by standing unequivocally for the doctrines of the Word of God (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:20-21), by being “ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you” (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:15), and by “turning away” from all forms of false doctrine, apostasy or unbelief by any name (Romans 16:17-18).

### Article III – Covenant of Fellowship, Doctrine and Tenets

#### A. Covenant of Fellowship

By the help of the Holy Spirit, we covenant:

1. To walk together in Christian love (John 13:34; Romans 13:5; Ephesians 5:2).
2. To exercise Christian care and watchfulness over one another (Romans 12:10; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:25).
3. To pray with and for one another, sharing our burdens, sorrow, and joys (Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18).
4. To be thoughtful and courteous to one another, to be slow to take offense, and to be quick to forgive and to seek forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13).
5. To guard the spiritual and scriptural purity, peace and prosperity of the Church and its growth in scriptural knowledge and godliness (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:17,18; 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:21).
6. To assist, as the Lord enables, in the work of the Church, and to promote its usefulness as a witness to the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 16:16; Philippians 4:3).
7. To contribute, as the Lord directs, to the financial support of this church and the evangelization of all peoples (Romans 15:27; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:11; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 9:7).
8. To love and to pray for all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 6:18; James 5:16; 1<sup>st</sup> John 4:7).
9. To engage regularly in personal Bible reading and prayer, and to establish family devotions where possible (Genesis 18:19; Colossians 3:16).
10. To bring up such children as may be entrusted to our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:7; Ephesians 6:4).
11. To walk circumspectly in the world, to provide things honest in the sight of all men, to be faithful in engagements, exemplary in behavior, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts (Romans 12:17; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 8:21; Titus 2:12; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:11,12).
12. To endeavor by example, by word and by prayer to win others to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 6:15; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:15).

#### B. Statement of Doctrine. The following basic doctrines contained in the Word of God are adopted.

1. The Bible, the Word of God.
  - a. We believe the Bible (the sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation) to be the verbal, plenary inspired Word of God, authoritative, inerrant, and God breathed (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:16-17; 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18).
  - b. Revelation: the content of the Bible has been revealed by God in order to make known to man information about God which man otherwise could not know (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:9-10).
  - c. Inspiration: through inspiration (a superintending by the Holy Spirit of the human authors of Scripture) God made certain that this revelation about Himself was recorded in written form without error in the original documents.
  - d. Authority: since the content of the Bible has been revealed by God and recorded under inspiration without error in the Bible, it is our sole authoritative guide in all matters of doctrine, faith, and practice.
  - e. Canonicity: based upon the principle of the self-authentication of Scripture and upon the objective criteria for determining canonicity (both O.T. and N.T.), we accept the sixty-six books and these alone as canonical (the inspired Word of God) (Galatians 1:8). We do not accept the apocryphal books or any other writing as canonical (Revelation 22:18-19).

