

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS
OF THE
LIGHTHOUSE BAPTIST CHURCH
NORWALK, CONNECTICUT

ADOPTED JULY 31, 1988

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

In order to affirm and preserve the principles of our faith, to guarantee that this body may be governed in an orderly and efficient manner consistent with the accepted tenants of an independent Baptist church, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this constitution.

Relying wholly of the Lord Jesus for our salvation, and trusting only in the enabling power of the Holy Spirit for guidance; we, the members of the Lighthouse Baptist Church of Norwalk, Connecticut do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

NAME

The name of this church incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Connecticut, shall be Lighthouse Baptist Church of Norwalk, Connecticut.

PURPOSE

The purpose for which this church is established shall be to bear united witness to the faith of its members in the entire Bible as the infallible, inspired Word of God; to promulgate the Gospel in a world wide program of missionary fervor and personal evangelism in obedience to the great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, to carry out the administrations of the ordinances of the New Testament (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), and to build up its constituency in the most holy faith.

CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe by the Holy Spirit of God to receive as our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose blood and righteousness alone we trust as the basis of our salvation; and having been buried with Him by baptism into the likeness of His death, and raised in the likeness of His resurrection, to walk in newness of life, and having thus been united to this church, we do now most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with God and with one another as one body in Christ.

We solemnly promise and engage that, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, we will love each other as brethren in the Lord; that we will exercise Christian care and watchfulness one for another, bearing one another's burdens and thus fulfilling the law of Christ.

We covenant that we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together in the House of the Lord, but will regularly attend its services unless providentially hindered; that we will pray and labor for its prosperity through its doctrines, its ordinances and its discipline, that we will earnestly and actively endeavor to walk circumspectly in the world winning souls to our Savior, realizing that apart from Him there is no hope, and that He has left us in the world as His "Ambassadors," in His name to "seek and to save the lost."

We covenant that we will regularly and systematically give of our substance, as the Lord prospers us, for the support of Biblical ministries among us, for the spread of the gospel in the whole world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment, refraining from those habits that would hinder our Christian testimony; to remember each other in prayer; to comfort each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy and courtesy; to be slow to take offense, ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the teaching of our Savior, to secure it without delay.

Desiring the triumph of Christ above all earthly good, and joyfully looking for His coming again in heavenly glory, we covenant that, by the helping of His enabling Spirit, we will seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, trusting Him to add unto us all temporal necessities and the fulness of heavenly grace.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with another church of like faith where we can carry out the principles of God's Word. In the event that there is no such church, we shall seek with the Lord's help to establish one.

ARTICLE I

ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments as verbally inspired by God and without error in the original writings; that God has preserved the Textus Receptus from which the KJV 1611 has been translated and only this translation shall be taught from the pulpit or in any other church meetings; that the Bible is reliable in science, history, and every other matter it discusses; and that the Bible is of supreme and final authority in faith and life. II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:19-21.

2. We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes, perfections, and personality. Exodus 20:2,3; I Corinthians 8:6; I John 5:7; Matthew 28:19,20; II Corinthians 13:14.

3. We believe in God the Father, perfect in holiness, infinite in wisdom, measureless in power; that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from eternal death and from Hell all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. Psalm 22:3; John 17:11; Psalm 147:5; I John 3:20; Matthew 19:26; John 3:16; Matthew 6:26,28-30; Psalm 65:2; Hebrews 11:6; Romans 5:8; I Timothy 2:5; John 14:6.

4. We believe in the absolute Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ; His eternal existence as God, co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit; His incarnation by means of the virgin birth; His sinlessness; His vicarious death through the shedding of His blood as an atonement for the remission of our sins; His literal bodily resurrection from the dead; His ascension; His present high priestly ministry in Heaven for believers; and His personal return to earth. I John 5:20; John 1:18; John 14:29; Hebrews 1:8; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35; I Peter 2:22; Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:14; Luke 24:36-43; Acts 10:40,41; Acts 1:9; Luke 24:51; Hebrews 8:1,2; I John 2:1; Acts 1:11; I Thessalonians 4:16.

5. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, co-equal with the Father and the Son, and of the same substance and nature; that He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgement; that He bears witness to the Truth; that He is the Agent of the new birth; that He baptizes all true believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sanctifying all of them, sealing and thus securing them unto the day of redemption; that He endues, guides, teaches, and helps believers; and that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit, the evidence being soul-winning power and not speaking in tongues. Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14; Acts 5:3,4; Ephesians 4:30; Acts 2:33.

6. We believe that God created the heavens and the earth, including all life, each after its own species, by direct act and not by the process of evolution. Genesis 1 & 2; Colossians 1:16,17; John 1:3.

✓ 7. We believe that man, in the person of the first Adam, was created in the image of God, in innocence under the law of his Maker, but by reason of his voluntary sin, fell from his high and holy state; that as a result, the whole race plunged into condemnation and death, so that now all human beings are born with a sinful nature; and that all who reach the age of moral responsibility before God become willful sinners in thought, word, and deed, and so are without excuse before God. Genesis 1:26,27; Genesis 3; Romans 5:10-19; Psalm 51:5; Romans 1:18-32; Romans 3:10-23.

