

Constitution of the  
OAKWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH  
CAMP HILL, PENNSYLVANIA

ARTICLE I Name

The name of this church shall be the Oakwood Baptist Church of Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

ARTICLE II Purpose

To love and glorify God, share the Gospel of Christ with the lost, disciple one another in our Christian walk, encourage fellowship in the Lord, and provide opportunities for service.

ARTICLE III Affiliation

Oakwood Baptist Church may affiliate with or become a member of Baptist associations, fellowships, or conventions provided the church is in agreement with the organization's doctrinal statement. We may cooperate with and support like-minded mission agencies and endeavors.

ARTICLE IV Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions, to educate our children in the scriptures; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealing, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from drunkenness and the illegal use and abuse of drugs; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Saviour.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Saviour, to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that, when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with a church of like faith and practice where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## ARTICLE V Doctrinal Statement

Section 1 – THE WORD OF GOD: We believe the sixty-six canonical books of the Old and New Testaments are the divinely inspired, infallible Word of God, without error in the original manuscripts, and God's complete, written revelation to humankind. The Bible is sufficient and trustworthy for life, faith, conduct, and practice, and is the supreme and final authority in all matters to which it speaks. We further believe that there is but one true interpretation of Scripture, although there may be several applications. The true meaning lies in the text and is that which the divinely-guided author willed to convey. It is recoverable through careful application of a literal (grammatical, historical, contextual) method of interpretation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and in the community of Christ. The Holy Spirit illumines the text, enabling the reader to embrace the significance of what God has communicated, and to see the glory of Christ in the Word of God. 2Timothy 3:16-17; 2Peter 1:19-21.

Section 2 – THE TRINITY: We believe in one God Creator and Sustainer of all things, eternally divine, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; we believe that these are equal in every distinct perfection and they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption. 1Peter 1:2; 3:18; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:18-19; Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:10-11; 2Corinthians 13:14

Section 3 – GOD THE FATHER: We believe in God the Father an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of humanity, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. We believe God's knowledge is exhaustive; that He fully knows the past, present, and future independent of human decisions and actions. The Father does everything in accordance with His perfect will, though His sovereignty neither eliminates nor minimizes our personal responsibility. Exodus 20:2-3; 1Corinthians 8:6; John 3:16; Matthew 7:7; Hebrews 7:25; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 1:11; Daniel 4:34-35; Romans 5:6-11

Section 4 – JESUS CHRIST: We believe that Jesus Christ is the incarnation of God's eternal Son. God the son has precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections as God the father and God the Holy Spirit. We believe further that He is not only true God, but true man, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. We also believe in His sinless life, His substitutionary atonement, His bodily resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven, and His priestly intercession on behalf of His people. We further believe that He is the Second Adam, the federal head of His people. John 3:16; 1Corinthians 15:3-4; Hebrews 2:17; Acts 1:11; John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:15-19; 2:9; Hebrews 1:1-4; 7:24-28; Romans 5:12ff; Matthew 1:21

Section 5 - HOLY SPIRIT: We believe in the Holy Spirit, His personality and His work in regeneration, sanctification and preservation. We believe He came forth from God to convict

the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, comfort and seal forever those who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe His ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, to implement Christ's work of redeeming the lost, and to empower the believer for godly living and service. We believe the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to believers as He wills for the common good. No gift signifies His baptism or filling, nor does any gift provide authoritative revelation beyond what has already been revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Life in the Spirit includes trials and does not guarantee physical health, material wealth, nor confirming outward signs. John 14:16-18; 16:5-11; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9-17; 1Corinthians 12:4-13; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2Timothy 3:12; 2Corinthians 12:9-10

Section 6 – MAN: We believe God originally created persons, male and female, in the image of God and free from sin. We further believe that in the Fall the human race sinned in Adam, therefore, all people are sinners by nature and choice and are spiritually dead. We also believe that those who repent of sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We believe God established marriage to be a life long covenant relationship between one man and one woman. Marriage so defined is the only permissible context for intimate sexual expression and is the foundation for human family. We further believe that human life is precious and should be protected from beginning at fertilization, until death. Genesis 1:26-30; 2:18-25; Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:1-4; Mark 1:14-15; Acts 2:37-39; 16:29-32; Romans 10:8-13; 1Peter 1:22-23; Matthew 19:1-10; 1Corinthians 7:1-5; Romans 13:8-10; Romans 5:12ff.