2. The Godhead. We believe there is only one true God who is Triune, existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19) which persons are co-eternal, equal in power and glory, and identical in nature and attributes (Deuteronomy 6:4; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 13:14). These attributes are sovereignty (Psalm 115:3), righteousness (Psalm 119:137), justice (Deuteronomy 32:4), love (1 John 4:8), eternal life (Psalm 90:2), omniscience (Psalm 147:5), omnipotence (Genesis 17:1), omnipresence (Jeremiah 23:23,24), immutability (Malachi 3:6), and veracity (Jeremiah 10:10).
3. The Person and Work of Christ.
  - a. Incarnation: We believe the Lord Jesus Christ to be the pre-existent, eternal Son of God who became man without ceasing to be God or in any way diminishing His Deity (John 1:1-5,14,18).
  - b. Virgin Birth: He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of Mary, then still a virgin (Luke 1:35).
  - c. Hypostatic Union: The Lord Jesus Christ is the unique person of the universe, His person being the eternal, inseparable union of two natures: undiminished deity (true God without loss of attributes) and true humanity (all the essential attributes of humanity but without sin) (Philippians 2:6-11).
  - d. Substitutionary Death: He died bearing our sins to pay ransom price for our redemption (Matthew 20:28), to secure our reconciliation to God (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:18-19), and to propitiate (satisfy) God, the Father, with respect to our sins (1<sup>st</sup> John 2:2). In His death, He took our place; He was our substitute (Mark 10:45; Romans 5:6-8). This death was for all members of the human race (1<sup>st</sup> John 2:2; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:15; Titus 2:11; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 2:9) so that all men are now able to be saved by believing in Him.
  - e. Resurrection: His literal, physical, bodily resurrection from the dead proves Him to be the Son of God (Romans 1:4) and guarantees both eternal redemption and personal resurrection for all believers (Hebrews 10:9-14; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:3-5; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:14).
  - f. Ascension and Session: He ascended in a glorified resurrection body into the third Heaven and is now seated and exalted at the right hand of God where as High Priest for His people, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9; Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34; 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:1-2).
4. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit
  - a. We believe the Holy Spirit is a person and as God is co-equal with the other members of the Godhead (John 14:16-17; Matthew 28:19).
  - b. Pre-salvation Work: He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment apart from which conviction the unbeliever could not comprehend nor receive by faith the Gospel (John 16:8-11).
  - c. Salvation Work: At the moment of salvation, the Spirit regenerates (Titus 3:5), baptizes into Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:3), comes to indwell (Romans 8:9), seals unto the day of the redemption of the body (Ephesians 1:13,14), and distributes at least one spiritual gift (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:7-11) to each person who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - d. Post-salvation Work: The ministry of the Spirit to the believer is to empower him/her to accomplish the supernatural Christian way of life (Acts 1:8; Zechariah 4:6). The believer is commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:18-26). Furthermore, the Spirit ministers to the believer by illuminating the Word of God (John 16:13; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:12-14), by providing guidance (Romans 8:14; Acts 11:12) and by interceding in prayer (Romans 8:26-29).
  - e. Spirituality, the Filling of the Holy Spirit: We believe that spirituality is an absolute condition in the life of the believer in this dispensation, the Church Age, wherein he is filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit, walking in love and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. A believer becomes carnal through any act of mental, verbal, or overt sin, and the filling of the Holy Spirit is restored solely by personal confession of that sin to God the Father. Furthermore, spirituality is distinct from maturity (John 15:7,8; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 5:16-18; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 6:11-13; 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9; 2:2; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:30,31).
5. The Origin, Nature, and Condition of Man
  - a. Origin: We accept the Biblical account concerning creation in which God created the universe out of nothing by His spoken Word and concerning the seven consecutive twenty-four hour days of recreation in Genesis 1 and 2 as the only accurate description of the origin of man and the universe (Genesis 1:1,2,25; Psalm 33:6-9; Isaiah 45:18).
  - b. Nature: We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, the human race fell, was changed in nature by inheriting the old sin nature, became alienated from God by spiritual death, and came under the Adamic curse (Genesis 1:26,27; 2:7,18-25; 3:1-24; Romans 3:22,23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1).
  - c. Condition: The consequent condition of man is that of total depravity, i.e., absolutely unable to retrieve his lost condition (spiritual life), to commend himself or his works to God, to improve his own spiritual condition of lostness, or in any way secure his own salvation or forgiveness of sin (Romans 3:10-18; 4:4-5; Ephesians 2:1,8,9; Titus 3:5; Isaiah 64:6).
6. Hamartiology, the Study of Sin  
The Bible describes three categories of human sin:
  - a. Imputed: At birth, every member of the human race shares in the responsibility and penalty for Adam's sin (Romans 5:12,18,19; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:22).