✓ 8. We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through faith in the blood sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ; that all who receive Him are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become children of God; that no rite, ceremony, or work can avail one whit for the sinner's salvation or make the believer's salvation more secure; that Christ is the only and all-sufficient Savior; and that all who are truly saved are kept forever. Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5-7; John 5:24; John 1:12; Romans 10:9-13; Acts 16:31; Acts 4:12; II Timothy 1:12; John 10:28,29; Romans 8:35-39; Philippians 1:6.

9. We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and/or voluntary rejection of the Gospel, which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation. John 3:16-21; I Timothy 1:15; Hebrews 7:25; Revelation 22:17; Ezekiel 33:11; John 5:40; II Peter 3:9; I Timothy 2:3,4.

10. We believe that every saved person possesses two natures; that he has the old nature for the duration of his earthly life; but that provision is made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Romans 7:15-25; Romans 6:11-14; Philippians 4:7-14; Philippians 3:7-14; II Corinthians 12:7-10.

11. We believe that sanctification for the believer is immediate, upon acceptance of Christ as Savior, and progressive, continuing to the end of earthly life; and that the progressive phase of sanctification is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the continual use of the appointed means, especially study of God's Word, self-examination, self-denial, faithfulness in and through a fundamental local church, through prayer and soul-winning. I Corinthians 1:2; I Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 10:10,14; I Thessalonians 3:12,13; I Thessalonians 4:1-12; II Peter 3:18; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 10:25.

12. We believe that the saved are called into a life of separation from religious apostasy, and from all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations. Romans 12:1,2; I Thessalonians 5:22; I John 2:15-17; II Corinthians 6:14-18; Romans 16:17,18; II John 7-11; Ephesians 5:11.

13. We believe that the local New Testament church is composed of regenerated baptized believers, voluntarily united together for the purpose of worship, edification, observing the ordinances, fellowship, and service; that the officers of the local church are pastors and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures; that the true mission of the church is the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity in the local community and unto the uttermost parts of the earth; that the local church has the absolute right of self government, free from interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations, religious or political; 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, with each local church as the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; and that on all matters of membership, policy of government, discipline, benevolence, the will of the local church is final. Acts 2:41-47; Romans 1:7; Colossians 1:2; I Corinthians 1:2 Acts 4:4; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 20:7; Acts 11:26; Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-16; Titus 1:5-8; Hebrews 13:7,17; I Peter 5:1-5; Acts 6:1-8; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:13-16; Acts 15:1-27; Acts 11:29,30; Acts 13:1-4; Philippians 4:14-16; Acts 20:28,31; I Corinthians 5:1-6,11; Matthew 28:19-20.

14. We believe that Bible baptism is the burial (immersion) of a believer in water, thus setting forth in symbol his union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection; that every believer should be baptized because of the example of our Lord and because of the command given by our Lord; and that while there is no saving power in water baptism, it is an act of obedience by those who are already saved to picture that they are dead, buried, and raised spiritually with Jesus Christ by faith in Him. We reject infant baptism because it is unscriptural. Romans 6:3-5; Matthew 3:13-17; Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 8:36-39; Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5; John 5:24.

15. We believe that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of the Lord's death until He comes again; and that, in this ordinance, the Lord's table should be open to all regenerated persons living in fellowship with, and in obedience to Jesus Christ. The Bible does not teach that the unleavened bread and cup literally becomes the body and blood of Jesus. They are merely symbolic of Christ's broken body and shed blood. I Corinthians 11:23-32; Luke 22:14-20.

16. We believe in the literal, bodily, personal, pre-millennial and imminent coming of our Lord into the air to catch away all believers unto Himself before the tribulation period; also, in the personal, visible, and glorious return of Christ to the earth, with believers, at the close of the tribulation period to judge the living nations and to set up His millennial kingdom on earth. Acts 1:11; John 14:3; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 4:1; Matthew 24:42-44; II Thessalonians 2:7,8; Matthew 24:29-31; Revelation 19:11-21; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:1-6; Hebrews 12:22-24.

17. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead, the saved to everlasting blessedness at the coming of Christ, and, one thousand years later, the lost to the judgement at the Great White Throne and then to everlasting, conscious punishment in the Lake of Fire. John 5:21-30; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:42-52; Philippians 3:20,21; Revelation 20:5,6,11-15.

18. We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, and that the souls of the lost remain after death in conscious misery until the second resurrection. II Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23,24; Luke 17:19-31.

19. We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed, except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 13:1-7; Genesis 9:5,6; Exodus 18:21; I Timothy 2:2,3; Acts 4:19,20; Acts 5:27-29.

20. We believe that in this Age of Grace, the Lord's Day, which is the first day of the week, the day of our Lord's resurrection, is the proper day for Christian worship and service; and that it ought to be kept sacred to spiritual purposes, by abstinence from all unnecessary secular labor and other activities unbecoming to such a day. Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1,2; Colossians 2:13-17; Hebrews 10:25; John 20:1,19,26.

