

CONSTITUTION

OF

BAPTISTS

FOR

LIFE

OF WISCONSIN

AUGUST 2011



Constitution of Baptists for Life of Wisconsin, Inc.

Article I Organization and Articles of Faith

Section A: Name

The name of this organization shall be Baptists for Life of Wisconsin, Inc.

Section B: Articles of Faith

1. Of the Scriptures

We believe in the authority and sufficiency of the Holy Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, as originally written; that it was verbally and plenary inspired and is the product of Spirit-controlled men, and therefore is infallible and inerrant in all matters of which it speaks.

We believe the Bible to be the true center of Christian unity and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creed and opinions shall be tried (2 Tim, 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21).

2. The True God

We believe there is one and only one living and true God, an infinite Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in every Divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (Exodus 20:2-3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Rev. 4:11)

3. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the Evil One until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; that He bears witness to the truth of the gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the Agent in the new birth; that He seals, endures, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer (John 14:16-17; Matt. 28:19; Heb. 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Gen. 1:1-3; John 16:8-11; Acts 5:30-32; John 3:5-6; Eph. 1:13-14; Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; Rom. 8:14, 16, 26-27).

4. The Devil or Satan

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan, the Devil; and that he was created by God as an angel but through pride and rebellion became the enemy of his Creator; that he became the unholy god of this age and the ruler of all the powers of darkness and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the Lake of Fire (Matt. 4:1-11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Rev. 20:10).

5. Creation

We believe in the biblical account of the creation of the universe, angels and man; that this account is neither allegory or myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process; that man was created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, the first parents of the entire human race (Gen. 1:2; Col. 1:16-17; John 1:3).

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6. The Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in innocence (in the image and likeness of God) under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression Adam fell from his sinless and happy state. All men sinned in him, in consequence of which all men are totally depraved, partake of Adam's fallen nature, and are sinners by nature and by conduct, and therefore are under just condemnation without defense or excuse (Gen. 3:1-6; Rom. 3:10-19; 5:12, 19; 1:18, 32).

7. The Virgin Birth

We believe that Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner, born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can be born of woman, and that He is both the Son of God and God the Son (Gen.3:15; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14).

8. Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is divinely initiated and wholly of grace through the mediatory offices of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who, by appointment of the Father, voluntarily took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, and honored the divine law by His personal obedience, thus qualified Himself to be our Savior; that by the shedding of His blood in His death He fully satisfied the just demands of a holy and righteous God regarding sin; that His sacrifice consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was a voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the just dying for the unjust, Christ the Lord bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that having risen from the dead He is now enthroned in Heaven, and uniting in His wonderful Person the most tender sympathies with Divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, compassionate and all-sufficient Savior.

We believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation. Repentance is a change of mind and purpose toward God prompted by the Holy Spirit and is an integral part of saving faith (Jonah 2:9; Eph. 2:8; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24-25; John 3:16; Matt. 18:11; Phil.2:7-8; Heb. 2:14-17; Isa. 53:4-7; 1 John4:10; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24).

9. Resurrection and Priesthood of Christ

We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ and in His ascension into Heaven, where He now sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest interceding for us (Matt. 28:6-7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Cor. 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2-6, 51; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 3:2 1; Heb. 8:6, 12:2, 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 2:1; Heb. 2:17, 5:9-10).

10. Grace and the New Birth

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and sins is made a partaker of the Divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about by our sovereign God in a manner above our comprehension, solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with Divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith and newness of life. (John 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 John 5:1; Acts 16:20-33; 2 Peter 1:4; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13; John 3:8).

11. Justification

We believe that justification is that judicial act of God whereby He declares the believer righteous upon the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any work of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's shed blood. (Rom. 3:24; 4:5; 5:1, 9; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9).

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12. Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the Divine setting apart of the believer unto God accomplished in a three-fold manner; first, an eternal act of God, based upon redemption in Christ, establishing the believer in a position of holiness at the moment he trusts the Savior; second, a continuing process in the saint as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to the life; third, the final accomplishment of this process at the Lord's return. (Heb. 10:10-14, 3:1; John 17:17; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 5:25-27; 1 Thes. 4:3-4, 5:23-24; 1 John 3:3; Jude 24-25; Rev. 22:11).

13. The Security of the Saints

We believe that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father for Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6; John 10:28-29; Rom. 8:35-39; Jude 1).

14. The Church

We believe that a local church is an organized congregation of immersed believers, associated by covenant of faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers are pastors and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures. We believe the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity. We hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only Superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel; that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; that on all matters of membership, policy of government, discipline and benevolence, the will of the local church is final. (1 Cor. 11:2; Acts 20:17-28; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Acts 2:41-42).

We believe in the unity of all New Testament believers in the Church which is the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 1:22-23, 3:1-6, 4:11, 5:23; Col. 1:18; Acts 15:13-18).

15. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our identification with the crucified, buried and risen Savior, through Whom we died to sin and rose to a new life; that baptism is to be performed under the authority of the local church; and that it is a pre-requisite to the privileges of church membership.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of His death until He comes, and should be preceded always by solemn examination. We believe that the biblical order of the ordinances is baptism first and then the Lord's Supper. (Acts 8:36, 38, 39; John 3:23; Rom. 6:3-5; Matt. 3:16; Col. 2:12; 1 Cor. 11:23-28; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-42).