- b. Inherent Sin (Old Sin Nature): Through the human father, every person inherits a sin nature which is desperately deceitful (Jeremiah 17:19) and out of which all personal acts of sin proceed (Psalm 51:5; Mark 7:18-23). This nature is a source of temptation as it entices and lures the person to sin (James 1:14,15). The sin nature of the believer is not eradicated or removed at salvation (1<sup>st</sup> John 1:8,10; Galatians 5:16; Romans 7:23) although the believer is freed from its necessary bondage (Romans 6:6,11). The sin nature is the source of human good as well (Romans 8:8; Isaiah 64:4).
  - c. Personal Sin: These are the personal acts of sin which proceed from the old sin nature and are classified as: mental attitude sins (Matthew 5:22,28); sins of the tongue (Matthew 7:1,2; Psalm 52:1-4) and overt sins (Galatians 5:19,21).
7. Salvation
- a. Basis: Salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace, based upon the finished, complete, perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, in dying on the cross bearing and being judged by God for the sins of all members of the human race to provide for forgiveness of sins (John 1:29; Ephesians 2:8,9; 1:7; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:18,19).
  - b. Genuine Offer: Since God is unable to be unfair to any person, loves all men equally, desires all men to be saved, is not willing that any should perish, invites all men to be saved, and since Christ paid the ransom price for the sins of the whole world; it is therefore genuinely possible for any member of the human race to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved (Acts 10:34,35; Isaiah 45:21; Romans 5:8; 8:32; 10:13; John 3:16; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:4; 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:9; 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:2; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:14).
  - c. Appropriation of Salvation: The means of appropriating salvation is faith and faith alone. The object of faith is the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:3,4; John 16:8-11). Each individual must make the decision to receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. When a person does not, this is equivalent to rejection, since there is no status of suspended judgment (John 1:12; 3:11,36; Acts 4:12; 16:31; Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5).
  - d. Eternal Security: When a person so appropriates by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, from that moment in time, the person (now a believer) is kept secure forever and cannot lose his/her salvation. The Father may discipline the believer as a beloved child when necessary, but salvation cannot be retracted because of sin (John 10:27-30; Romans 8:1,38,39; Hebrews 12:6-1; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:3-5; Jude 24).
8. The Church
- a. Universal Church: We believe that the Church, which is the body of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again believers of this dispensation (Church Age) irrespective of their affiliation with Christian organizations (Ephesians 1:22,23; 4:4-6; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:12-14; Colossians 1:18,24). In the future, the body of Christ will become the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:7,8).
  - b. Local Church: We further believe that the local church is an assembly of believers meeting together in a specific location with Biblically ordained leadership for the purpose of Bible study, worship, prayer, observation of the Lord's Supper, fellowship, and witnessing (Acts 2:42; 6:1-6; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:2; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:1-13; Hebrews 10:25).
  - c. Church Ordinances: We believe the Lord Jesus Christ instituted the ordinance of baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper (communion) to be observed until His return (Matthew 28:19,20; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:23-26). Baptism is for believers only and is a symbolic testimony of a past identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3,4). The Lord's Supper is also for believers only and commemorates the unique person (bread) and the perfect work (cup) of Christ dying on the cross for our sins.
9. Angels
- a. Existence, Creation and Fall: We believe in the existence of a creation physically superior to man called angels. These angels were created and existed before God created the universe and man (Job 38:6,7). Angelic creation was divided into two categories known as elect and fallen (devils, demons) as the result of the fall of Satan in which he led the fallen angels in rebellion against God (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5:21; Mark 8:38; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:1; Acts 8:9; Mark 5:12; Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:12-17).
  - b. Satan: God's Word reveals the personality and program of Satan who is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Job 1:6,7; Matthew 4:2-11; Revelation 12:7-9; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:3,4). He stands under the judgment of God. His certain future confinement in the lake of fire with all fallen angels and unbelieving humans to experience eternal conscious torment is clearly set forth in Scripture (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10-35).
  - c. Angelic Conflict: Until the execution of the judgment upon Satan, there exists a state of hostile conflict between God, His plan, and the elect angels on one hand, and Satan and the fallen angels on the other. This conflict is mirrored in and resolved by the exercise of human volition in response to God's plan (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:10; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:12; Luke 15:10; Revelation 12:1-9). Christ in His substitutionary death and His future reign provides the basis for the resolution of the angelic conflict in the human race (Colossians 2:14,15; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:23-28).
  - d. Demonism: As an extension of the angelic conflict, Satan has organized the fallen angels to resist the plan of God (Ephesians 6:21). Therefore, the operation of demons in the world today is a reality. All demonic activity is condemned by the Word of God and must be avoided by believers (Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 19:31; 20:6,27; Deuteronomy 18:10,11; 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 28:9; Psalm 96:5; Isaiah 8:19). The Bible clearly describes demon possession in which a fallen angel (a demon) inhabits the body of a human being. However, a believer cannot be demon possessed, although he can come under demon influence by rejecting Bible doctrine and flirting with demonic activity (Matthew 8:28; 12:22; Mark 1:23-28; 5:1-9; 9:14-28; Luke 8:27-39; Ephesians 4:17-19 with 2:1-3; 1<sup>st</sup> John 4:4).