Section 7 – SALVATION: We believe in salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We further believe that salvation is based upon divine election and the sovereign grace of God to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. We believe salvation was purchased by Jesus Christ on the cross, is eternally secured by the Holy Spirit, and is received by faith, apart from any human merit, works, or ritual. We further believe salvation results in righteous living, good works, and proper social concern. Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 9:10-13; Ephesians 1:4-7; Romans 3:21-28; Titus 2:14; James 2:14-24; Romans 8:28-39

Section 8 – THE CHURCH: We believe that the local church is composed of regenerated, immersed believers, voluntarily united together for the purpose of the worship of God, the fellowship of believers and the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ throughout the world. We believe that the Church of the firstborn, whose names are registered in heaven, is the bride of Christ, whom He purchased with His own blood, and is loved, chosen, called, and secure in Christ for all eternity. Acts 2:41-42; 1Corinthians 11:2; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19-20; Hebrews 12:22-24; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:22-27; Revelation 19:6-9; 21:9

Section 9 – BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES: We believe in the competence of the individual soul in direct approach to God; the priesthood of all believers, a regenerated church membership; the symbolic ordinances of believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper; that each church is autonomous and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; the absolute separation of church and state; and a world-wide program of missionary endeavor in obedience to the final command of our Lord. 1Peter 2:5, 9; Acts 8:26-39; 1Corinthians 11:23-30; Acts 4:19-20; Matthew 22:21; Matthew 28:18-20.

Section 10 – LAST THINGS: We believe that God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in the New Heaven and New Earth with the Lord. 1Thessalonians 4:13-5:1-5; 2Thessalonians 1:7-2:1-15; 2Peter 3:7-13; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 21:1-27; 1Corinthians 15:50-58

## ARTICLE VI Membership

### Section 1 Reception of Members:

- A. The membership of this church shall consist of such believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as have been baptized in water, who take the Holy Bible as their only rule of faith and practice, and who agree to be governed by this Constitution. They may be received by:
  - a. Baptism (Immersion).
  - b. Letter from a church of the same faith and practice.
  - c. Christian experience, if the candidate has been baptized and gives satisfactory evidence of Christian faith and character.
  
- B. All requests for membership shall be referred to the Church Board.

### Section 2 Duty of Members:

- A. Members shall, by Divine help, faithfully endeavor to meet the obligations set forth in the Church Covenant.
  
- B. All active members eighteen years of age and older shall have the privilege and duty of voting at all business meetings of the Church.

### Section 3 Separation of Members:

- A. Members may be dismissed from this church:
  - a. By letter to unite with some other church of like faith and practice.
  - b. By exclusion:
    - (1) Any member persisting in unrepentant sin (see Article XIV).
    - (2) Any member who fails to attend the regular services of the church (providing they are physically and mentally able) for a period of three months shall be placed on the inactive list. Members placed on this list shall be notified the same week of the action of the Church Board. They shall be given three months time in which to appear at the services of the church and if they do so, they shall be restored to the active list. If they

fail to appear at the services of the church during this three month period, their names shall automatically be removed from the membership list of the church. After a name has been removed from the membership list, any who desire reinstatement will have to follow the usual procedure of obtaining membership.

c. By erasure in the case of death or by request of the member.

B. All requests for separation shall be referred to the Church Board.

## ARTICLE VII Officers

Section 1 Officers: The officers of the church shall be: Elders/Pastors, Deacons, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Clerk. Only active members of this church shall be eligible to hold any office.

Section 2 Term of Office:

A. Elders/Pastors of the church shall be chosen by the congregation for an indefinite period, by ballot, upon the recommendation of the Church Board after a period of careful prayer and consideration. The balloting for the selection of the elder shall be at a congregational meeting specifically called for that purpose. Notice of such a meeting shall be given at services on the two consecutive Lord's Days preceding the called meeting for voting. A two thirds majority of the membership present and voting shall be necessary to extend a call. The elder's office shall terminate immediately upon the elder's refusal to adhere to or affirm the doctrinal statement of this church following a congregational meeting at which time his dismissal has been requested by a two thirds majority vote of the membership.

B. Deacons shall serve a three year term with at least one being open for election each year. The number of deacons shall be determined by the Church Board with a minimum of three for the first fifty members.

C. All other officers, boards and committees shall serve a regular term of one year.

Section 3 Organizational Year: The fiscal year of the church shall begin the first day of January and close the last day of December. The elected officers shall assume office the first day of January. The exception to this rule will be when an office has been declared vacant during the year and a special election is held to fill the vacancy until the next regular election.

