



Standale Baptist Church

Constitution

We accept Christ and we expect Christ

**Constitution
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Church Organized - March 20, 1963

**Constitution Revised and Effective
April 24, 2016**

Part One Articles of Association

(Ecclesiastical Corporation Organized March 20, 1963) of the Standale Baptist Church of the City of Walker, Kent County, Michigan

We, the undersigned, desiring to become incorporated under the provision of Act No. 327, P.A. 1931 as amended, do hereby make, execute and adopt the following Articles of Association, to wit:

1. **Name:** The name assumed by this Corporation and by which it shall be known in law, is Standale Baptist Church.
2. **Location:** The location of said Church shall be in the City of Walker, County of Kent, and State of Michigan.
3. **Time:** The time for which said Corporation shall worship and work together according to the discipline, rules and usages of the Word of God.
4. **Members:** The members of this Church shall worship and work together according to the discipline, rules and usages of the Word of God.
5. **Autonomy:** The Standale Baptist Church is the sole authority as to qualifications for membership thereof, discipline of members, and rules governing its own procedure.
6. **Purposes:** The purposes of this Corporation are as follows:
 - a. The maintaining of Public Christian Worship, study and teaching of the Bible and preaching of the gospel;
 - b. The administration of the New Testament Ordinances;
 - c. The spiritual growth of its members;
 - d. And, exerting as far as possible, a moral and Christian influence in the community in which it is located, and a missionary spirit in the world at large.
7. **Officers:** The Officers of the Church, which constitute its Church Board, shall be the Pastor and the Board of Deacons (effective January 1, 1980).

Mission Statement

*We at Standale Baptist Church seek to glorify God
by worshipping Him, by edifying the body of believers,
and by reaching the lost through evangelism and discipleship.*

Part Two

Our Church Covenant

Church Covenant - A commitment to God and fellow believers (members)

- We believe we have been brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ by the grace of God and, therefore, commit ourselves to glorify Him.
- We commit ourselves to regular, personal worship, bible study, and prayer to maintain our spiritual growth and health. In our families we will practice the same so that our homes will reflect the love of Christ and practice the truth of God's Word.
- We commit ourselves to join together in public worship so that we might be renewed in our fellowship with God and one another. We willingly give of our time, abilities and monies to support the work of the church, meet the needs of others, and share the gospel.
- We commit ourselves to live our lives so as to be a testimony for Christ in what we do and say so that we might effectively share the gospel.
- We commit ourselves to serve God, united together in Christian love. Our love will be shown by mutual care and encouragement to each other to grow in Christ so that the whole church working together might become more mature in Christ.
- Because we desire our fellow believers to continue to grow in Christlikeness, we commit ourselves to encourage them, admonish them, and as necessary confront them in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1. We will do this in a spirit of meekness and humility so as to encourage them and protect ourselves.

- In relationship with fellow believers we commit ourselves to watch out for one another, pray for one another, and help one another--all in brotherly love. We will foster attitudes of respect and care in words and deeds for one another. When difficulties arise, we will be slow to take offense and quick to seek reconciliation.
- We commit ourselves to not promote, condone, or accommodate wrong doctrine or sinful practices.
- Because the fellowship of believers in the local congregation is so important, we commit ourselves to do everything in our power to maintain our faithfulness to this local congregation. If we should move from this area, we will endeavor faithfully to find a like-minded congregation that we can unite with and practice the principles of this covenant.

Part Three **Doctrinal Statement**

Truth where agreement is expected and understanding is encouraged.

Section One: *The Scriptures*

We believe in the complete inspiration of the Bible (the sixty six books of our Bible) as originally written by godly men of biblical times as they were directed by the Holy Spirit. These holy writings were without error. The Bible is the trustworthy completed revelation of God's will for today. It is the standard for human thoughts, words and deeds. (John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16,17; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

Section Two: *The Triune Godhead*

We believe that there is only one true God. He is a Spirit being who is limitless in His power, knowledge and presence. He has always existed and always will. He is perfect in His holiness, justice and love. He is worthy of our unreserved honor, allegiance, and love. We believe that while there is only one God, He exists in a Godhead of three persons (Father, Son and

Holy Spirit) each equal in power, authority and glory. While these three exist in perfect unity, they have distinct personalities and functions within the realms of creation, ministry and redemption. (Genesis 1:1, 2:1; Exodus 15:11; Psalm 83:18; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Revelation 4:11)

Section Three: *The Lord Jesus Christ, His Deity, Birth, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Return*

We believe in the eternal existence of Jesus Christ as God the Son. All things were made by Him. He took on humanity and was born of a virgin. His life was without sin as He perfectly kept the law of God. His death on the cross was in our place, as the penalty for our sins. He physically arose from the dead and ascended to sit at the place of authority and honor beside God the Father. He presently acts as our High Priest and Advocate. He is returning in the air to take believers, both dead and living, to be with Himself. This event, the Rapture of the Church, could happen at any time and will precede a seven year period of great judgment upon the earth called the Tribulation. Following the Tribulation, He will return to the earth to establish His kingdom, and reign for 1,000 years. (Matthew 28:6,7; Luke 24:26,27; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 John 2:1; Revelation 19:11-16, 20:4-6)