#### 10. Eschatology (Prophecy and Last Things)

- a. The Blessed Hope: We believe that the next great event in the fulfillment of prophecy will be the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the air to receive to Himself the dead in Christ and believers who are alive at His coming, otherwise known as the Rapture and Translation of the Church (Titus 2:11-14; 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:51-57; Philippians 3:20,21; 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:2).
- b. The Tribulation: We believe that the Rapture of the Church will be followed by the fulfillment of Israel's seventieth week (the Tribulation), the latter half of which is the time of Jacob's trouble, the great tribulation (Daniel 9:24-27; Jeremiah 30:7; Matthew 24:15-21).
- c. The Second Coming: We believe that the great tribulation will be climaxed by the premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth to set up His Kingdom for the millennium (a thousand) years in accordance with the fulfillment of Israel's unconditional covenants (Acts 1:11; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 1:7-10; Zechariah 14:4-11; Matthew 24:29-31; Revelation 19:11; 20:4; 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7:9-16).
- d. The Millennium: During these thousand years, Christ will reign over the nations of the earth with a rod of iron in righteousness and justice with peace (Revelation 20:1-10; Isaiah 9:6,7).
- e. The Eternal State: We believe that the souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation do at death immediately pass into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His coming, when soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in the glory; but the souls of unbelievers remain after death in conscious misery until the final judgment of the great white throne at the close of the millennium, when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (Luke 16:19-26; 23:43; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 1:7-10; Jude 6,7; Revelation 20:11-15).

#### 11. The Responsibility of Believers

We believe that it is the wonderful privilege and responsibility of every believer to:

- a. Grow and mature in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, through a desire for and a feeding upon (study of) the Word of God (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:18; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:2; 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:15; 3:16).
- b. Glorify, honor, and please our Lord and Savior through the manifestation of the filling of the Holy Spirit and the mental attitude of doing everything as unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:1,18; Galatians 5:22,23; Romans 5:5; Colossians 1:10; 3:23; 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:1; 3<sup>rd</sup> John 3,4).
- c. Seek every opportunity to proclaim the Gospel to all the world beginning with those persons with whom we have daily contact (Acts 1:8,11; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:18-20).
- d. Remember the work of the Lord in prayer and to support it as the Lord prospers and guides each (Ephesians 6:18; 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:17,18; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 16:2).

#### 12. Spiritual Gifts

We believe that God the Holy Spirit in grace and apart from human merit sovereignly bestows spiritual gifts to believers in this dispensation. Some of the permanent spiritual gifts which exist today are pastor-teacher, evangelist, administrator, helps, giving, and showing of mercy. We further believe that the temporary spiritual gifts ceased with the completion of the Canon of Scripture and these were: apostleship, prophecy, speaking in languages (tongues), interpreting languages (tongues), healing, and working miracles (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12&13; Ephesians 4:7-12; Romans 12:4-8).

#### C. Tenets

1. This church shall not at any time become a member, sanction, or support the National Council of Churches of Christ in America, the World Council of Churches, or any other such organizations.
2. This church shall not solicit anyone to become a member. Those who desire to affiliate with this church may do so by complying with the provisions of Article IX.
3. This church shall not knowingly accept gifts from unbelievers nor make individual solicitation of funds or pledges among believers.

#### ARTICLE IV - GOVERNMENT

The Government of this church, under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ and under the control of the Holy Spirit, is vested in its Pastor, whose authority is derived from Scripture (Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:12; Ephesians 4:11b-15) and specifically enumerated in the Articles of this Constitution.

The delegated responsibilities for the administration of the affairs this church, under the leadership of the Pastor, vested in the office of Deacon/Deaconess, are derived from Scripture (Acts 6:1-6; Philippians 1:1) and specifically enumerated in the Articles of this Constitution.

The rights and privileges for the Members of this local church are derived from Scripture (Acts 6:1-6) and specifically enumerated in the Articles of this Constitution.

## ARTICLE V – THE PASTOR

### A. The Pastor

Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, and walks in the midst of this church. Jesus Christ's authority and leadership is represented by a single messenger, held in His right hand (Revelation 1:20). This right-hand messenger has charge over those souls allotted to him by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 5:3; Hebrews 13:17). This right-hand messenger is hereinafter referred to as the Pastor. The Pastor exercises his oversight shepherding under the authority and leadership of Jesus Christ. The Pastor leads all other Elder-Overseers in their consultation and advisory capacities to the Deacon Council and during Regular and Special Business Meetings.

