

Coweta Independent Baptist Church Constitution and Bylaws

Its

Structured Overview of Church Organization, Purpose, Membership, and Governance

Preamble

Reposing our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, believing in the teachings and practices of New Testament Baptists, and in the great distinctive principles for which they have stood, and accepting as a general summary of doctrine and duties, a covenant and articles of faith, we therefore bind ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, and adopt for our government, and plan of worship and service, the following:

Name

The organization as an organism shall be called: Coweta Independent Baptist Church of Coweta, Oklahoma.

Purpose

The purpose of our organization is to worship and glorify God, promote the spiritual wellbeing of the saints gathered, and spread the gospel throughout the world. All activities are guided by the Holy Scriptures contained in the King James Version of the Bible (1611-1769) for the English-speaking world.

Character of Government

Coweta Independent Baptist Church (CBC) shall be governed by the New Testament as our only rule of faith and practice. Our Confession of Faith, Constitution, and Covenant reflect and define what we believe the New Testament teaches regarding proper gospel order (Col. 2:5; Phil. 1:27) for the Lord's church. We strive to adhere strictly to New Testament precepts and practice. (Our Confession of Faith and Covenant are separate documents and available to all members.)

The church shall be informal in ritual, and its government is vested in the body of baptized believers of which the church is composed.

- Acts 11:22 – "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch."
- Acts 1:14-15 – "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and

Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)"

- Acts 2:1 – "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."
- Acts 15:22 – "Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:"

This church shall always remain independent, fundamental, self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. No synod, presbytery, denomination, or external assembly has jurisdiction over this congregation; however, counsel may be sought from other churches in the same faith and order.

BYLAWS OF THE COWETA BAPTIST CHURCH

Congregational Authority

This church looks to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head and true Bishop of this Assembly, as expressed in Ephesians 1:22-23. His instructions and commissions are contained in the New Testament of the King James Version of the Bible. All matters are resolved by the majority rule of this body of believers. This authority includes the election of officers, membership, discipline, property, budgets, amendments, resolutions (this list is not comprehensive), and all business, both spiritual and temporal.

Officers

Commissioned Officers

- **Bishop/Pastor:** The qualifications for this ordained office shall be those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The Pastor is responsible for preaching, teaching, and general oversight of the assembly, including officers, teachers, music, ministry, assistants, appointees, and the pulpit. The Pastor serves as the moderator at all business meetings and is an ex-officio member of all committees. He has authority to call church business meetings at any time and appoint necessary committees.
- **Deacon(s):** Deacons must meet the qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. They are chosen from among the assembly and ordained, as many as are needful. Their duties include attending to the temporal concerns of the assembly, serving under the direction of the Pastor, assisting at the Lord's Table, and looking after the needs of the elderly.

Non-commissioned Officers

- **Trustees:** Three male members are chosen to care for church property. Trustees cannot buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer property without a supermajority (min. 75%) vote of the attending members. They are the legal signatories of the Church Corporate in documents pertaining to property rights, promissory notes, and other church-related papers. Trustees ensure the church building is maintained, insured, opened, heated/cooled, and lighted for church meetings.
- **Treasurer/Assistant Treasurer:** Two male members are elected annually to serve as treasurer and assistant treasurer. They receive and deposit all monies collected by tithes and offerings, keep strict accounts of receipts and disbursements, and make payments by check unless directed otherwise by the assembly.
- **Missions Treasurer:** One male member is elected annually to issue funds to approved missionaries and mission projects, keeping strict accounts of all receipts and disbursements. All payments are made by check unless the assembly directs otherwise. This position is under the direct supervision of the Church Treasurer.
- **Church Clerk:** A member is elected to record all business meetings and manage all documents, papers, and letters. The clerk issues letters of dismissal and recommendations, keeps a monthly history and

membership record, and provides reports as required.

- **Chief Usher:** Appointed by the Pastor, responsible for proper seating of the congregation at all services. The Chief Usher appoints assistants as needed to maintain good order on the premises.
- **Webmaster:** Appointed by the Pastor for an indefinite term and under his direct supervision. Responsible for maintaining the church website, social media, and any other internet-based site designed or approved by the Pastor. The webmaster may add and remove content as needed.

The assembly reserves the right to add or delete non-commissioned officer roles as needed. All helpers (song leader, pianist, and their assistants) are appointed by the Pastor.

Meetings

The assembly meets regularly on the first day of the week for public worship, which includes reading scripture, preaching, praying, singing hymns and spiritual songs, and administering ordinances. Additional meetings may be held for fasting, feasting, thanksgiving, or consultation as needed.