## ARTICLE VIII Duties of the Officers

Section 1 Duties of Elders/Pastors (Bishops)

- A. An elder, designated by the eldership, shall be the moderator of the church; the elders shall be ex-officio members [members with full rights] of all boards and committees; the elders may call any board, committee, or the church together for a special meeting to transact business of the church. Elders shall devote their time and energy to the spiritual welfare of the church and may receive compensation from the church upon the recommendation from the Church Board and church approval. The elders shall affirm the Doctrinal Statement annually.
- B. If at any time an elder shall make application to be released from the eldership, or if the relations between an elder and the congregation have become such as to be detrimental to the welfare of the church, the relationship may be terminated by the congregation in ninety days from the date of notice of intent, or in a shorter period of time, if it is mutually agreed upon. The Church Board shall have the authority to consider this matter and make recommendations to the congregation, but it shall require a two-thirds vote of the membership to dismiss an elder.
- C. The eldership is responsible for the spiritual ministrations of the church and watching over the souls of the members as those who must give account to God for this responsibility. The eldership shall exercise the oversight of the church in all its ministries and functions. The eldership will determine the duties and responsibilities of each elder. Elders shall give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word.

Section 2 Duties of Deacons:

- A. It shall be the duty of Deacons to:
  - a. Hold stated meetings as part of the Church Board.
  - b. Prepare and distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper.
  - c. Use the Deacons Fund of the Church for the relief of the poor and needy.
  - d. Exercise general supervision over the physical interest of the church property and its members, provided they shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any property of the Church without the specific authorization of the Church.
  - e. Advise and cooperate with the elders in the performance of their duties.
  - g. With the elders, consider all applications for membership and requests for dismissal and report, with recommendation thereon, to the Church.
  - h. They shall elect their own officers.
  - i. If the church is without an elder, the chairman of the deacons shall serve as the moderator of the church.

Section 3 Duty of Treasurer: It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive and disburse all funds of the Church. He/she shall give a receipt to the financial secretary for all monies received and duplicate checks for all monies spent. He/she shall make a quarterly report to the Church in writing of the condition of its finances and at the annual business meeting make a detailed report of receipts and disbursements during the year.

Section 4 Duty of Financial Secretary: The Financial Secretary shall help the Treasurer count the offerings and prepare the deposit. He/she shall keep a record of all monies received and spent by the treasurer. He/she shall receive a receipt from the treasurer for all monies received by him/her and duplicate checks for all monies spent. He/she shall keep a record of all individual contributions and prepare an end of year report for contributors.

Section 5 Duty of Church Clerk: The Church Clerk shall keep a record of all proceedings of the Church at the various business meetings; keep a registry of members; sign all letters of dismissal; supervise the keeping of the Sunday School Records; conduct such correspondence as the business of the Church may require; and perform such other duties as may be referred to him/her.

Section 6 The Church Board shall be comprised of the elders and deacons.

#### ARTICLE IX Ministry Leaders

All ministry leaders shall be approved by the Church Board. Ministry leaders include the leaders of: Children's Ministry; Youth Ministry; Education Ministry; Worship and Music Ministry; VBS Ministry; Women's Ministry; and other ministries approved by the Church Board.

#### ARTICLE X Affirmation of Doctrinal Statement

All church officers, ministry leaders, and lead teachers of any class or Bible study shall affirm their adherence to the Church's doctrinal statement without reservation before installation to office or position and shall provide a written or verbal affirmation at each annual business meeting. Missionaries whom the church supports financially shall affirm the church's doctrinal statement annually.

#### ARTICLE XI Committees

Section 1 Nominating Committee: The Church Board shall select a nominating committee from church members. They shall nominate a slate of officers to be presented at the annual business meeting. Each nominated officer must be approved by the Church Board. This slate will be posted at least one week before the annual meeting.

Section 2 Other Committees: Other committees than those specified by the constitution may be appointed by the Church Board as the need arises.

## ARTICLE XII Meetings of the Church

### Section 1 Stated Meetings and Reports:

- A. Public Worship each Lord's Day
- B. Once each week the members shall meet for prayer
- C. Observance of the Lord's Supper at least once a month
- D. The Annual Business meeting shall be held in the month of November.
- E. The End of Year Business meeting shall be held in January.
- F. Public notice of all business meetings must be given from the pulpit at least one Sunday prior to the meeting.
- G. Quarterly Treasurer Reports shall be available to church members in the months of January, April, July, October.