16. Separation

We believe in obedience to the biblical commands to separate ourselves unto God from worldliness and religious association with any group that denies fundamental doctrines of the faith (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 Thess. 1:9-10; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-11).

17. Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of Divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except in those things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only Lord of the conscience and the coming King of Kings (Rom. 13:1-7; 2 Sam. 23:3; Exo. 18:21-22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Acts 5:29, 4:19-20; Dan. 3:17-18).

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18. Israel

We believe in the sovereign election of Israel as God's eternal covenant people, that she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that she will be re-gathered in the Holy Land and, after the completion of the Church, will be saved as a nation at the Second Advent of Christ (Gen. 13:14-17; Rom. 11:1-32; Ezek. 37).

19. Rapture and Subsequent Events

We believe in the premillennial rapture of the Church, an event which can occur at any moment, and that at that moment the dead in Christ shall be raised in glorified bodies, and the living in Christ shall be given glorified bodies without tasting death, and all should be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before the seven years of the Tribulation (1 Thes. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 5 1-54; Phil. 3:20-21; Rev. 3:10).

We believe that the Tribulation, which follows the Rapture of the Church, will be culminated by the Return of Christ in power and great glory to sit upon the throne of David and to establish and rule the Millennial Kingdom (Dan. 9:25-27; Matt. 24:29-31; Luke 1:30-33; Isa. 9:6-7, 11:1-9; Acts 2:29-30; Rev. 20:1-4, 6).

20. The Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that only those who are justified by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief, though loved by God, are in His sight wicked and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in the Lake of Fire (Mal. 3:18; Gen. 18:23; Rom. 6:17-18; 1 John 5:19; Rom. 7:6, 6:23; Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matt. 25:34.41; John 8:21, Rev. 20:14-15).

Article II Purposes, Services and Organizational Authority

Section A: Purpose

1. Baptists for Life is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes, including for such purposes the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c) (3) of the United States Internal Revenue Law (or the corresponding provision of any future Internal Revenue Law).
2. The purposes of Baptists for Life and its affiliates shall be:
 - a. To promote and maintain the biblical teaching that the unborn child is a unique, distinct person made in the image of God and endowed by the Lord with the right to life.
 - b. To promote, establish and maintain a biblical, caring ministry to women with crisis pregnancies by offering alternatives to abortion.
 - c. To oppose the practice of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia in that these practices represent a rejection of the sanctity of human life as presented in the Bible.
 - d. To educate the Church and the public at large about the realities of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia, including the possible complications and danger of abortion as well as valid alternatives available.

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- e. To inform the Church and the public at large of the legal and constitutional right and privileges of citizens to register their opposition to the practices of abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia. However, nothing in this statement shall be construed to imply activities which are not in accordance with the provisions of Section 501(c) (3) regarding influencing legislation or interfering with a political campaign for public office.
- f. To promote positive, biblical attitudes toward children, the elderly, the handicapped, etc.
- g. To introduce individuals to the Lord Jesus in the hope that they might receive Him as personal Savior and embrace the Christian ethic about life.

Section B: Services

To attain the purposes of Baptists for Life the following services shall be offered:

1. Speakers for churches, civic groups, schools, colleges, seminaries, etc. for educational presentations related to organizational purposes.
2. Production and distribution of biblically based materials which address pro-life and pro-family concerns.
3. Crisis pregnancy counseling, donations of maternity and infant related items, referrals for adoption, medical care, legal aid, education and vocational opportunities, parenting and child-birthing instruction and housing for women experiencing an unplanned pregnancy.
4. Publication of newsletters for educational and inspirational purposes.
5. Any other service, temporary or permanent, deemed necessary by the Executive Board to the stated purposes of the organization.

Section C: Organizational Authority

In order to carry out the purposes of the organization the governing body, otherwise known as the Executive Board, may engage in any and all lawful activities that may be incidental or reasonably necessary to any of the forgoing purposes and may have and exercise all other powers and authority now and hereafter conferred upon voluntary organizations under the laws of the State of Wisconsin, including the power and authority to buy, sell, own, rent, lease, mortgage, pledge and otherwise deal in real and personal property of every kind, and to construct, maintain and operate any improvements therein.

This organization shall never be operated for the purpose of carrying on a trade or business for profit.

Article III Finances

Section A: Reception of Funds

Funds may be received from the following sources:

1. Church offerings and budget support
2. Contributions from individuals and corporations

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3. Legacies and memorials
4. Membership donations
5. Grants from foundations and other organizations.

Section B: Ownership

All gifts, donations and purchases become the property of Baptists for Life to hold and maintain as long as such an organization exists.

Section C: Dissolution

Should Baptists for Life of Wisconsin, Inc. cease to exist in accordance with the purposes herein stated, the properties and assets remaining after payment of all liabilities shall be given to Baptists for Life, Inc.