Church business meetings may be called whenever necessary. The men of the church meet to consider, investigate, pray, and make recommendations to the church body. These recommendations are then presented to the church body for discussion, amending, correction, and ratification by a simple majority vote. New business may be introduced, proposals considered, and motions made according to church body rules.

Meetings involving matters such as the sale or purchase of property or calling a Pastor require a supermajority vote (min. 75%) and must be announced two weeks in advance. Public announcements of regular church business meetings must be made at least one week prior unless there is an emergency requiring immediate attention.

The Pastor serves as moderator for all business meetings or appoints someone in his absence. If the church is without a Pastor or the Pastor is disqualified, the church may appoint a moderator.

If the church is without a pastor, a pulpit committee composed of deacons and other appointed members will search for a qualified candidate. The qualifying candidate is presented to the church, demonstrates abilities, and vetted by the whole assembly before he is recommended by the committee. The church may inquire further if not satisfied with the recommendation. The vote to call a Pastor requires a supermajority (min. 75%) of members. Members in good standing, not willfully or negligently absent from regular meetings without valid excuse, are eligible to vote. In matters related to property, calling or dismissing a Pastor, or significant church problems, members must be at least sixteen years of age.

No meeting may be conducted, publicly or in secret, without the Pastor's knowledge and consent. Business conducted without proper authorization is considered illegal and null. If business involves the Pastor, he may appoint another member to act as moderator.

Membership, Duties, and Discipline

Membership in a church of the Lord Jesus is not open to the public or anyone merely wishing to join. It is a serious commitment requiring spiritual and ceremonial qualifications and a covenantal agreement.

- All candidates for membership must have a credible profession of faith in Christ.
- They must have a walk consistently with their professed faith (godliness).
- They must be baptized in the Baptist faith.
- They must agree generally with our Confession of Faith and Covenant.

The general duties of members include:

- Walking circumspectly in holiness and godliness.
- Attending church assemblies on the Lord's Day and at other appointed worship times.
- Contributing as God has prospered them for the maintenance of the ministry.
- Submitting to those who watch over their souls, as they must give an account (Hebrews 13:17).

Termination of Membership

- A member voluntarily leaving may seek another church of like faith and practice. If they leave in good standing, a letter of recommendation may be issued and membership terminated.
- A member may voluntarily leave the assembly due to some doctrinal differences or inability to submit to the ministry of this church and seek for a Baptist church in keeping with these differences.
- A member may be removed by congregational vote due to a discipline matter.
- All who leave are considered in good standing unless removed by discipline or join another assembly not of our Faith.

The churches of Jesus Christ are not immune to those professing believers who do not walk according to gospel church order and therefore must be censored/disciplined according to that same order. This being done that the name of the Blessed Savior is not marred and the church disgraced.

- Gross moral offense against the Lord and His Church (1 Corinthians 5:1-13)
- Doctrinal offenses (holding or teaching false doctrine) (Romans 16:17; Titus 3:10)
- Personal trespasses against a fellow member (Matthew 18:15-18)
- Failure to walk in gospel church order according to our Covenant (2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6, 14-15; Hebrews 3:12-13)

Support for this Ministry

The church is supported by the free-will offerings of its membership, according to the teachings of Holy Scripture. This includes a fixed salary for the Pastor, commensurate with his needs and the church's ability to pay, followed by all other official salaries. Utilities, maintenance, building repairs, improvements, and approved obligations are paid from the general offerings. Fifteen percent (15%) of general offerings are designated for missions.

The church does not promote suppers, sales (such as rummage or bake sales), parties, raffles, or any similar projects for the support of this ministry.

Use of Church Facilities

Weddings

- All weddings performed at church facilities must be between one man and one woman only. No other types of ceremonies are permitted on church property. (Gen. 2:24-25; Eph. 5:22-25; Rom. 1:26-27)
- Persons wishing to be married on church property must be born-again Christians and participate in counseling at the Pastor's discretion (2 Cor. 5:17; John 3:3).
- A man is defined as one born male, and a woman as one born female.
- If any court, commission, or tribunal finds this provision unlawful, marriages shall be limited to members of Coweta Baptist Church.

Governmental Use

The church shall not be used for any municipal, county, state, federal, or district elections (such as water or school board, etc.).

Amending the Constitution

The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of members present at any regularly called meeting, provided that notice of the proposed amendment(s) has been distributed among the membership with a two-week notice given for consideration.

Dissolution

If the Corporation is dissolved and assets are sold, it shall be governed by these rules:

- A supermajority (min. 75%) vote of the remaining members is required.
- Assets and proceeds from the sale of the building are to be distributed as gifts to ordained ministers, churches, missions, and others of like faith and practice. Trustees oversee the sale and distribution according to the wishes of the remaining membership. No proceeds are distributed to regular members, past or present.