21. We believe that God's covenant people, Israel, shall be redeemed and regathered to Palestine from their world-wide dispersion, and under the personal and millennial reign of Christ upon David's throne in Jerusalem, shall become the head of nations. Genesis 12:2,3; Genesis 13:14,15; Jeremiah 7:7; Deuteronomy 28:63-66; Deuteronomy 30:1-6; Ezekiel 36:22-28; Ezekiel 37:11-28; Romans 11:25-27; Luke 1:30-33; Jeremiah 23:3-6; Jeremiah 33:14-17; Acts 3:19-21; Revelation 20:4-6.

22. We believe that Satan, a fallen angel, is a distinct and real personality, the god of this age, the adversary of Christ and all believers; and that his destiny is eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire. Ezekiel 28:1-19; Job 1:6-9; I Peter 5:8; Matthew 4:1-11; I Timothy 3:7; James 4:7; II Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10.

ARTICLE II

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - Admission . . .

- A. Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, giving satisfactory evidence of having been born again and assurance of his desire to live a consistent Christian life, who willingly agrees to abide by the Constitution and By-laws of this church and shows evidence of a satisfactory attitude toward its doctrinal standards and Covenant, and who has been baptized by immersion, shall be eligible for membership.
- B. Members may be received by:
1. Satisfactory profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, followed by scriptural baptism; or
 2. Transfer of membership from another church of like faith; or
 3. Personal testimony, if not holding membership elsewhere, or if it is impossible or inadvisable to obtain a letter of dismission from their previous church because of peculiar circumstances known to the pastor; or
 4. By restoration, if having been excluded from membership of this church, and upon open confession of error to the pastor and one board member or to the church if the church is involved, giving satisfactory evidence of repentance, or explanation of lapse of membership. This person may be placed on the inactive list for probationary period of 90 days at the discretion of the deacon board.
- C. Each candidate for membership shall first be interviewed by the pastor and/or deacons and recommended to the church. Members may be received by majority vote at any of the services of the church of the members present upon the conditions mentioned above.

Section 2 - Duties . . .

- A. To themselves: to pursue personal Christian growth by means of: 1) church attendance, 2) Bible reading, 3) prayer, 4) soul-winning, 5) tithing and, 6) fellowship with other Christians.
- B. To their pastor: to honor, esteem, and love him; to pray for him fervently and often; to submit to him in the scriptural exercise of his official authority; to attend constantly upon his ministrations; to manifest a tender regard for his reputation; and to contribute to his support in proportion to his ability.
- C. To other members: to cultivate and cherish brotherly love for all of them; to show this love by using all proper measures to promote their spiritual benefit and prosperity as set forth in the Church Covenant; and, as nearly as possible, refrain from becoming party to cliques or groups whose spirit is manifestly selfish and not in the interest of "all other members".

- D. To the church: to be faithful in all the spiritual duties of the church essential to the christian life as stated in letter A; and to share in its activities. Those members who have moved away are expected to report to this church, through the pastor, deacons, or church clerk, at least once a year and to contribute to its support, if able, until they cease to be members.
- E. To others: to be exact in fulfilling obligations financial or otherwise and performing promises; and to commend the gospel of Christ unto the lost.

Section 3 - Rights . . .

- A. To vote: all members of the church who are 18 years of age and older shall be allowed to vote; excepting such as may be on the inactive roll or under discipline.
- B. To hold office: a person must be a member of the church for one year before holding office with the exception of pastor or assistant pastors. A person must also qualify scripturally and spiritually for any office in this church.
- C. For ordination: see Article X.
- D. For support in service: it is not necessarily the policy of this church to support all of its members who engage in missionary work.

Section 4 - Termination . . .

- A. By death
- B. Voluntary: Members in good standing may, at their own request, or the request of another church of like faith, have their church letter sent directly to the church with which they wish to unite. Members leaving this church community remain members of this church until they withdraw by letter or until their names are dropped from the roll by 2/3 vote of the membership present.
- C. By erasure: Any member who unites with another church thereby automatically ceases to be a member of this church and the church clerk shall drop the name from the church roll upon notification of church membership.

Section 5 - Discipline . . .

See: Matthew 18:15-17; Revelation 2:2; II John 10,11; Titus 3:10,11; Romans 16:17; II Thessalonians 3:6-15; I Corinthians 5:11-13; Galatians 6:1.

Purpose: The purpose of this church's discipline of its members shall be to maintain the church and its members spiritual and doctrinal purity; to insure its self perpetuation and existence in accordance with its original purpose; to remedy any spiritual weakness in the life of its members; to follow the injunctions of the New Testament regarding the maintaining of local church purity (I Cor. 5:6-8); to head off, where possible, disunity and discord, both of which are not pleasing to the Lord, and to provide an atmosphere in the church which is conducive to carrying on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ to His greatest glory. While it is recognized that the individual members purity and correction should be sought (Gal. 6:1), where this is not possible the purity and welfare of the church as a whole must be the guiding principle in the discipline of its members.