Section Four: *Holy Spirit*

We believe that He is divine, a member of the Godhead and that He is equal in all aspects with the Father and the Son. He works to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. He works to regenerate all who believe in Christ. He baptizes, seals, indwells, teaches and bestows one or more spiritual gifts on every believer. We believe that some spiritual gifts with supernatural manifestations (i.e. tongues, healings, and miracles) were given especially as signs to confirm the message being shared during the time of the apostles before the completion of the New Testament. (Matthew 28:19; John 3:5,6; 15:26,27; 16:7-11; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 6:19,20; 12:4-11,13; 14:22; 2 Corinthians 12:11,12; Ephesians 1:13,14; 5:18; Hebrews 2:3,4; 1 Peter 4:10,11)

Section Five: *Satan*

We believe Satan is a created spirit being. He carried the rank and authority to lead the angels of God. Through pride and ambition he fell and led other angels to follow him. He exists as the evil "prince of the power of the air" and the unholy "god of this age." He is the committed enemy of God and the work of our Redeemer--Jesus Christ. He seeks to make accusations against believers. His destiny lies in defeat before the power of Jesus Christ. He will ultimately be cast into the lake of fire created for he and his angels. (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:14-17; 2 Corinthians 4:4, 11:13-15; Ephesians 2:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12; Revelation 12:9,10; 20:10)

Section Six: *Atonement for Sin and Security of the Believer*

We believe that all men are sinners by nature as well as in their thoughts and actions. Because of this, it was necessary for God to provide salvation totally by His grace through Christ's death on our behalf on the cross. Mankind as sinners can do nothing to earn salvation. Only those who place their trust by faith in Christ as their personal Savior have eternal life. Having been saved by the grace of God (through faith) we are kept by God, awaiting the completion of salvation at the resurrection, when our bodies will be like Christ's glorified body. (John 10:28,29; Acts 13:39; Romans 3:23-26; 5:12; Ephesians 2:8; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

Section Seven: *Position of the Believer In Christ*

We believe that Christians (those redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ), have a unique position and relationship to God. Before salvation they were lost in sin and enemies of God. After salvation they have been reconciled to God. They have become children of God, with Him as their Heavenly Father. In this new relationship, they have direct access by prayer to talk with God. Because of the completed work of Christ, they are joint heirs with Him of the riches of God's grace, and have a heavenly home being prepared for them. (John 1:12, 14:1-4; Romans 5:8-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Ephesians 1:7-8, 15-19, 2:4-7; Colossians 1:19-22)

Section Eight: *Heaven and Hell*

We believe that Jesus is preparing a place in heaven for all those who are His (saved) and that we will spend all eternity with Him in the New Jerusalem He is preparing. We believe that those who die without Christ as Savior are lost and will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire (Hell) created for the devil and his angels. (Matthew 25:34-46; John 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15)

Section Nine: *The Church, the Ordinances, the Great Commission, the Autonomy of the Church*

- A. We believe the church was created by God in the New Testament to be a congregation of baptized believers, following the Word of God as their standard for faith and practices.
- B. We believe that the church is to practice the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion) in obedience to the commands and examples of the New Testament. Baptism is by immersion (in water) of the believer as a picture of his faith in the death, burial and resurrection of His Savior and a commitment to live as a new creation in Christ. The Lord's Supper is celebrated in memory of Christ's sacrificial death, with the bread representing His body given for us and the cup representing His life blood shed for our sins. It is for all who know Christ as Savior.
- C. We believe that God called the church to glorify Him in its worship, ministry, and outreach as commanded in the Great Commission. (Matthew 28:19,20; John 4:23,24; Ephesians 4:11-16)
- D. We believe that the local church was created by God for this age to be accountable to Jesus Christ our Head. God is presently working through the Church to accomplish His purposes and to call out a people for His name. When the church (all believers of this age) is taken out of this world (at the rapture), God will once again work through His chosen people, the nation of Israel. As a local church, we carry the responsibility to be self-governing in matters of membership, policy, government, discipline, finance, and

benevolence. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-42; 1 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23,24; Colossians 1:18; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

Section Ten: *Creation*

We believe that in the beginning God through the person of the Son (2nd person of the Godhead), acted directly to bring into existence all of creation, including all living things, with a special creation of the first man (Adam), and the first woman (Eve). He then proclaimed that it was good and that all living creatures were to reproduce according to their kind. He continues to sustain all of His creation. (Genesis 1 & 2; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17)

Section Eleven: *Marriage*

We believe that marriage is the joining of one man and one woman and that sexual intimacy is to be expressed only within the bonds of a Biblically defined marriage. This reflects God's timeless creation design and pictures Christ's love for the church. Any other form of marriage or sexual intimacy is immoral and a perversion of God's gracious will. Genesis 1-3; John 1:2-3; Galatians 3:28; Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 1:26-27, 7:2; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; 7:1-5; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4. (See Article 20, Section 1 for an expanded statement.)