Section 2 Special Business Meetings: Special Business Meetings may be called by the elders/pastors. Special Business meetings may also be called by the clerk on a written request specifying the purpose and signed by not less than one-third of the members. Public notice of such meeting shall be given from the pulpit on the Lord's Day next preceding the proposed meeting.

Section 3 Quorum: One-third of the voting members of the church shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

## ARTICLE XIII Finances

Section 1 Basis: The basis for operational funds is entirely dependent upon the prayerful and voluntary gifts of the Lord's people. Before the annual meeting the Church Board shall receive an estimate of the needs of the various ministries of the church, and shall prepare a detailed spending budget of the proposed expenditures for the coming year. When this spending budget is approved by the congregation, it should be the basis for current liabilities. No changes or unauthorized disbursements shall be made by anyone without the advisement of the Church Board and the consent of the church.

Section 2 Dissolution: Upon the dissolution of Oakwood Baptist Church, the Church Board shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all the assets of the church exclusively for the purposes of the church in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, education, religious or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 ( or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Church Board shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of common Pleas of the county in which the principle office of the Church is then located,

exclusively for such purposes as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

#### ARTICLE XIV Discipline

Section 1 Disciplinary Committee: The elders and deacons shall constitute a Committee of Discipline. In the discharge of its duties, the committee of discipline shall always use kindness, consideration and Christian love throughout the proceedings in such cases.

Section 2 Counseling: Any members of the church may counsel with the Committee on Discipline concerning any other member who that member believes has violated the Covenant, or has been guilty of immoral conduct contrary to the principles and practices of the Bible, or is teaching or espousing heretical doctrine in opposition to Article V.

Section 3 Personal Differences: In the case of personal differences between members of the church, the elders shall recommend that the parties endeavor to settle their differences Scripturally in the manner laid down by our Savior in Matthew 18:15-16. If the differences cannot be settled, the persons involved shall be requested to appear before the Committee of Discipline. A full and fair hearing shall be given and the Committee of Discipline shall recommend just settlement of the controversy and shall recommend to the church that those unwilling to accept the decision shall be disciplined or suspended from the membership as the case may warrant.

Section 4 Exclusion: If any member of this church be opposed to any of the Bible Doctrines as accepted and practiced by this church and uses his or her influence contrary to the best interest of this church, or shall be found to be walking disorderly, he shall be excluded for Scriptural reasons. All such cases shall be first reviewed by the Committee of Discipline who will give such members ample hearing before rendering a decision. If the member will accept the decision the case will be closed. Failure on the part of the member to accept this decision will make it necessary for the issue to be brought before the church and an explanation given for the exclusion from membership.

#### ARTICLE XV Calling an Elder/Pastor

Section 1 Pulpit/Search Committee: When it is necessary to call an elder/pastor, the Church Board shall act as the pulpit/search committee. It shall be the duty of this committee to take necessary steps to secure an elder/pastor. The committee shall investigate the merits of every man under consideration, in regard to his personal character, education, ministerial record, and preaching ability, in determining his fitness for said pastorate/eldership. When a suitable man is found, the committee shall recommend him to the church for consideration. Ideally, the position should be filled from within the congregation.

Section 2 Call: The call of an elder/pastor shall come before the church at a regularly called meeting, notice of such meeting and its purpose having been read from the pulpit

on the two previous and successive Sundays. An affirmative vote of at least two thirds majority of the members present and qualified to vote shall be necessary to extend a call. Each candidate shall be presented to the church individually. The vote shall be by written ballot.

Section 3 Length of Call: The elder/pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time. If a salary and other compensation is to be given, it shall be fixed at the time of the call, and may be changed by a vote of the church at any regular business meeting, provided that such change has been recommended by the Church Board. The salary shall be paid in weekly installments. Sick leave, paid vacation, sabbaticals, extended mission trips, temporary interim pastorates and leave of absences will be determined by the Church Board.

Section 4 Termination: See Article VIII Section 1, part B.

#### ARTICLE XVI Rules of Order

The rules of parliamentary procedure as found in the manual, *The New Hiscox Guide for Baptist Churches* shall govern the business proceedings of this church in all cases where such rules do not conflict with this Constitution and By-Laws. This shall include the order of business.

#### ARTICLE XVII Amendments

This Constitution, after due notice, may be amended at any business meeting of the Church by a two-third vote of those present and voting, provided the proposed change has been presented in writing to the Church at least one month previous.