### B. Shepherding Responsibilities

The Pastor shall watch over the spiritual life of this church, shall communicate the Word, shall administer the ordinances, and shall have charge of the worship services and Bible study classes, including their regulation in matters of conduct, format, music and all other considerations. The Pastor shall have final authority in all matters of doctrine and in the establishment of all policies not restricted by this Constitution. In the event of his absence, the Pastor shall be responsible for the supply of the pulpit.

### C. Call of a Pastor

The selection of a Pastor for this local church is done by Jesus Christ as the head of the Church. The role of the flock in seeking a Pastor is the work of seeking the Will of God and identifying the Pastor that Jesus Christ has assigned. The sheep will know the voice of their shepherd and the shepherd will know the sheep that are his. The call of a Pastor is a matter of faith-conviction by the flock that knows the voice of their shepherd. A Pastor shall be recommended to the Members by at least a three-fourths (3/4) affirmative vote of the male Deacons and called to serve by at least three-fourths (3/4) affirmative vote of the Members in a duly called business meeting. The administrative procedures for church votes are stipulated in Article XI of this Constitution.

### D. Dismissal of a Pastor

The dismissal of a Pastor for this local church is done by Jesus Christ as the head of the Church. The role of the flock in dismissing a Pastor is the work of seeking the Will of God and identifying the Pastor that Jesus Christ has removed. The dismissal of a Pastor is a matter of faith-conviction by the flock that knows the voice of their shepherd. The Pastor may be recommended for dismissal by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the total number of male Deacons. Upon such recommendation the Pastor is dismissed by at least a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members in a duly called business meeting. The administrative procedures for church votes are stipulated in Article XI of this Constitution.

## ARTICLE VI – ELDER-OVERSEERS

### A. Elder-Overseers

The Pastor is automatically vested in the office of Overseer. Additional Elder-Overseers may be provided by Jesus Christ as fellow-workers for the Pastor's work of ministry. Any male member of the church with the spiritual maturity status of Elder is eligible for the office of Overseer provided they meet the present character qualifications of 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:2-7 (cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:12). Elder-Overseers are vested and divested by the Pastor with the consent of the presently serving male Deacons.

### B. Shepherding Responsibilities

Elder-Overseers exercise their oversight shepherding under the authority and leadership of the Pastor. Elder-Overseers shall assist the Pastor in the shepherding of the membership of this church; reconcile so far as possible all personal differences; give counsel and comfort to the poor, the sick and afflicted; and keep order in the assemblies of the Members. Elder-Overseers are especially vital when it is the Pastor himself who is in need of shepherding comfort. Elder-Overseers are welcome to attend all meetings of the Deacon Council where their wisdom may be a benefit. Elder-Overseers may also be asked to speak in Regular and Special Business Meetings.

## ARTICLE VII – DEACONS/DEACONESSES

### A. The Deacon Council

Deacons and Deaconesses (collectively referred to as the Deacon Council) serve the administrative needs of this church. Any member of the church is eligible for the office of Deacon or Deaconess provided they meet the present qualifications of 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:8-13.

### B. Number

The Deacon Council shall consist of not less than three voting Members.

### C. Election

Deacons and Deaconesses are appointed by the Pastor with the consent of the presently serving male Deacons. In the event that the church is without a Pastor, the Deacon Council board shall appoint each Deacon or Deaconess. The term for serving on the Deacon Council shall be two years. A Deacon or Deaconess who has served a two year term shall be eligible for re-appointment. A Member who is an employee of this church or a supported Missionary shall not serve as a Deacon or Deaconess.

### D. Regular Meetings

Regular meetings shall be held at such times and places as the Deacon Council may determine, but at least once a month. At the first meeting following the Annual Business Meeting, officers shall be elected for one year.

### E. Special Meetings

A special meeting of the Deacon Council may be called at any time at the request of the Pastor or the Chairman of Deacon Council.

F. Meeting Attendance

A Deacon or Deaconess may attend a Regular or Special Meeting via electronic means (telephone, audio or video messaging, etc.) and is considered to be present at the meeting for the purposes of achieving a quorum.

G. Quorum

A quorum shall be two-thirds of the total number serving on the Deacon Council. The acts of the majority of the Deacon Council present shall be the act of the Deacon Council, unless otherwise specifically required by law or by this Constitution.