Section Twelve: *Separation*

We believe that mankind was created in the image of God and that sin contaminated that moral image. In regeneration we are restored to fellowship with God and therefore we are to commit ourselves to all that will build our fellowship with God. We need to refrain from all that would harm us or keep us from that fellowship. We are to love God and reject all in this life that would keep us from loving Him as we ought. (Romans 12:1,2; Colossians 3:1,2; 1 John 2:15-17)

Part Four Bylaws

Article 1: Membership

Section One: *Qualifications for membership*

It is required of all members of this church that they:

- A. Give testimony of having placed their faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior Matthew 10:32
- B. Demonstrate in their lifestyle that they are indwelt and led by the Holy Spirit Galatians 5:22,23
- C. Agree to the Church Covenant, Doctrinal Statement, and practices included in this constitution (for active membership)
- D. Have been baptized by immersion, following salvation and have been approved for membership by majority vote of the active members in a quorum.

Section Two: *Classification of Membership*

- A. Active Membership - Members who are regular in their support, attendance, and involvement in the programs and ministry of the church. They must be at least 18 years of age and share in the privileges and responsibilities of membership.
- B. Inactive Membership - When members fail to meet the standards for membership in conduct, attendance or doctrine, they may be placed in temporary inactive status to give time to resolve the difficulties. Inactive members lose their privileges of voting and holding office (elected or appointed).
- C. Associate Membership - Individuals temporarily residing in this area, and having membership in a church of similar doctrinal position may hold associate membership at Standale Baptist Church. This allows for the privilege of membership except voting and holding elective office. Associate membership ceases when an individual permanently moves out of the area.
- D. Youth Membership - Young people under 18 years of age may be received into youth membership upon their parents' or guardian's approval, baptism and testimony of

faith. Youth membership does not allow voting privileges or holding elective office. Youth membership may be changed to active (adult) membership when the youth turns 18 by attending a membership orientation class, completing a membership application, and interviewing with members of the Board of Deacons. Youth membership will cease at the nineteenth birthday, if it has not been changed.

Section Three: *Procedure for Membership*

Persons desiring membership at Standale Baptist Church will complete the following membership procedure:

- A. Submit a completed membership application to the pastor or a deacon (available in the church office)
- B. Complete our church membership orientation
- C. Have been baptized by immersion following salvation.
Acts 2:38
- D. Meet with a group of deacons for an interview involving:
 1. A testimony of personal faith in Christ and evidence of a Christian life.
 2. An opportunity for questions and answers from the applicant and deacons.
 3. A review of the applicant's present or past relationship to a church.
- E. A favorable recommendation of the Board of Deacons and approval of the congregation by two-thirds majority at a congregational business meeting.
- F. Having completed the above membership procedure will fulfill the requirements and grant membership to the applicant. Public recognition of this will occur with the right hand of fellowship given at a communion service.
- G. Transfer of Membership
Adults coming from churches in fellowship with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches or from churches of like faith, if they are members in good standing having already met our standards for membership, may transfer their membership. Their membership will be complete upon receipt of a letter of transfer from their previous church, recommendation of the deacons, and approval of the congregation. They are still encouraged to take our membership orientation.

Section Four: *Discipline of Membership*

- A. Among the church membership, members are to so care for one another that they desire to restore any fellow member involved in destructive sin (acts, words, or doctrinal error). They are to encourage them to make it right in a spirit of meekness. Galatians 6:1
- B. If a person is unresponsive to the encouragement of the member, it may be brought to the pastor or deacons. In cases where the offense (actions, words, or doctrinal error) will harm the testimony of the believer, the well-being of the congregation or the cause of Christ, further steps will be initiated to call for repentance. In accordance with Matthew 18:15-18, this would require a visit from a person aware of the nature of the sin and one or two witnesses (preferably including a pastor or deacon).
- C. If the sin is not dealt with after the encouragement of this second visit, then the next step is for the board of deacons to call a congregational meeting to alert the congregation to the need for repentance. They will call for a congregational resolution of admonishment. The congregation calls upon the member for repentance and commits itself to a time of humble intercession, which may include fasting. (Matthew 6:16-18; 9:14-15; 17:21) Failure to respond to the congregation's call for repentance, will be followed after an appropriate time with a congregational vote for discipline (two thirds majority needed), resulting in removal from membership.
- D. An individual involved in a disciplinary action or absent for a period of six months or longer, may have their membership transferred to inactive status to allow time for personal contact and prayerful encouragement. If an individual is not responsive after six months, a motion for removal from the membership will normally be brought to the next congregational meeting.

Section Five: *Restoration or Change in Membership Classification*

- A. Members on inactive status may be restored to active status with full fellowship and privileges upon repentance and agreement of the Board of Deacons.
- B. Former members may be reinstated to membership upon recommendation of the Board of Deacons and completion of the procedure for membership (Section Three).

Section Six: *Removal From Membership*

- A. Any member in good standing may have a letter of transfer sent when uniting in fellowship with another congregation in the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches or when uniting with a congregation of like faith (consistent with our Doctrinal Statement).
- B. Any member in good standing who wishes to unite with a church not meeting the qualifications of Paragraph A, may upon request from such church and the approval of the Board of Deacons, receive a letter of commendation.
- C. Any member in good standing who wishes to be removed from the rolls of Standale Baptist Church may request such in written form to the Board of Deacons. Those presently involved in disciplinary action (Section Four), forfeit this privilege.
- D. All actions under Section Six must be brought to the congregation for final approval and removal from the membership rolls.