- A. The church may(using scriptural procedure) censure, reprimand, or exclude from membership by recommendation of the deacon board any member who becomes an offense to the church and its good name for the following reasons:
1. Unchristian conduct, the persistent disregard of the Church Covenant obligations;
 2. Holding or teaching doctrines subversive of those held and preached by this church, whether such teaching is done on the church's property or any other place;
 3. Calling, holding, or participating in a secret or unauthorized meeting with members of the church for such purpose as listed under letter A;
 4. Unbridled tongue, as defined under letter C;
 5. Active and/or continuous opposition to the policy or leadership of the church or conduct calculated to cause or create dissension or division within the church;
 6. Gross immorality;
 7. Misdemeanor in office.
- B. Charges by a member, or members, against the character or christian standing of any member must be presented to the pastor and deacons in writing and the person submitting such charges must be prepared to support the same with reliable witnesses. Action by the deacon board shall not be taken until the accused has been notified by registered letter and/or a personal meeting with the pastor and another church officer and given ample time to prepare a defense. Failure to appear for such a defense will ordinarily be considered supporting evidence of the charges advanced.
- C. Any member found murmuring[(a) complaining;(b) discussing subjects or people in this church they want to change or feel ought to be changed] with other members either on church property or off, and after having been approached by the pastor and/or deacon board there is no open repentance, those names involved shall be brought before the church at the next business meeting and will be subject to immediate dismissal from membership. Murmuring is not a personal sin. It involves we as a church and will be handled by our church.

- D. Those under church discipline may be placed on the inactive roll.

Section 6 - Inactive Roll . . .

- A. Since it is the duty of every member to be faithful in attendance at all services when it is humanly possible to be so, a 60 day voluntary absence from the regular services of this church, except for providential hindrances or non-residency, shall constitute sufficient reason for the board of deacons to transfer that member from the Active to the Inactive Roll at that time. Those on the Inactive Roll forfeit their right to vote and to hold office. Unbecoming behavior, as in Section 5A, may also constitute sufficient reason for the deacon board to act in placing a member on the Inactive Roll.
- B. In the advent that a church officer is placed on the Inactive Roll, his office shall be declared vacant and then filled in accordance with Article IV, Section 2.
- C. Persons on the Inactive Roll may be restored to full membership standing by action of the deacon board when a renewal of interest and attendance, and a changed attitude and behavior justify such action.
- D. The pastor and the deacon board shall check the Membership Roll at the end of every three month period beginning the first of each church year to see if there are those names which should be removed or placed in the Inactive and Non-voting Church Roll. Restitution to active membership may be made by agreement of the deacon board and pastor.

ARTICLE III

PASTOR AND OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

Section 1 - Pastor . . .

- A. Overseer: The leadership of the church, all departments being subject thereto, resides in the scriptural office of the Pastor (also called in the Scriptures "Bishop" or "Elder"), who is appointed by the Holy Spirit as the overseer of the flock. No other officer or member of this church can consider their work any more important than being assistants to and co-laborers with the pastor. See Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1,2; Hebrews 13:7,17.
- B. Qualifications: The qualifications for bishops in I Timothy 3:1-7 are accepted as the proper standard for this church. The pastor shall be a member of a fundamental church. He shall be in complete accord with the Articles of Faith,

Church Covenant, and By-Laws of Lighthouse Baptist Church, and upon his call to this pastorate become a member. He shall uphold and carry out the letter and spirit of this constitution.

C. Duties:

1. The pastor shall have the general oversight of the spiritual life, regular services, and ministration of the ordinances of the church; shall be a member of all boards and committees connected with the church or any of its organizations; shall act as moderator, when present, in all meetings for the transaction of business. Meetings which distinctly concern himself shall be moderated by another, yet he himself shall remain present to vote. He shall also conscientiously perform the various other duties incumbent on his office.
2. The pastor shall consider and decide upon all pulpit equipment i.e. audio visual aids, furniture, etc., and will confer with the deacon board on these matters as needed.
3. The pastor shall be responsible for providing guest speakers as needed.
4. The pastor shall have the oversight and control of all music including specials.
5. The pastor shall have control of the broadcasting by radio or other public media, or any church services, subject when necessary to the approval of the church.
6. The pastor shall supervise the teaching ministry of the church and may disqualify any teacher for spiritual or moral reasons that would hinder the teaching ministry of the church.
7. The pastor shall have the oversight of the evangelistic and missionary outreaches of the church i.e. missions conferences, soul-winning, visitation, revival meetings, etc. He must personally go soul-winning every week.
8. The pastor shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all members on behalf of the church. All persons uniting with the church shall be made acquainted with the Church Constitution and By-Laws.
9. The pastor shall appoint the Nomination Committee subject to ratification by vote of the church. He shall appoint members of other standing committees not specified in this constitution.
10. Any assistant pastor, or pastors, or any employee of this church shall perform such duties as may be designated by the pastor and deacon board (or its authorized representative).
11. It shall be the duty of the pastor to hire and dismiss all paid employees of the church. Note: As the need arises, and upon the recommendation of the pastor and deacons, said person(s) shall be voted upon by the voting members of the church to fill the needed position(s).
12. The pastor shall confer with the treasurer concerning all financial decisions before obligations to determine if funds are available.