H. Servant Responsibilities

1. The Deacon Council exercises its servant responsibilities under the authority and leadership of the Pastor with consultation and advisory blessings provided by other Elder-Overseers. The Deacon Council shall assist the Pastor in the practical conduct of all worship services and ordinances.
2. The Deacon Council shall assist the Pastor and the Elder-Overseers in the shepherding of this church; reconcile so far as possible all personal differences; give counsel and comfort to the poor, the sick and afflicted; keep order in the assemblies; and supervise and administer the Sunday School and Missionary activities.
3. The Deacon Council shall be responsible to supervise and administer all handling of funds; to receive and disburse the funds in accordance with this Constitution or as directed by the Members; to hire and discharge personnel; to determine salaries and Missionary allowances; to hold title to all property in trust for the use and benefit of the Members, but shall not acquire or dispose of real property or its fixtures or contract for any loans on behalf of this church except upon prior specific instruction and authority of the Members at a duly called Business Meeting; to take necessary measures for the protection, management and upkeep of all property; to determine the use of the facilities of this church for all extra or secular purposes; to render a written report to the Members at the annual business meeting of the Members; to execute any special instructions of the Members adopted in a resolution at a duly called meeting of the Members.
4. The male Deacons shall make provision for the supply of the pulpit in the event of a vacancy in the position of Pastor, or take full charge of all services for which the pulpit is not supplied during that vacancy. Elder-Overseers within this congregation should have first consideration for pulpit supply.
5. Deaconesses voice their faith-convictions (votes) with the Deacon Council in matters of administrative consideration, but not in the consent approval for the Pastor's nominations of Elder-Overseers, male Deacons and male Members.
6. The Deacon Council shall interpret this constitution.

ARTICLE VIII – CHURCH OFFICERS

The Church Officers shall be a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. The position of Chairman or Vice-Chairman shall be held by male Deacons only; the position of Secretary or Treasurer may be held by either a Deacon or Deaconess. The Deacon Council may elect Assistant Secretaries and Assistant Treasurers from among the Members. The officers shall be elected at the first meeting of the Deacon Council following the Annual Business Meeting. The term for each officer shall be one year or until a successor has been elected.

A. Chairman

The Chairman shall preside at all business meetings of the Members and of the Deacon Council; shall have general supervision of the administrative affairs of this church as provided in this Constitution and/or directed by the Deacon Council or Members; shall sign all instruments of this Church as authorized by the Deacon Council or Members; shall be an ex-officio member of all Ministry Committees and shall perform all other duties incident to this office.

B. Vice-Chairman

The Vice-Chairman shall assist the Chairman as directed, and perform the functions of the Chairman during his absence.

C. Secretary

The Secretary shall keep the Minutes of the business meetings of the Members and Deacon Council; receive and issue notice of all business meetings of the Members and Deacon Council; be custodian of the Corporate Seal and records; keep current a roster of all Members with addresses; maintain a record of attendance at meetings of the Deacon Council; sign instruments authorized by the Deacon Council or Members; and prepare the agenda of all business meetings of the Members and Deacon Council.

D. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for the receipt, deposit, and disbursement of all funds and securities as authorized by the Deacon Council and Members; keep books of account; and shall render a current financial statement at the annual meeting of the Members and such other report as may be directed by the Deacon Council.

E. Removal of Officers

Any officer may be removed with cause by affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the total number of members of the Deacon Council. Voting shall be at a duly called meeting of the Deacon Council.

## ARTICLE IX – FELLOWSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP

### A. Distinctions of Fellowship and Membership

All born again believers are welcome to fellowship with this local church. Bible classes, prayer meetings, communion, and fellowship events are open to all believers who desire to freely partake of such grace blessings. Born again believers may also be convicted by the will of God to formally identify with this local church on the administrative basis of membership. Membership is never a matter of obligation or pressure. It is purely a voluntary association for those who are under conviction of God's will in this matter. Membership provides a voice (vote) among the multitude within this local church.