Article 2: Officers of the Church

The elected officers of the church shall be the pastor(s) and deacons. They shall be the voting members of the church board. For legal matters, four of them (Senior Pastor, Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Deacon of Finance) shall be designated as the corporate board of trustees.

**Article 3:
Term of Office for Appointed Personnel**

All other officers and volunteer leaders of ministries shall normally be appointed by the Board of Deacons for one year terms.

They may be appointed for succeeding terms if they satisfactorily complete the duties of their position.

Article 4: Government and Procedures

Section One: *Fiscal Year*

The fiscal year of the church shall begin with January 1 and end with December 31.

Section Two: *Voting Procedures, Eligibility & Quorum*

- A. Only those members whose names are on the Active Membership Roll shall be eligible to vote. They must be 18 years of age, having met the requirements of Article 1 Section 3.
- B. A quorum for church business to be conducted shall consist of a minimum of twenty percent of the active membership (including absentee ballots). If a quorum is lacking, a smaller number shall adjourn the meeting to a future date. The new date for the meeting is to be announced at two services, one of which must be a Sunday Morning Worship Service.
- C. Absentee ballots will be made available for financial expenditures, selection of officers (pastors & deacons), and changes to the constitution. Eligible voters unable to attend the business meeting may obtain an absentee ballot from a deacon. The completed absentee ballot must be returned to a deacon in a sealed envelope prior to the business meeting. The deacon will be responsible to submit the ballot at the time of voting.

Section Three: *Business Meetings of the Church*

- A. Quarterly meetings will normally be held in the last half of the month following the end of the quarter. Reports of finances, minutes, and ministries will be given at that time. Other business of the church, including membership items, may be conducted without advance notice.
- B. The annual meetings will normally be held in the latter half of the month of January. Annual reports of officers, ministries, minutes, and finances are to be submitted to the church office by the second Sunday of January to allow

printing prior to the Annual Meeting. Additional normal business of the church may be conducted at this time.

- C. The Budget and Election meeting will normally be held the first week of December. The business at this meeting will be limited to the budget approval and election of deacons. The voting will be done by ballot. Both the slate of deacons and the proposed budget will be available in advance.
- D. Special business meetings may be called by a majority of the Board of Deacons. Notice of the meeting and the business to be conducted must be announced in at least two regular services, one being a Sunday Morning Worship Service.
- E. Except as provided herein, the business of the church shall normally be conducted according to *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Section Four: *Exception to the Constitution*

Any exception to this constitution requiring immediate action may be made upon approval of at least two-thirds of the Board of Deacons. Reporting such action to the congregation is to take place at or before the next regularly scheduled congregational business meeting.

Section Five: *Enacting and Repealing Clauses*

- A. The title page of the constitution will include the incorporation date, the latest revision date, and any amendments made to the latest revision.
- B. Effective with the adoption of this revised constitution, all previous by-laws not contained herein are repealed.

Article 5: Pastors and Pastoral Assistants

Section One: *Pastoral Qualifications*

- A. The highest (leadership) office of the local New Testament church is that of pastor. The Biblical synonyms for the office include: elder, bishop and pastor/shepherd (Acts 20:17,28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

- B. The pastor (meaning shepherd) shall reasonably meet all the biblical requirements for this esteemed office. Upon acceptance of the church's call, he and his wife (if married), shall be considered members. The pastor's family members may be received into membership upon fulfilling regular membership provisions of Article 1, Section Three.

Section Two: *Duties of the Pastor*

- A. Preaching and teaching.
 - 1. He shall regularly be involved in preparing and delivery of messages and lessons through preaching and teaching.
 - 2. He shall be the primary administrator of the ordinances, but able to delegate.
- B. Communication
The pastor shall regularly, personally communicate with the church family, using notes, e-mail, cards and letters, phone calls, individual and group meetings, etc.
- C. Administration
His duties shall include:
 - 1. Serve as the primary moderator of congregational business meetings
 - 2. He shall supervise the ministry of the church clerk, pastoral assistants, secretary(ies), and those involved in the business office of the church.
 - 3. If need arises, he may be called upon to supervise other positions as recommended by the deacons.
 - 4. He shall serve as a member of the Board of Deacons and the Corporate Board of Trustees in legal matters.
 - 5. He shall be considered an ex-officio member of all committees for all matters not pertaining to his employment.
- D. Evangelism
He shall participate in and promote evangelism as a basic part of the ministry of this church.
- E. Counseling and Discipling
He shall be responsible for making pre-marital counseling available and developing the counseling and discipling ministries of the church.

Section Three: *Calling a Pastor*

- A. Selection of a Candidate
 1. The Pulpit Committee in the absence of a Senior Pastor, shall unanimously select a pastoral candidate.
 2. They shall arrange for him to preach in at least one Sunday's Worship Services at the church. Additional exposure to the congregation is recommended.
 3. He shall be interviewed by the Board of Deacons.
- B. Approval by the Board of Deacons

If the candidate is unanimously approved by the Board of Deacons, a congregational meeting will be called for consideration of the candidate by the church membership.
- C. Election Notice

Election notice for pastors or pastoral assistants shall be announced at the regular Sunday Morning and Evening Services of the Sunday prior to time the election is held.
- D. Election Approval Needed

It will require a minimum of seventy-five percent favorable vote by a secret ballot of the active members in a quorum to extend a call to a candidate.
- E. One Candidate at a Time

The Deacon Board and congregation shall consider only one pastoral candidate at a time.
- F. Agreements

Terms of agreement between the church and the prospective pastor shall be worked out by him and the Deacon Board. It shall be placed in writing and approved by at least seventyfive percent of the entire Board of Deacons. It will include: breakdown of salary package, vacation time allotted, conference/education time allotted and any additional requirements or financial expectations.
- G. Annual Review. The terms of employment agreement will be reviewed annually by the Board of Deacons for appropriate adjustments and breakdown of the salary package. This review will take place in time to be included in the proposed budget for the new year.