D. Election and Terms of Office:

1. Whenever a vacancy occurs, a Pulpit Committee consisting of the board of deacons and two members of the church at large elected from the floor at a special meeting called for that purpose, shall bring to the church for its consideration only one candidate at a time.
2. Only male candidates who are of the same doctrinal position as this church and in full accord with the Church Covenant are to be considered for the position of pastor.
3. The pastor shall be elected at a specially announced business meeting by a three-fourths vote of the active members present and voting. Voting shall be by ballot. He shall be elected for an indefinite period of time unless specifically stated otherwise in the agreement. Announcement of such a meeting shall be made at least one week prior to it.
4. The relationship between pastor and church may be terminated by his resignation or by church vote in a special meeting called for that purpose of which two weeks public notice from the pulpit is given. A three-fourth's affirmative vote of the active members present and voting shall be required for the termination of a pastor. A thirty day notice must be given by either party desiring termination, however this provision may be waived if mutually agreed upon.
5. If, at any time, after a fair and impartial trial during a special business meeting of the church it is found that the personal belief, preaching, teaching, or practice of the pastor are not in full accord with the doctrinal standards of this church constitution, his services may be terminated abruptly, by the required vote and without his consent, and the matter of any further salary shall be decided at that time by the church.

E. Dignity of the Office: The pastor shall be held in esteem as an undershepherd of God, and worthy of double honor. I Peter 5:1-6; I Timothy 5:1,17-19.

Section 2 - Deacons . . .

A. Servants: The Greek word deacon in Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:8-12, is given to mean: to run errands, an attendant, a waiter. In Acts 6:1-4, the first servants were chosen by the church and were appointed to their task by the overseer of the church for the purpose of performing such tasks as would free those in charge of the services for prayer and study of the Word of God. Therefore, because this church accepts the Scriptures, rather than tradition, as final authority, the office of deacons shall not in any way be taken to mean authority over the church or pastor. The deaconship is dishonored when it is regarded as a post of honor rather than a medium of service, and when it becomes a medium of rule rather than a ministry.

B. Qualifications: The qualifications of a deacon are given in I Tim. 3:8-13 and they must be known to be faithful to the Lord and to the church. They shall, by the help of God, try to live thereby.

1. "Grave" - seriousness of purpose
2. "Not doubletongued" - saying a thing to one person and giving a different view to another
3. "Not given to much wine" - no wine
4. "Not greedy of filthy lucre" - eagerness for money more than the things of God
5. "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" - believing and practicing the faith with a pure conscience
6. "And let these also first be proved" - a period of testing (one year or more) of faithfulness to the church, pastor, God, etc.
7. "Then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless" - not held accountable by any other person
8. "Even so must their wives be"
 - a. "Grave" - serious
 - b. "Not slanderers" - fault finding, accusers
 - c. "Sober" - self control
 - d. "Faithful in all things" - reliable
9. "Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife" - never divorced
10. "Ruling their children and their own houses well" - having obedient children, even their entire homes
11. No one shall be considered for, nor serve as, deacon who is not in accordance with the Articles of Faith, Covenant, and By-Laws of this Constitution.
12. No woman shall be considered for, nor serve as, a deacon.

C. Duties:

1. The deacons, as servants of the church, shall carry on their work under the direction of the church and pastor, and shall meet as regularly as necessary to tend to the oversight and care of the church.
2. At the first meeting of the board of deacons after the annual business meeting of the church, they shall elect a chairman from their group. Meetings of the board of deacons shall be held at the call of the pastor or the chairman, if the church is without a pastor. The pastor shall preside at their meetings and have general oversight of their work.
3. The board of deacons shall assist the pastor:
 - a. In promoting the spiritual welfare of the church, in matters of business and discipline as stated in the Church Constitution and By-Laws,
 - b. In home visitation and the soul-winning efforts of the church weekly.
 - c. In investigating member delinquents and endeavor to remedy any spiritual weakness in the lives of the members.
4. The board of deacons shall:
 - a. Assist the pastor as he feels necessary in examining applicants for membership as set forth in Article II, section 1.

- b. Assist male candidates for baptism.
- c. Fill the pulpit and conduct services as necessary in the absence of the pastor.
- d. Collect and dispense the fellowship fund as needed.
- e. Assist the pastor in reviewing the membership roll as stated under Article II, Section 6.
- f. Guard and protect the reputation of the church and pastor against gossip, lies and false accusations.
- g. Assist the pastor during the communion service.
- h. Be faithful to all church services and activities involving men/boys of the church unless providentially hindered.