1. Members are invited to voice their faith convictions when confessions (motions) are proposed to this church. Members may, in fact, author such motions in a manner prescribed by this Constitution.
2. Members have the opportunity to serve as Sunday School teachers, Deacons, Deaconesses, or Elder-Overseers in this church.
3. Members have the opportunity to present grievances to the Deacon Council so that they might represent these grievances before the Pastor.
4. Members hold ownership to all real and personal property of this local church, and have a voice in the acquisition and disposal of such property.
5. Finally, Members have a voice in the identification of the Pastor's installation by Jesus Christ as well as the Pastor's removal by Jesus Christ.

### B. Becoming a Member

Membership can be requested at any time. A simple request to the Pastor is followed by the Pastor making a nomination to the Deacon Council. Membership becomes effective once an approving vote by the presently serving male Deacons takes place. A person shall qualify for membership when he or she:

1. Has believed in and acknowledges the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior.
2. Accepts the authority of the Pastor's office, and acknowledges being allotted to his charge by Jesus Christ.
3. Agrees to be governed in church affiliation by this Constitution, including the Statement of Doctrine, Tenets and Covenant of Fellowship.

### C. Voting Members

Voting Members must be 18 years of age or older and reside in Travis County or within two counties of Travis County in Texas.

### D. Membership Roll

The Membership Roll will be reviewed by the Pastor at least once per year to determine if Members are attending regularly and desire to remain on the active roll. Members may be moved to the inactive roll by the recommendation of the Pastor with the approval of the Deacon Council. Inactive Members are not eligible to vote or serve as a Sunday school teacher, Deacon, Deaconess, or Elder-Overseer. A Member may be moved from inactive to active status at any time by the recommendation of the Pastor with the approval of the Deacon Council.

### E. Dismissal of Members

A Member shall be dismissed by affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the total number of male Deacons, in a duly called meeting of the Deacon Council. At least ten days prior to such meeting, the Member under consideration shall be notified in writing of the charge(s), and at his election may be represented by two other Members, introduce evidence, present and cross-examine witnesses.

## ARTICLE X – WORSHIP MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS

Public worship services shall be held as often as the Pastor may determine, or in the event of a vacancy in the office of Pastor exists, as often as the Deacon Council may determine.

## ARTICLE XI – BUSINESS MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERS

### A. Place

All business meetings of the Members shall be held at the principal place of worship of this church, unless otherwise specified in the meeting notice. Notices of business meetings should be given at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

### B. Time of Annual Meeting

There shall be an Annual Business Meeting of the Members within six weeks after the end of the fiscal year; the exact date to be determined by the Deacon Council and called in the manner prescribed for the Special Business Meetings of the Members.

### C. Special Business Meeting

Special Business Meetings of the Members shall be called by the Secretary upon notice from the Pastor, the Deacon Council, or upon written request of ten percent of the voting Members.

### D. Quorum and Conduct of Business

A quorum for the transaction of business shall be a simple majority of the voting Members. A majority vote of such Members present and voting shall prevail unless the vote of a greater number is required by law or this Constitution. The agenda of all business meetings of the Members shall include the following: opening and closing prayer, proof of notice of meeting and quorum, reading of the minutes, disposition of business for which the meeting was called, reports and elections as required by this Constitution. In all business meetings, the Chairman of the Deacon Council shall preside, and in his absence, the Vice-Chairman; and, if both be absent, a chairman shall be appointed by the Deacon Council. In the transaction of business, the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Tenth Edition shall be used in all cases not covered by this Constitution.

E. Voting

The Chairman of the meeting shall determine the method of voting, except that the following shall be by secret ballot: purchase, sale or transfer of real or personal property; the calling or dismissal of a Pastor. Whenever possible, votes on resolutions and motions in a business meeting of the Members are to be expressed in terms of faith convictions as to the will of God.

ARTICLE XII – MINISTRIES

A. Ministries of this church

The Ministries shall be as follows:

1. Standing Ministry
2. Special Ministry

B. Standing Ministries

1. The Standing Ministries of this church shall be:

- a. Church Records Ministry
- b. Education Ministry
- c. Finance Ministry
- d. Nursery Ministry
- e. Property Ministry
- f. Ushers Ministry

2. The Deacon Chairman, with the approval of the Pastor and the Deacon Council, shall appoint a Deacon or Deaconess as the Leader of each Standing Ministry. Each such Ministry Leader, with prior approval of the Deacon Council, may decide to appoint members of a Ministry Committee as is necessary for the function of the Ministry. This Ministry Leader shall serve until his successor has been qualified and appointed. Terms for the Ministry Leader and members of any Ministry Committees formed shall be for one year and may be repeated, subject to approval by the Pastor and Deacon Council.