Section Four: *Termination of Pastorate*

- A. The term of the pastor shall be open ended. If there is a desire to terminate the pastorate on the part of the pastor or the church, the party desiring the change shall normally give the other party thirty days written notice. A minimum of seven-

ty-five percent agreement of the deacon members of the Board of Deacons or a majority vote of the active members in a quorum may request a pastor's resignation and/or make exception to the normal thirty day notification period and payment.

B. Disciplined Separation

If the pastor is charged with immoral conduct, the Board of Deacons shall investigate such charges with all known responsible parties. If they believe the charge to be valid, they may recommend immediate termination of the pastor to the congregation. This recommendation of the Deacon Board requires a minimum of seventy-five percent agreement of all the deacons on the Board of Deacons. Such termination will require a majority vote of the active members in a quorum at a duly called business meeting. Under such circumstances, severance salary as indicated in paragraph A is not required.

Section Five: *Pastoral Assistants*

A. Definition

Additional ministry staff may be enlisted in areas such as preaching, Christian Education, Youth work, evangelism, music, outreach, etc. as deemed necessary by the church. They may be considered pastoral staff if qualified and the ministry is appropriate.

B. Calling

1. All the procedures concerning calling a pastor will apply except Section Three, A-1 and A-2. The Pastor will recommend the person to be submitted to the Board of Deacons.
2. Pastoral Assistants will not normally be added during times the church is without a Senior Pastor.
3. Termination

All procedures regarding termination of the Senior Pastorate will apply to the Assistant. In addition, Pastoral Assistants will continue after the calling of a new Senior Pastor on the approval of the Deacon Board in consultation with the Senior Pastor.

Article 6 - Board of Deacons

Section One: *Qualifications* - In accordance with 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

In order to qualify as a nominee for a deacon ministry, a man must:

- A. Be an active, adult member of this church in accordance with the provisions of Article 1 - Section 2A for at least a year.
- B. He must demonstrate maturity in his Christian life, having reached 25 years of age and having been a Christian for at least two years.
- C. He must have maintained a good public reputation in word and deed.
- D. If married, he must have his family in order and not have been previously divorced.

Section Two: *Personnel*

The Board of Deacons shall consist of the full-time Pastor(s) (entitled to vote) and deacons elected by the majority vote of a quorum of active members. The number of deacons on the board shall be limited to a maximum of 5 for the first 100 active (adult) members. For each additional 50 active members, an additional deacon may be added. From the member deacons, the Board of Deacons shall select a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, and Deacon of Finance.

Section Three: *Election and Term of Service*

- A. Election of Deacons shall be by a secret ballot and elected by a majority vote of a quorum of active members from nominees recommended by the Nominating Committee.
- B. The normal term of service for each deacon shall be two fiscal years, with staggered terms of election (1/2 each year).
- C. Deacons serving three consecutive terms (6 years) will normally be given at least a one year sabbatical before re-election.

Section Four: Chairman - Duties & Responsibilities

- A. He shall normally chair the Board of Deacons, working with the Pastor(s) to develop the agenda. He shall also chair the Pulpit Committee when it is functioning.
- B. He shall serve as a member of the Nominating Committee.
- C. In the absence of the Pastor or in matters concerning the pastor, he shall serve as moderator of congregational meetings.
- D. During periods when the church is without a pastor (or in his absence), the chairman shall oversee the general operation of the church. In this capacity he shall be an ex-officio member of all other committees.

Section Five: Vice-Chairman

- A. He shall assume the duties of the chairman during his absence.
- B. When both the pastor and chairman are absent from a congregational meeting, he shall serve as moderator.
- C. He shall chair the Nominating Committee when it is functioning and serve on the Pulpit Committee when needed.

Section Six: Board Secretary

- A. The secretary shall record minutes of all action taken by the Board of Deacons.
- B. He shall reproduce the minutes in printed form for inclusion with the agenda for the next scheduled Board of Deacons' meeting.
- C. In the event corrections are made to the minutes at a Board Meeting, he shall reproduce copies of the amended minutes for distribution to the deacons.

Section Seven: Deacon of Finance

- A. One member of the Board of Deacons shall be appointed Deacon of Finance each year.
- B. He shall oversee the finances of the church and work with the Treasurer and Assistant to facilitate recording, receipts, banking, check writing, accounting, and reporting.

- C. He shall oversee the ministry of the counting and recording of giving to maximize accuracy and confidentiality, while minimizing the risk of inappropriate handling of funds.
- D. He shall oversee the formation of the budget, working with the ministries of the church and deacons to prepare a proposed annual budget for congregational approval.

