

**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**  
**of the**  
**COWETA INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH**

**Preamble**

- I. Reposing our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation believing in the teaching 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.
- II. 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.

**ARTICLE I**

**Name**

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

**ARTICLE II**

**Purpose**

- I. Since the scriptures declare that in the last days many shall depart from the Faith, giving heed to deadly seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and many shall be engaged in scattering broadcast the fatal seeds of error, directly affecting the honor of our Lord Jesus Christ and the destiny of the soul, we feel constrained by fidelity to Him to adopt the Statement of Doctrine herein contained, to which we ask the assent of all applicants for membership, including the pastor.

**ARTICLE III**

**Character of Government**

- I. 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:"

II. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body and no denominational or associational representatives shall ever sit in judgment or council over its affairs. This church shall always remain independent, fundamental, self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **Membership**

- I. Any person confessing faith and trust in the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and willingly submitting to the ordinance of baptism by immersion in water shall be accepted into the membership of the church and extended the hand of fellowship subject to the provisions of paragraph 5 of this article.
- II. Any person from another church of like faith and order, or to whom the ordinance of baptism by immersion has been administered by an orthodox Baptist Church may be received as a member upon promise of letter subject to the provisions of paragraph 5 of this article.
- III. Any person to whom the ordinance of baptism by immersion has been administered by the authority of an orthodox Baptist Church shall be received upon statement of his or her experience and faith in Christ, by the vote of the church and extending the hand of fellowship subject to the provisions of paragraph 5 of this article.
- IV. Any person desiring to become a member of the church who has been excluded from some other Orthodox Baptist Church, shall first make acknowledgment to the offended church and secure a letter of dismissal by which he or she may then be admitted as a member in regular order. The Pastor may, at his discretion, postpone a vote on admitting anyone seeking membership in this church if he feels that questions exist regarding the behavior or lifestyle of the person seeking membership; if questions exist regarding the suitability of the person seeking membership; or if he feels that further discussion is needed with the person seeking membership. Any such postponement shall be for whatever period of time the Pastor deems necessary.
- V. Members of this church are expected to live Christian lifestyles. The church reserves the right to remove any member from the membership rolls of the church if that member does not live a Christian lifestyle. Pursuant to Article XVII of the Bylaws of the Church, in such cases a written grievance must be presented to the Pastor, who will present the grievance to the Committee on Church Discipline.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Doctrine**

- I. This church receives the Scriptures as its authority in all matters of faith and practice. The King James Version (1611) alone being used for all preaching and teaching. We also adopt the *New Hampshire Confession of Faith* as our interpretation of the Bible Doctrine.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Support**

- I. The church shall be supported by the free-will tithes and offerings of its membership, according to the teachings of the Scriptures. The support of the church includes a fixed salary paid to the pastor commensurate with his needs and ability of the church to pay, and then all other official salaries which the church may establish and declare at any future time. It will also include all supplies for the officers and the various departments of the organization. Utilities, maintenance of church property, such as building repairs and improvements and the care of the church grounds, and all obligations of whatever nature which have been approved by the church shall be included in the support of the church. In addition to the regular expenses, the church shall support the cause of missions by designation of 15% of its income for the preaching of the Gospel unto the uttermost part of the earth.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Officers**

- I. The officers of the church shall be Pastor, Ordained Deacons, Trustees, Recording Clerk, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, Missions Treasurer, and other officers and committees as the church so declares.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Meetings**

- I. Regular meetings of the church shall be held each Sunday according to a regular schedule. Mid-week prayer services shall be held each Wednesday evening, the time designated by the church. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Pastor for business reasons. Protracted or revival meetings may be had at any time the Pastor and church should so consider advisable.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Property Rights**

- I. Only the church as a corporate body shall have the right to purchase and own property. The individual members, as such, shall have no material shares in the assets of the church, and no claim to title to any of the real property corporately owned by the church.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **Amending the Constitution**

- I. The Constitution of the church may be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote by show of hands of the members present at any regular called conference provided that notice of the proposed amendments have been given at some previous meeting at least two weeks in advance.

**BY-LAWS**  
**of the**  
**COWETA INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH**

**ARTICLE I**

- I. Qualifications of Officers of the church shall meet the standards upheld by the Bible as recorded primarily in (I Timothy 3) and must at all times recognize the authority of the Pastor as being the under shepherd of Christ, as set forth in God's word.