D. Election and Term of Office:

- 1. They shall be recommended as deemed necessary by the pastor and/or majority voting members when the pastor cannot meet the needs of others in his daily ministration in accordance with this Section A and B, and Acts chapter 6.
- 2. The terms and number of deacons may be adjusted as the needs and circumstances dictate.
- 3. Nominations to fill the positions available will be submitted to the pastor and deacons for eligibility with final approval determined by the pastor. Those who receive approval will be given opportunity to decline if they feel they are unqualified before being brought to the floor for a vote. Those qualified shall be voted upon by secret ballot at the Annual Meeting and elected by majority vote.
- 4. The deacons shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the church for 2 year terms so arranged that as nearly as possible, one-half of the number shall be elected each year. No deacon shall be eligible for re-election until the expiration of (1) year from the end of his term, unless he has been elected to fill an unexpired term of less than one year.

Section 3 - Deacon's Wives . . .

They shall assist the pastor in:

- A. Counseling other ladies when the pastor feels necessary.
- B. The visitation program of the church.
- C. Caring for the sick, needy, and distressed members.
- D. Preparing the Lord's supper.
- E. Assisting other ladies for baptism.
- F. Providing and caring for baptismal robes, maintaining dressing areas before and after baptism, and caring for other needs as well.
- G. Helping with planning, organizing and carrying out social functions such as banquets, church dinners, showers, etc.
- H. Faithfulness to all church services and activities involving ladies/girls.
- I. Faithfulness to all ladies/girls activities when necessary unless providentially hindered.

Section 4 - Trustees . . .

- A. Qualifications: They shall be elected because of their spiritual and business-like interests in the program of the church; and an active member in good standing with due regard to the duties set forth in Article II, Section 1.
- B. Election: They shall be elected at the Annual business meeting of the church. There shall be three or more trustees (depending upon church need), each serving a term of three years. As nearly as possible one-third of the board shall be elected each year. Should a vacancy occur, another trustee can be elected at the next monthly business meeting. A trustee may hold more than one office in the church at the same time.
- C. Duties: The trustees are elected for the purpose of meeting the requirements for incorporation. They shall represent the church in strict accordance with directives from the church in execution of legal powers. They shall have the care of the church property both real and personal. They shall keep said church property insured, properly maintained and be responsible for its clean and attractive appearance. They shall assist and counsel with the pastor as to the upkeep and maintenance of the property.

Should a financial crisis arise, the trustees will help the treasurer and pastor decide how to meet the financial obligations. In the event of liquidation or dissolution of the church, all assets, properties, and funds of the church, after full discharge of any indebtedness, shall be distributed upon the recommendation of the board of trustees for approval by the church to one or more organizations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as tax exempt and as being organized exclusively for religious, charitable, or educational purposes, the same to be a Baptist organization holding the doctrinal position set forth in this corporation's constitution. No individual of the church can benefit from the sale of church property. The board of trustees shall not have the authority to buy, sell, mortgage or lease any church properties or to put the church into any financial debt except as directed by church vote.

Section 5 - Treasurer . . .

- A. The treasurer shall be elected at the annual business meeting of the church for a period of one year.
- B. Duties:
 - 1. The treasurer shall, with the financial secretary, or in his/her absence, a trustee, receive and count all offerings received by the church after each service.
 - 2. The treasurer shall deposit all monies in the name of Light-house Baptist Church of Norwalk, Connecticut, in an accredited bank designated by the board of trustees.
 - 3. The treasurer shall keep a correct account of all receipts

and expenditures and submit a complete statement of his/her account twice a year (at the annual business meeting and six months thereafter) which a committee appointed by the church shall examine (see article IV, Section 1), likewise giving to the church a signed statement of "satisfaction" within 30 days after these meetings.

4. The treasurer shall pay all current expense items involving the operation of the church, including all other items incurred and approved by order of the church.
5. The treasurer shall post monthly reports, by the receipts, expenditures, and balance or debit.
6. The treasurer shall be custodian of all leases, deeds, insurance policies, bonds, notes, etc., some or all of which, as directed by the board of trustees, shall be kept in a depository designated by them, access to said depository to be made by the treasurer or other individuals only by direction of the trustees.
7. The treasurer's books, records, and accounts are the property of the church. At the end of their expired term, these records shall be turned over to the new treasurer.
8. The treasurer cannot be the financial secretary.

Section 6 - Financial Secretary . . .

- A. The financial secretary shall be elected at the annual business meeting of the church for a period of one year.
- B. Duties:
 1. The financial secretary shall assist the treasurer, or in his/her absence, a trustee, in receiving and counting all offerings received by the church after each service.
 2. The financial secretary shall keep an accurate record of all the members of the church as to their weekly contributions, tithes, and offerings, using an acceptable book-keeping system authorized by the church. He/she shall be prepared to issue a receipt for such gifts over any given period upon request provided the givers used signed envelopes or checks.
 3. The financial secretary shall provide the treasurer with a record of all monies received, specifying the distribution into various funds or categories, as indicated by the donors or by special offerings.
 4. At no time shall this officer disclose the amount of anyone's giving except to the inquiring person's own account.
 5. The financial secretary shall be responsible to prepare and arrange for the distribution of offering envelopes in any system the church may adopt.
 6. The financial secretary's books, records and accounts are the property of the church. At the end of their expired term, these records shall be turned over to the new financial secretary.
 7. The financial secretary cannot be the treasurer.