Section Eight: *Duties & Responsibilities*

- A. The Board of Deacons shall normally meet monthly to handle the business of the church and to report on the ongoing ministries of the church. An emphasis will be placed on prayerfully seeking the Lord's leadership, provision, and working.
- B. Each deacon will have at least one area of ministry that he will oversee and report on. The specific area(s) and extent of involvement will be determined by the spiritual gifts, talents, interests, and time available. The areas of oversight will correlate with our purpose as stated in our Mission Statement and Constitution. In addition, our facilities and grounds will be designated as an area of deacon oversight. They will provide oversight for programs and committees established to accomplish the church's purpose.
- C. The deacons in their biblical role of servants, will assist the pastor in ministering to the needs of the congregation and in visitation (as needed). They will oversee the collection and distribution of the Benevolent Fund. They shall serve the Lord's table as it is celebrated. They shall act as the committee for membership items, making recommendations to the congregation when appropriate.
- D. The deacons shall work with the Deacon of Finance and the pastor in preparing an annual budget in printed form to be available to the congregation by the fourth Sunday of November.
- E. The deacons shall prepare a brief, written summary of their area of ministry to be included in the printed Annual Report. These reports should be into the church office at least a week prior to the Annual Meeting.

Section Nine - Associate Deacon

- A. Qualifications. In addition to the qualifications for deacons listed in Section One, he shall be at least 60 years of age.
- B. Procedure.
 - (1) As the needs of the church require, the Board of Deacons may appoint Associate Deacons by majority vote.
 - (2) The term of the Associate Deacon will be for the balance of the fiscal year.
- C. Duties. The Associate Deacon(s) will minister in the area (s) that the deacons determine that the church has needs and the Associate Deacon has skills. They are welcome to sit with the Board and share their insights and wisdom. Because of their non-elected status, they do not have the power to vote.

Article 7 - Clerk

- A. The clerk shall be an active member, appointed annually by a majority vote of the Board of Deacons.
- B. He/she shall work under the supervision of the Senior Pastor or in his absence, the Chairman of the Board of Deacons.
- C. The Clerk shall keep minutes of the actions of all church business meetings and provide a printed copy of the minutes for distribution to the congregation.
- D. The clerk shall keep the official register of church members reception and removal, including items of church discipline and death of members. He/she shall handle the official correspondence on items concerning membership transfers and release.

Article 8 - Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

- A. They shall be active members appointed annually by a majority vote of the Board of Deacons and work under the supervision of the Deacon of Finance.
- B. They shall maintain accurate systematic, permanent records of income and expenditures of all church general funds and special fund monies.

- C. All monies shall be deposited with banking institutions approved by the Board of Deacons
- D. Distribution is to be made by check upon the signed authorization of a deacon or pastor in accordance with the church budget or with authorization of the Board of Deacons or congregation. The authorization normally will be upon a printed request form and signed by the deacon overseeing that area. All bills received and paid are to be identified by account and should be identified by authorization.
- E. Printed financial statements are to be distributed to the Board of Deacons on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. Quarterly and annual printed financial reports are to be made available for each quarter's congregational business meeting.
- F. Offering envelopes shall be made available and a record of individual giving kept. While every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality, all records and reporting will be done to conform to IRS standards for charitable giving receipts. A confidential giving report will be made available in January for each identifiable giver.

Article 9 - Nominating Committee

Section One - Organization

- A. This is an Ad Hoc Committee for nominating qualified individuals for the office of deacon.
- B. It shall be appointed three months prior to the annual election.
- C. It shall consist of seven members: Senior Pastor, Chairman & Vice-Chairman of the Board of Deacons, and four additional, active members from the church who shall be appointed by the Board of Deacons.
- D. The Vice Chairman of the Board of Deacons shall chair the committee.

Section Two - Function

- A. The function of this committee shall be to present to the congregation a list of qualified nominations for the open

deacon offices to be filled. Prayerful consideration to the selection of nominees will consider:

1. Spiritual maturity (I Tim. 3:8-12)
 2. Availability (employment, health, family, desire)
 3. Abilities/experience
 4. A blend of experiences and ages to develop leadership and vision for the church
- B. They shall approach those qualified men they recommend to ask them to prayerfully consider having their name(s) placed in nomination.
- C. A list of nominees consenting to serve, if elected, shall be posted in the church and printed in the bulletin two Sundays prior to the election.
- D. There shall be no nominations from the floor at the time of the election.
- E. The results of the election shall be printed in the bulletin following the election.

Article 10 - Election of Officers

Section One: *Date*

The congregational meeting for the election of deacons (officers) shall be held early in December, unless otherwise directed by the Board of Deacons.

Section Two: *Balloting Procedures*

The active members shall be provided with a ballot listing the nominees for election to the Board of Deacons. The ballot shall list the number of positions and years (if other than two years). There shall be no further nominations from the floor. On the printed ballot, the active members shall indicate their preference by marking their choices up to the number of openings to be filled.

Article 11 - Worship Services

Section One: Regular morning and evening worship services will normally be held each Lord's Day (Sunday). In addition, times for united prayer and Bible instruction for all ages will be regularly scheduled on a weekly basis.