3. Each Standing Ministry shall have the following general functions and duties:

- a. Be responsible to and report to the Pastor and Deacon Council.
- b. Become familiar with its sphere of activity.
- c. Execute only such policy and procedure as is approved by the Pastor and Deacon Council.

4. The specific functions and duties of the Standing Ministries are as follows:

- a. Church Records Ministry shall be responsible for maintenance of membership rolls and church records. The Secretary shall be the Leader of the Ministry.
- b. Education Ministry shall be responsible for the operation and management of all Sunday School activities in accordance with the policy approved by the Deacon Council. This Ministry shall oversee the Junior Church, including the respective directors, teacher personnel, materials, schedules, and operation; and in general promote the spiritual and recreational activities of the young people of this church.
- c. Finance Ministry shall be responsible for the supervision and administration of all ways and means of receiving, and disbursing funds, including insurance requirements. The Treasurer shall be Leader of this Ministry.
- d. Nursery Ministry shall be responsible for the administration and operation of the nursery facilities.
- e. Property Ministry shall be responsible for the operation, use, maintenance, and repair of all property, not specifically delegated to others, including all buildings, grounds, parking areas, mechanical equipment, recording equipment and systems, sound systems, furniture and fixtures. The custodian shall be under the direct supervision of this Ministry.
- f. Ushers Ministry shall be responsible for the seating of the congregation at public worship services; provision for tellers at business meetings of the Members; preparation and distribution of the elements of the Lord's Supper; assist the Pastor in the administration of Baptism.

C. Special Ministries

Such other Ministries as may be needed for particular purposes from time to time may be formed and utilized as directed by the Deacon Council. Each Special Ministry shall be responsible to and report to the Pastor and the Deacon Council.

ARTICLE XIII - MISSIONARIES

Missionaries may be supported on monthly basis upon recommendation by the Pastor with the approval of the Deacon Council. The amount of support is to be determined by the Deacon Council.

ARTICLE XIV – DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS

Designated contributions may be used as directed, if in keeping with the purpose and policy of this church. Contributions designated for purposes which do not meet this requirement shall be returned to the donor, if possible. The Deacon Council shall have the right to determine the use of all contributions.

ARTICLE XV – FISCAL YEAR

The Fiscal Year of this church shall begin on the first day of January, and end on the last day of December, each year.

ARTICLE XVI – LICENSING AND ORDINATION

A. LICENSE – The right of licensing will be reserved.

A license to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be issued in the name of this church to any man who, in the judgment of the Pastors and Deacon Council is called of God to the work of the ministry. The issuance of such a license shall not bind this church to a future ordination of the licensee.

B. ORDINATION – The right of ordination will be reserved.

A commission to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be granted in the name of this church to any man by a unanimous affirmative vote of an examination committee convened by the Pastor and the Deacon Council. This committee shall thoroughly examine all such applicants as to personal salvation, spiritual gifts, doctrine, ministry, education and character.

ARTICLE XVII – SEAL

The Deacons shall be authorized to provide a Corporate Seal which shall be in the form of a circle and shall have inscribed thereon the name of this church.

ARTICLE XVIII – DISSOLUTION CLAUSE

Austin Bible Church pledges its assets for use in performing the organization’s religious functions. Should Austin Bible Church be discontinued by dissolution or otherwise, the assets are to be transferred to the State of Texas or to a charitable, educational, religious, or other similar organization that is qualified as a charitable organization under section 501 ( c ) ( 3 ), Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended.

ARTICLE XIX - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the Members present at a duly called business meeting, provided the proposed amendment has been approved by the Deacon Council, or has been submitted by a petition, signed by not less than ten percent (10%) of the Members, and that the written notice of such meeting shall state the proposed amendment.

Amendment History:

This Constitution was amended by the membership of this church at a special business meeting duly called and held on February 9, 2014, at the principal place of worship, 8405 Cross Park Dr., Austin, Texas. The Covenant of Fellowship was added to Article III and significant text changes were made to Articles IV through XIX.

This document will be titled “Austin Bible Church Constitution (2014 Revision)” and serve as the base text for all future amendments.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman of the Deacon Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice-Chairman of the Deacon Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Treasurer