Section D: Fiscal Year and Audit

1. The fiscal year of Baptists for Life shall be from January 1 through December 31.
2. The treasurer shall submit the financial records of the organization to an auditing committee appointed by the Executive Board for an annual audit before the annual meeting.

Article IV. Membership

Section A: Non-Voting Members

Those persons who submit an annually renewable donation as established by the Executive Board and subscribe to the purposes of Baptists for Life are eligible for non-voting membership.

Section B: Voting Members

1. Members at Large: Individuals who are members in good standing of a fundamental Baptist church, who subscribe to the Doctrinal Statement of Baptists for Life of Wisconsin, Inc., and who submit an annual individual membership donation as established by the Executive Board, shall be permitted to have voting privileges as members-at-large. They will have the right to nominate and vote for executive board members, to propose business items, and to vote on proposals by mail.
2. Supporting Churches: Local fundamental Baptist churches who subscribe to the Doctrinal Statement of Baptists for Life of Wisconsin, Inc., and who submit the annual church membership donation as established by the Executive Board, shall be permitted to have voting privileges for the Pastor and two members of the church. They will have the right to nominate and vote for Executive Board members, to propose business items, and to vote on proposals by mail.

Section C: Record of Membership

The Secretary of Baptists for Life shall maintain a record of all active members of the organization.

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Article V Administration

Section A: Membership Meetings

An annual meeting of the general membership shall be held on the first Saturday of March or as determined by the Executive Board at which time newly elected Executive Board Members will be presented, an annual financial report made and a report on the status of the organization will be the major items of business. This financial report will be made available to any member on request.

Section B: Executive Board

1. The governing body of Baptists for Life shall be the Executive Board. They shall meet quarterly, or as often as is deemed necessary.
2. It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Board to oversee the establishment and implementation of policies, act on financial and legal matters, and ensure the competent administration of the organization.
3. The Executive Board may select an Executive Director and shall establish a description of his duties.
4. The Executive Board shall consist of a minimum of five (5), and up to ten (10) members. Executive Board members shall be selected from the voting membership of Baptists for Life. They must sign the Baptists for Life doctrinal statement annually.
5. All Executive Board members are elected for a two (2) year term, commencing on the date of the annual meeting.
6. Special meetings of the Executive Board may be called by the Executive Director, President or four (4) Executive Board members.

Section C: Executive Director

1. Selection of an Executive Director shall be by the Executive Board. The Executive Director shall be responsible to the Executive Board, who shall provide him with an annual salary and performance review.
2. The duties of the Executive Director shall be as follows:
 - a. Provide for the on-going administration of Baptists for Life and its subsidiary programs.
 - b. Represent Baptists for Life in making public statements.
 - c. Oversee the development of crisis pregnancy centers.
 - d. Supervise, evaluate, interview, hire, and when necessary, dismiss salaried and volunteer personnel.
 - e. Act as an official representative of Baptists for Life of Wisconsin to supporting churches, individuals, etc.

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3. The Executive Director shall meet the spiritual and administrative qualifications established by the Executive Board.
4. The Executive Director is an ex-officio member of all affiliates, committees, etc.

Section D: Annual Election of the Executive Board

1. The annual election of five members to the Executive Board shall take place BY MAIL in February, by the membership-at-large. The results will be announced at the Annual Meeting and published in the next newsletter.
2. Ballots will be mailed to qualified members in early February of each year and instructions will be provided on the voting process, e. g. when and where to mail completed ballots, etc. Biographies of each candidate will be provided with the ballots.
3. Nominations for the Executive Board:
 - a. Must be made in writing to the Executive Board by January 1 of each year by a member-at-large or a supporting church.
 - b. Nominees will be screened by the Executive Board as to their qualifications and willingness to serve.

Section E: Vacancies

Vacancies on the Executive Board may be appointed by the Executive Board for the unexpired term.

Article VI. Local Church Chapters, Affiliates - Activities and Services

Section A: Local Church Chapters

Church chapters formed in local churches may use the Baptists for Life of WI name and logo provided such churches have fulfilled the following guidelines:

1. Made application for chapter status in writing to the general offices of Baptists for Life of Wisconsin.
2. Give written evidence of agreement with the Baptists for Life Constitution, doctrinal statement and operating policies.

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Section B: Activities

1. The services of Baptists for Life offered through crisis pregnancy centers and its educational programs shall not be denied on the basis of race, gender, religion, color or national origin.
2. The services and activities of Baptists for Life shall at all times correspond to the principles of Scripture so as to bring no dishonor to our Lord or His churches.
3. Cooperative activities with other pro-life organizations shall be by unanimous approval of the Executive Board, who shall be responsible for the scriptural appropriateness of such involvement.
4. All services and activities of this organization shall be conducted with the understanding that the ultimate goal of such is to evangelize and disciple men and women. Therefore, the centrality of the local church and its ministry shall be maintained. Membership and involvement in Baptists for Life must not conflict with one's responsibility to the local church.

Article VII. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended upon the recommendation of the Executive Board and by a two-thirds vote of the membership present at the annual business meeting;

Notes:

See appendices A for amendments adopted 3/6/93.
See appendices B for amendments adopted 2/15/95
See appendices C for amendments adopted 3/7/09