Section Two: *Communion & Baptismal Services*

- A. The Lord's Supper will normally be held monthly in conjunction with a regularly scheduled service, unless otherwise directed by the Board of Deacons.
- B. Baptismal Services will be held periodically according to the desire of candidates and at the discretion of the Senior Pastor. Baptismal Services will normally be held as a part of regularly scheduled services.

Section Three: *Special Services.*

With the input of the Senior Pastor and the deacon(s) ministering in the specific area, the Board of Deacons may schedule evangelistic meetings, missions conferences, and Bible/spiritual life conferences for the spiritual growth of the church family.

Article 12: Vacancies and Removal From Office

Section One: *Vacancies*

When vacancies occur during the year in any office of the church except the pastorate, the Board of Deacons may appoint a replacement. Filling vacancies in the office of deacon must be confirmed by the congregation at the next quarterly meeting. All appointments are for the balance of the church year.

Section Two: *Removal From Office*

Any officer of the church who fails to fulfil his/her office for two consecutive months or is involved in conduct warranting church discipline, may be subject to removal from office after personal contact. Removal is by majority vote of the Board of Deacons. Exception to this rule of non-fulfillment may be made by the Board of Deacons for valid absence related to employment, illness, or continued travels outside the area.

Article 13 - Finances/Budget

Section One: *Method of Finance*

Church finances shall be raised by freewill offerings and in accordance with our Church Covenant. Giving is a spiritual act of worship to God, and is to be the willing contribution of God's people as they purpose in their hearts.

Section Two: *Benevolent Fund*

The Benevolent Fund is made up of monies given specifically to meet the needs of individuals and families in financial difficulty. Priority will be given to those who are part of the church but not limited to them. Distribution of funds will be by action of the deacons.

Section Three: *Allocations of Duties and Responsibilities*

The procedures and personal responsibilities are listed in the appropriate articles of the Constitution and therefore are not repeated here.

Article 6 - Deacon of Finance, Budget Procedure

Article 8 - Office & Duties of Treasurer and Assistant
Treasurer

Article 14 - Audit

Section Four: *Procedure Regarding Financial Obligations*

Providing the finances of the church permit, ministries are allowed expenditures within their budget. Prior approval with a deacon's signature should be obtained for items not normally purchased. In addition, deacons will be authorized for expenditures above budget within annually approved limits. Such limits are to be set at the time of budget approval.

Article 14 - Audit

Section One: *Duties & Responsibilities*

An audit of the church financial records is for the purpose of maintaining the integrity and proper stewardship of the church's

finances and officers. The audit should be made on an annual basis, within the first quarter following a fiscal year. A report should be presented to the Board of Deacons by the Deacon of Finance.

Section Two: *Selection of Auditors*

Two auditors shall be appointed by the Board of Deacons to complete the audit of the preceding year. Competency in basic accounting will be a factor in considering appointees. If the Board considers it necessary, it may appoint auditors from outside the congregation. In such case, proper remuneration is appropriate.

Article 15 - Transition of Office

At the end of their terms officers, committee members, and appointees shall turn in their church records, keys, and church articles of ministry. These items should be passed to the person replacing them, or if no replacement, the pastor or deacon with oversight of the ministry. Personal efforts to promote a smooth transition are encouraged and appreciated for furthering the work of Christ.

Article 16 - Amendments

Section One: *Covenant, Doctrinal Statement and Bylaws*

This constitution in part or in whole (including the Church Covenant, Doctrinal Statement, and Bylaws), may be amended by a two thirds majority vote of the active members present in a quorum (including absentee ballots) voting at any Annual Meeting or at a special meeting called for the purpose, providing the proposed changes have been:

1. Approved for recommendation to the congregation by at least a two thirds majority vote of the Board of Deacons.
2. Announced by print and public announcement for at least two Sundays prior to the meeting.
3. Posted in printed form available to the congregation at least two weeks prior to the date of the called meeting.
4. Delivered in printed form (either by hand or by regular or electronic mail) to the active membership at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting.

Section Two: Articles of Association must comply with the provisions of Act No. 327 Public Acts of the State of Michigan for the year 1931 as amended.

Article 17 - Committees & Ministries/Organizations

A. Committees

1. Standing Committees. The church may establish such standing committees as necessary to accomplish the purpose and vision of the church. All standing committees are responsible to the Board of Deacons for their policies, actions, and activities. Standing committees will also be responsible to submit written reports for inclusion in the Annual Report presented at the Annual Meeting in January.
2. Ad Hoc Committee. The Board of Deacons may establish temporary committees for specific purposes. These committees are directly responsible to the Board of Deacons. Their findings and recommendations will be reported to the Board of Deacons. At the conclusion of their appointed task, they will cease to exist.
3. Pulpit Committee.
 - a. The Pulpit Committee will be formed and will function during the extended absence of a Senior Pastor because he is incapacitated or the office is vacant.
 - b. The Pulpit Committee shall consist of the Deacon Board Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and one additional deacon. In addition, two members of the congregation will be added by the appointment of the Board. The chairman of the Deacon Board will serve as chairman of this committee.
 - c. In the event of an extended absence or a vacancy in the Senior Pastor position, the committee will arrange for pulpit supply with consideration given to securing an Interim Pastor.
 - d. In case of a vacancy, this committee will pursue and secure pastoral candidates as provided in Article 5. They shall evaluate the candidates' qualifications and follow the procedures of Article 5.