Section 7 - Church Clerk . . .

- A. The church clerk shall be elected at the annual business meeting of the church for a period of one year.
- B. Duties:
1. The church clerk shall keep accurate minutes of the business proceedings of the church, including the reception and dismissal of members, and read the same for approval at the consecutive meetings. A duplicate copy of the records shall be kept in the church office.
 2. The clerk shall keep an accurate record of the church membership, admissions, deaths, baptisms, and ordination services; issue letters of dismissal voted by the church to the parties involved, conduct its correspondence when authorized; preserve all papers and reports which the church may direct to be placed on file; and perform such other duties as appertain to this office. See Article II, Sections 1,4,5.
 3. The clerk shall present a report at the annual business meeting of the church. This report shall include the number of admissions and dismissions during the year, baptisms, the total active and inactive membership, etc.
 4. His/her books shall be at all times open to the church active membership. He/she shall deliver immediately to his/her successor all books, files, records, and other church documents in his/her possession.
 5. The church clerk shall also act as historian of the church and keep a record of the various church events which might add to the historical interest of the church.

Section 8 - Chief Usher . . .

- A. The church shall elect from its membership at each annual business meeting some capable, consecrated, exemplary person to serve as its chief usher, who shall have charge of seating the congregation at all meetings, and shall appoint all needed assistants subject to approval of the pastor and deacons.
- B. He shall superintend the distribution of literature, cards, envelopes, song books, and the gathering of the offerings at the regular Sunday services; and attend to proper lighting, ventilation, and temperature.
- C. He shall keep a record of the number present at each preaching and midweek prayer service and render a report of the attendance (average, total, highest, and lowest) to the church at the annual business meeting.

Section 9 - Sunday School Superintendent . . .

- A. The superintendent of the Sunday School shall be elected at the annual business meeting of the church for a term of one year.
- B. The superintendent shall, in cooperation with and under the leadership of the pastor, be responsible for the administration and promotion of the Sunday School.
 - 1. The superintendent and pastor shall appoint all other officers and teachers of the Sunday School, with the approval of the church.
 - 2. They shall also be responsible for the selection of the literature for the Sunday School, with the approval of the church.
 - 3. He shall present a written report at the annual business meeting of the church.

Section 10 - Qualifications of Sunday School Teachers . . .

- A. All teachers shall be known to be separated and consecrated to Christ in their daily lives so as not to bring reproach either on the name of Christ or His church, and an active member of the church in good standing.
- B. All teachers will co-operate with the pastor and fellow workers. He/she will welcome constructive criticism and helpful suggestions.
- C. All teachers will be in full agreement with the Articles of Faith and Church Covenant of the Constitution.
- D. All teachers will be expected to attend the regular services of the week unless providentially hindered. Regular services are as stated: Sunday School, Sunday morning worship service, Sunday evening service, prayer meeting and church visitation.
- E. All workers in the Junior Church must attend one other preaching service during the week.

Section 11 - Missionary Secretary . . .

- A. The missionary secretary shall keep a regular correspondence with missionaries.
- B. Upon request, he/she shall be prepared to give a monthly report of the praises and prayer requests of the missionaries.

ARTICLE IV

COMMITTEES

Section 1 - Auditing Committee . . .

The auditing committee shall consist of one trustee and one

deacon who are not the financial secretary or treasurer. They shall audit the financial records of the church twice a year (at the annual business meeting and six months thereafter), likewise giving to the church a signed statement of "satisfaction" within 30 days of these meetings. The church may vote to authorize the audit by a professional auditing firm rather than by the audit committee.

Section 2 - Nominating Committee . . .

A. At least four weeks before the annual business meeting, a nominating committee shall be composed of the pastor, one deacon, and one trustee.

B. Duties:

1. To choose nominees for election to fill elective offices of the church. The committee shall thoroughly investigate the qualifications (scriptural, spiritual, etc.) and capabilities of those considered for office.
2. The names of such nominees shall be posted two weeks before the annual business meeting, in a conspicuous place in the church building.
3. Members who wish to submit nominations should give their suggestions in writing to the nominating committee at least 3 weeks before the election to enable the committee to ascertain qualifications. This committee shall add the name to the posted slate, providing the proposed candidate shall satisfy the committee with respect to the requirements of divisions 1 and 5 in this section. The slate shall be considered closed the Sunday evening prior to the annual business meeting.
4. In case of a vacancy in office during the church year, the pastor shall appoint a nominating committee immediately and the committee shall do its work as quickly as possible, posting the name(s) of the nominee(s) 2 Sundays before the meeting is called for election. The church shall, in this case, still have the privilege of Division 3 in this section. The slate shall be considered closed the Sunday evening prior to that business meeting.
5. Before posting nominations, the committee shall approach each nominee and secure consent to serve. It shall be impossible for the committee to place in nomination for the church any candidate who is not in full agreement with the Articles of Faith and Church Covenant.
6. The committee shall prepare ballots for voting at the annual meeting showing the names of the qualified candidates nominated for each vacancy. They shall count the ballots.