**ARTICLE II**

- I. The Pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the congregation. He shall act as moderator in the business meetings of the church. He shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees and shall have the right to call any board or committee together at any time. He may call the church together for special business at any time with the approval of the body. He shall also have authority to purchase supplies not to exceed \$400.00 necessary to his office.

**ARTICLE III**

- I. Without the Pastor's knowledge and consent, no meeting of the church for business purposes shall be legal. All meetings of whatever nature must be under his directions. Should the nature of business to come before the assembly be such as would involve the person of the Pastor, thereby disqualifying him to act in an impartial manner as moderator, he shall have the right to call upon some other member to act in his stead. Also, in the event of his absence, he shall have authority to appoint someone to act as moderator.

**ARTICLE IV**

- I. The church shall select at least three (3) of its male members to serve as Deacons. These shall be men who qualify according to the teachings of the Scriptures for such office. These shall be ordained to this office for an indefinite term. This number may be increased as the church so deems appropriate. It shall be the duty of the Deacons to visit the sick, to prepare and distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper, and to cooperate with and assist the Pastor as he may require in the work of the church.

**ARTICLE V**

- I. The church shall elect by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present one of its members to serve as Clerk, who shall keep a record of the proceedings of the church business meetings; and shall have charge of all documents, papers, letters except as otherwise provided for; shall issue letters of dismissal and recommendation; shall keep a monthly history, a record of membership, and shall make reports as the church may so require.

## **ARTICLE VI**

- I. The trustees of the church shall consist of at least three (3) male members to be elected by the church by a two-thirds affirmative vote in the following manner: the first shall be elected for a period of one year; the second for a period of two years; the third for a period of three years. Thereafter one shall be elected each year to replace the retiring member, thereby always maintaining the number three in office. These shall have the care of the church property but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any such property without the specific vote of the church authorizing such action. They shall be the legal signatories of the church corporate when it is necessary to sign on behalf of the church, papers pertaining to property rights, promissory notes, and/or any document which may require the signature of the church. Such signatures when duly authorized by the church shall constitute the legal subscription of the entire membership. It shall be the duty of the trustees to also see that the church buildings are kept in proper condition, insured, opened, properly heated and lighted for the meetings of the church.

## **ARTICLE VII**

- I. The church shall elect annually two (2) of its male members to serve in the official capacity as: Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer who shall receive and deposit in the Bank (chosen by the church) all money of the church. They shall keep a strict account of all receipts and disbursements, unless otherwise directed, all payments shall be made by check. They shall be under direct supervision of the Pastor together with the finance board, and all distribution of funds must be properly authorized by the church.
- II. The church shall also elect annually a Missions Treasurer, who shall issue funds to approved missionaries and mission projects pursuant to Article VI of the church Constitution; and shall keep a strict account of all receipts and disbursements. Unless otherwise directed all payments shall be made by check. This position shall be under the direct supervision of the Church Treasurer.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

- I. The Board of Finance, (consisting officially of the Pastor, Deacons, and Trustees) shall meet when necessary to discuss the plans and ways whereby to finance church building or property and to bring reports or recommendations before the church body as they deem it necessary.

## **ARTICLE IX**

- I. The church shall elect annually with two-thirds written affirmative vote one of its members to serve as Sunday School Superintendent, who shall have general control of the church Sunday School in conjunction with and under the leadership of the Pastor.

## **ARTICLE X**

- I. The Song Leader and Assistant Song Leader shall be appointed by the Pastor for an indefinite term. They shall perform the regular duties of this office and arrange that one or the other is present at each service.

#### **ARTICLE XI**

- I. The Organist and Pianist along with their assistants shall be appointed by the Pastor for an indefinite period of time. They shall, in cooperation with each other, see that these offices are performed at each church service.

#### **ARTICLE XII**

- I. The Chief Usher and his associates shall be appointed by the Pastor and shall be responsible for the proper seating of the congregation at all regular meetings for worship. The Chief Usher shall be responsible to appoint such assistants as he may require for the maintenance of good order on the premises at all times of regular church services.

#### **ARTICLE XIII**

- I. All scripturally baptized members of the church, who have not willfully and negligently and without valid excuse been absent from the regular meetings of the church, shall be entitled to vote in the regular routine matters of the church. A two-thirds affirmative vote of all members present and voting by secret ballot who are at least sixteen years of age, shall be required; for the purchase or sale of property, for the call or dismissal of a Pastor, or in the case of a serious church problem.