B. Ministries/Organizations

All ministries and organizations that are affiliated with Standale Baptist Church must meet the following qualifications:

1. They are approved by the Board of Deacons and are established to further the cause of Christ in line with our purpose and vision.
2. All those in leadership positions are members in good standing of Standale Baptist Church.
3. An annual, written report will be prepared for inclusion in the Church Annual Report. For those requesting funding from the church budget, all budget requests for the following year should be in writing to the Board of Deacons by November 1. All monies received and spent outside of budget approval should comply with Article 13, Section One: Method of Finance.

Article 18 - Ordination - Licensing - Revocation

Section One - *Ordination*

Ordination is reserved for men who are in ministry roles of spiritual leadership and public proclamation of the Word of God. It will normally be considered only for those active in ministry for at least a year. It is open to those filling the role of Pastor, Assistant Pastor, Interim Pastor, Missionary, or head of a Christian organization or ministry. It will be considered only for those meeting the scriptural requirements of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, while demonstrating suitable gifts, adequate training, and God's leading and blessing upon his ministry.

When the Board of Deacons feels that a person meets the provisions of the above paragraph and that the individual desires ordination, they are empowered to call an ordination council of pastor and church representatives and representatives from appropriate Christian organizations or boards, all of like faith. This council is for the purpose of examining the candidate in matters of doctrine and spiritual qualifications, and making a recommendation to the Board of Deacons. The Board of Deacons will act to make recommendation to the congregation and it will require a two-thirds majority vote of the active members in a quorum to proceed with the ordination.

Section Two - *Licensing*

While ordination is reserved for men in Christian ministry, licensing is a declaration of confidence by the church in those members in occupational ministry and lay ministry of either sex. It will be recognition by the church for a three year period of the giftedness and qualification of the individual for a specific role. It is given by a two-thirds majority vote of the active members in a quorum and may be renewed upon review and approval of the Board of Deacons. All persons being licensed must be members in good standing of the church, hold without reservation to the doctrinal statement of the church, and maintain their licensed ministry in a manner that reflects well on their Lord and church. In addition to those roles eligible for ordination, licensing may be granted to either sex for ministries like hospital visitation or prison ministries. Women may be licensed in ministry roles to women and children.

Section Three: *Revocation of Ordination Credential and License*

Any person either ordained or licensed by this church who afterwards is involved in serious sin or strays from support of our Doctrinal Statement and Covenant, or compromises their ministry by unethical conduct, may have their ordination credentials or license revoked upon recommendation of the Board of Deacons and a two-thirds majority vote of the congregation.

Article 19 - Dissolution or Division

Section One: *Dissolution - Disposition of Church Property*

In the event that the church dissolves, all assets remaining after the payment and discharge of all its liabilities, shall be distributed to the organizations qualifying for Internal Revenue Code as a 501(c)3 organization and adhering to the purpose, Covenant, and Doctrinal Statement of this church. Such organizations would primarily include churches, mission boards, educational institutions, benevolent social agencies, and Christian ministries appearing in the church budget at that time. Due care and consideration will be given to provide assistance to our missionaries supported under approved missionary agencies, especially those servicing overseas. No member of the church at dissolution may personally

benefit from the dissolution except in reimbursement for specific services rendered at the established rate.

Section Two: *Division of Church Membership*

In the event of a division of the church membership, the church property and all its assets, as well as its obligations, shall belong to those members who remain and abide by this constitution, including its Articles of Association, Doctrinal Statement, Covenant, Bylaws, and congregationally approved policies.

Article 20 - Resolutions and Affirmations

Section One: *Biblical Statement on Marriage*

I. This Church believes in the sanctity of the marital union as described in Scripture:

- A. God created the first marriage as a sacred covenant relationship between one man and one woman for the purposes of procreation, companionship and dominion over creation, in keeping with the covenant relationship God himself established with his own creation (Genesis 2:15-24; Romans 1:16-32); and
- B. Jesus blessed a marriage celebration between a man and a woman with his presence and his first public miracle, thereby affirming the traditional definition of marriage as a cornerstone of every culture and community (John 2:1-11); and further that he advised those who are for congenital or psychological reasons unable to enter into marriage (i.e. between a man and a woman) to remain single and therefore celibate (Matthew 19:12); and
- C. The Bible holds to this traditional definition of marriage, eschewing all other unions as unnatural, inappropriate, and anti-social, and has advocated the family unit of husband and wife and their children as the chief building block of society (Leviticus 18:22-30; Psalm 127:3-5; Romans 1:16-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-2; Hebrews 13:4).

II. This Church adheres to the doctrinal statements on Marriage and Family by our denomination, the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, as stated in its belief, policy and literature, that marriage is defined biblically and theologically in God's

own terms rather than man-made terms; and further that this church intentionally adheres to the highest standards for marriage, namely Biblical standards, and that other legal definitions and court actions are secondary to Biblical mandate.

III. This Church affirms that all marriage ceremonies performed in the name of this church and any related celebrations or activities allowed in its facilities shall be for unions that meet the standards named in this church constitution, and further, that church ministers and staff engage only in marriage ceremonies in keeping with this church's adopted biblical and theological definition of marriage.

End of Church Constitution