Section 3 - Budget Committee . . .

The budget committee shall consist of the pastor, chairman of the deacon board, one trustee, treasurer, financial secretary, and the Sunday School superintendent (youth director, bus director). Prior to the annual business meeting, the budget committee shall prepare a recommended budget for the church which shall be submitted to the church at the annual business meeting for consideration and adoption for the ensuing year.

Section 4 - Flower Committee . . .

The flower committee shall consist of 2 members elected at the annual business meeting of the church. They shall have charge of procuring and placing floral decor in the church for holidays and special occasions. They shall also be responsible for sending cards and/or flowers to members and friends of the church as the need arises (i.e. illnesses and deaths in the immediate family).

ARTICLE V

MEETINGS

Section 1 - Worship . . .

- A. Public services shall be held regularly on the Lord's Day, morning and evening.
- B. Midweek service shall be held for the purpose of prayer, praise and Bible study.
- C. The Lord's supper shall be observed on the first Lord's Day of each month.
- D. Other worship services shall be held from time to time as the interest of the Lord's work may necessitate, including revival or evangelistic meetings.

Section 2 - Business . . .

- A. The annual meeting shall be held during the month of February at which time officers and committees shall be elected, and such other business be transacted as may be specified in the call or authorized in the By-Laws.
- B. Monthly meetings shall be held on the second Sunday night of each month for the purpose of receiving reports and the transacting of other business as may be specified in the call or authorized in the By-Laws.

- C. Routine Meetings. Meetings to take action on recommendations from the pastor or the deacons regarding the reception of new members, the dismissal of members, the temporary filling of any vacancies due to resignation or removal of any church official, or the discipline of members, may be held in connection with any regular service.
- D. Notice of meetings. The annual meeting and any special meeting called by the pastor, shall be announced publicly from the pulpit on two consecutive Lord's Day mornings prior to the meeting. The nature of the meetings must also be publicly announced.
- E. All business meetings of this church shall require for a quorum the presence of at least 20% eligible voting members.
- F. Excepting for routine meetings, other meetings shall be conducted according to "Roberts' Rules of Order."
 - 1. Open in prayer
 - 2. Reading of minutes
 - 3. Treasurer report
 - 4. Discussion of old business
 - 5. Discussion of new business
 - 6. etc.

ARTICLE VI

ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1 - Sunday School . . .

- A. The Sunday School is an organization of the church. It's purpose shall be to teach its constituency, both young and old, in the truths of God's Word. It shall also seek to carry out the great commission of the church in evangelizing.
- B. It shall be under complete control of the government of the church.
- C. All teachers and workers of the Sunday School shall be appointed as provided in Article III, Section 9, of this Constitution. No teacher shall be permitted to remain in office who is not in absolute harmony with the ministry of this church. No teacher shall be appointed who is not in complete agreement with the Articles of Faith and Church Covenant.
- D. All mixed classes, or male classes from the Intermediate age and up shall be taught by men teachers. I Corinthians 14:33-38; I Timothy 2:11-15.

Section 2 - Policy . . .

- A. The Scriptures are the sole authority of the financial policy of this church. Only Scriptural methods of raising monies are permitted. In as much as tithes and offerings are commanded of every believer, all members are encouraged to bring them into this church, God's storehouse. Malachi 3:10; I Corinthians 16:1-3; II Corinthians 8 and 9.
- B. The pastor, treasurer and financial secretary have sole authority to write checks. Two signatures are required.
- C. The church shall operate under one treasury and separate treasuries for organizations of the church shall be discouraged. The church will provide and encourage the use of church offering envelopes.

Section 3 - Pastor's Salary and Vacation . . .

It shall be the duty of the board of deacons to review the financial needs of the pastor each December and to adjust his salary accordingly. The pastor shall be given an annual paid vacation of two weeks. Upon four years of service he is entitled to three weeks paid vacation and upon eight years of service he is entitled to four weeks paid vacation. The pastor will notify the board of deacons of his vacation plans. The church shall also allot the pastor one week of conference leave for his spiritual encouragement and growth. The church shall if possible, defray the expenses of his conference leave.

Section 4 - Special Speakers . . .

Every due consideration will be taken concerning evangelists, missionary speakers, supplies, and other special speakers that we be ethical and just in our reimbursing the servants of our Lord for their labors in this church.

Section 5 - Special Offerings . . .

Special offerings may be taken at any regular church service in which the pastor and deacon board deem necessary.

Section 6 - Other Offerings . . .

Anyone can give designated offerings through Lighthouse Baptist Church to its full time pastors, assistant pastors and the missionaries it supports for tax deduction purposes.