#### **ARTICLE XIV**

- I. The regular meetings of the church shall be as follows: Sunday School, Morning Worship, Evening Study Period, Evening Worship on each and every Sunday and Prayer Meeting on each and every Wednesday. A public announcement of all regular church business meetings shall be at least one week prior to the meeting in question. The business of the church shall be conducted at a "special men's meeting" after which action taken in such meeting will be presented to the church for official approval or rejection. The observance of the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper for the church shall be observed by members only of the church a minimum of four (4) times a year that will be designated by the Pastor. A quorum for the transaction of business at any church or board meeting shall consist of at least two-thirds majority of the membership present. The church calendar year shall be considered to run from the month of March to March of the following year; with the annual election of officers to be held at the February business meeting, recognizing the recommended names for nomination as received from the church approved nominating committee (composed of the Pastor, Deacons, Trustees) which had previously met for this purpose.

#### **ARTICLE XV**

- I. Committees may be chosen by the church or appointed by the Pastor with the approval of the church to act in an advisory capacity concerning any phase of the church work or for the selection and recommendation of officers for the church.

#### **ARTICLE XVI**

- I. It shall by no means be the plan or policy of this church to promote suppers, sales (rummage or otherwise), parties, raffles or any other projects for the support of this work.

#### **ARTICLE XVII**

- I. When occasion arises, the committee on church discipline shall consist of the Pastor, Deacons, Trustees, Church Clerk, the Song Leaders, Sunday School Superintendent, and Chief Usher. All grievances that may arise shall come before this group and be disposed of according to the teachings of the Scriptures. No such trial shall be held before the body of the church as a whole which is in order to shield the weaker Christians and especially the unsaved from the influences of the enemy that would destroy the soul. Therefore, all grievances must be presented to the Pastor in writing and signed by the plaintiff.

#### **ARTICLE XVIII**

- I. If at any time the church should become pastorless a pulpit committee consisting of the Deacons shall be authorized by the church to assist the church in securing another pastor. It shall be their duty to provide pulpit supply at all times, to investigate the record of and consult with in regard to terms, salary, etc. any candidate for the pulpit, reporting their findings to the church for formal action.

#### **ARTICLE XIX**

- I. When it becomes the duty of the church to call a pastor, a meeting for such purpose should be announced two weeks in advance in prayerful plans to be present. When the church assembles for such a purpose, the first thing in order shall be to select a moderator for the meeting, who, upon assuming the chair, shall direct the congregation in regular order and by secret ballot, in making the call. Three members shall be chosen to count the votes and one of the group shall declare the results unto the church. Such call shall require at least two-thirds majority of all members present. No member shall participate in such election who has willfully or negligently and without valid excuse been absent from the regular meetings of the church for the past six months preceding the election. After the results of the voting have been announced, it shall be the Christian duty of the dissenting voters (if there be such) for the sake of fellowship and harmony of the body to make the call unanimous.

#### **ARTICLE XX**

- I. The By-Laws herein contained may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular business meeting of the church. Any amendment to the By-Laws must be submitted in writing to the Pastor and read to the church at least two weeks before being presented to the church for its acceptance or rejection.

#### **ARTICLE XXI**

- I. Wedding ceremonies performed on church property shall be between one man and one woman only. No other types of wedding ceremonies is allowed to be performed on church property. (Genesis 2:24-25, Ephesians 5:22-25, Romans 1:26-27).
- II. Persons wishing to be married on church property must be born-again Christians and must participate in counseling at the Pastors discretion. (2 Corinthians 5:17, John 3:3).
- III. A “man” shall be defined as a person who was born a male. A “woman” shall be defined as a person born a female.
- IV. Should any court, commission, or tribunal find the provisions of this article unlawful, then marriages shall be limited to members of Coweta Baptist Church.

#### **ARTICLE XXII**

- I. The Church shall not be used for any municipal, county, state, federal, or district (I.E., Water District, School Board, ect.) election.

#### **ARTICLE XXIII**

- I. The Pastor shall appoint a Webmaster who shall serve an indefinite term at the discretion of the Pastor and shall be under the direct supervision of the Pastor. The Webmaster shall be responsible for maintaining the Church internet site, any social media site, and any other internet-based site as designed by the Pastor, including but not limited to so called “social media” sites.
- II. The Webmaster may add text, photos, or any other information to any church internet-based site, and my remove any objectionable material from any church internet-based site.

#### **ARTICLE XIV**

- I. The church does not endorse any statement made in postings on the church’s social media site (s). The only statements endorsed by the church are those on the church website.