

Constitution & Bylaws of St Adolphe Bible Fellowship

Preamble

This Constitution and Bylaws are made to:

1. Preserve and secure the principles of our faith.
2. Respect and honour each individual member of the church.
3. Provide for orderly conduct of internal affairs, in dealing with others, and of governing church members.
4. Serve as an umbrella of protection and guidance for our Church Planting Network.

Article I

Name and Location

The name of this organization is St Adolphe Bible Fellowship (hereafter listed as SABF). The place of worship is 467 Main Street, St Adolphe, Manitoba or at such other place as shall be designated by the congregation.

Article II

Purpose

- To establish, maintain and support a house of worship conducted in accordance with the tenets and doctrines of the Christian faith.
- To support and maintain missions and missionaries in order to propagate the Christian faith.

In keeping with this purpose, the objective of St Adolphe Bible Church is to glorify God by obeying the Great Commandment (Matthew 22: 36-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28: 18-20). The process is designed to produce disciples of Jesus Christ, which involves these values and practices.

- To maintain regular services, both devotional and for public worship;
- To proclaim earnestly the Gospel message and urge its personal acceptance;
- To cooperate heartily by prayer and gift of service in an effort to establish the Kingdom of Christ throughout the world;
- To promote systematic Bible study and training for Christian service;
- To secure the practice of true Christian faith and walk; and
- To own, purchase or sell property, to incur debts and transact such business as is necessary to carry out our above purpose.

Article III

Statement of Faith

The Scriptures

The Scriptures, comprising the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, are the complete and final written record of God's revelation to man and are in their entirety the very word of God. They are powerful, with their own inherent authority and are the final rule and authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Holy Scriptures were written by men who were supernaturally moved by the Holy Spirit in such a way that their human writing was divinely inspired. This inspiration of the Holy Scriptures extends equally to all parts; the thoughts and ideas are expressed in words which are themselves inspired. The Holy Scriptures are wholly reliable, trustworthy and true, without error. They have been, and will be, preserved by the Holy Spirit throughout all ages. (*2 Timothy 1:13, 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Psalm 119:105, 160, 12:6; Proverbs 30:5*)

About God

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God. (*Genesis 1:1, 26, 27; Psalm 90:2; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14*)

About Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus was both fully God and fully human, was born of a virgin and lived a perfect, sinless human life. He offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return someday to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (*Matthew 1:22-23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5, 8:58, 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 1:3-4; Acts 1:9-11; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13*)

About the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a divine person, co-equal with the Father and the Son. He is present in the world to make people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with the power for living, enables understanding of Biblical truth and guides them in righteous living. He provides every Christian with spiritual gifts for service. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily. (*2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13, 5:18; Galatians 5:25*)

About People

People are the supreme object of God's creation, originally created in the image and likeness of God. Humanity fell through disobedience, incurring both physical and spiritual death. All people are sinners by nature and sinners by choice and this separates them from the life of God. Only through the atoning work of Jesus Christ can anyone be

saved and restored to relationship with God. (*Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; 51:1-8; Isaiah 53:6, 59:1-2; Romans 3:23; 5:12*)

About Salvation

Salvation is by grace through faith. It is God's free gift to us, but we must accept it. Those who receive Jesus by faith are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn in repentance from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith, we are saved. Eternal life begins the moment one receives Jesus Christ into his life by faith. (*Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6, 1:12; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26, Romans 5:1*)

About Eternity

People were created to exist forever in eternity. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation through Christ. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence. (*John 3:16; 17:3; Romans 6:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 20:15*)

About Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Jesus instructed His disciples to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the Church two visible symbols (called "ordinances") as reminders. These two ordinances are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. While we respect all acts of spiritual obedience, the Bible teaches that Baptism is to be done by immersion, following salvation, as a one-time act of obedience and identification with Jesus Christ as Lord. The Lord's Supper is an ongoing symbol remembering our Lord's death, burial, resurrection and promised return. Each individual must decide his or her own participation in these ordinances. Regardless, we do not regard anyone's participation in these practices as a means of salvation. (*Matthew 28:18-20, 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32, Colossians 2:12*)

About The Church

The Church consists of all those who have been saved through faith in Jesus Christ. Christ is the Head the Church, whose members have been commissioned by Him to go into all the world as a witness, preaching the gospel to all nations. The local church is an autonomous, local body of believers in Christ who are joined together for the worship of God, for teaching of the Word of God, for prayer, fellowship and the proclamation of the Gospel, and for observance of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The local church is governed by the principles found in Scripture. (*Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 10:25*)

IN SUMMARY

The cornerstone of our belief and faith is Jesus Christ. Through Him, we have the free gift of salvation, an eternal relationship with God, and an example of how to live our

lives and love God and each other. He is central to everything that we believe and everything that we do. God wants us to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, keeping ourselves constantly in subjection to Christ, we must allow God's Holy Spirit to live through us in a daily "walk" of faith. All of us need to make sure that He is the center of our lives in every way.

Article IV

Affiliation

SABF is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denomination control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation and inter-dependence with other churches, our church voluntarily affiliates with the Canadian National Baptist Convention (CNBC). We also embrace and support the CNBC Church-to-Church covenant (see Attachment #1).

Article V

Government

The decision making of SABF is vested in its members. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of its life and organization. It recognizes the needs for mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among Baptist churches. SABF will cooperate with and mutually work with the CNBC.

Article VI

Records and Reports

SABF will maintain the following records and reports:

1. Adequate and correct books and records of accounts (financial records).
2. Minutes of the proceedings of its congregational meetings and all other teams.
3. A record of its members, giving their names and addresses.
4. Contribution statements for contributors.
5. Reports of annual review of all church financial books, records, and proceedings.

Article VII

Nonprofit Status and Dissolution

SABF shall be carried on without purpose of gain for its members, and any profits or other accretions to the organization shall be used solely to promote its purposes. Upon dissolution and after the payment of all debts and liabilities, all remaining assets will be given to a qualified donee described in subsection 149.1(1) of the Income Tax Act.

Article VIII

Amendment

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended provided the proposed amendment shall have been presented in writing at a regular congregational meeting and then circulated to the membership. Amendments to this Constitution and Bylaws shall be two-thirds vote of members of SABF who are qualified to vote and are present in the congregational meeting with a quorum to discuss and vote for this matter. Written notice with proposed changes in the constitution need to be provided to the members 30 days prior to a church meeting. Written notice for a Bylaw change is 15 days in advance of a church meeting.

Providing the amendment passes the first vote, a second vote will not be held on the same day. Should it pass a second reading the amendment will be accepted.

St Adolphe Bible Fellowship Bylaws

I. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Section I: Ways to request membership at SABF

1. After a meeting with a pastor/Elder membership may be requested and then announced at a worship service.
2. By transfer of church letter from another Baptist church presented to a pastor/Elder.
3. By a statement of faith of their prior experience of conversion and baptism as described in the SABF Believers Baptism Position Paper (Attachment #2).

Elders reserve the right to refuse membership for the same reasons laid out in Section IV (termination of membership).

Section II: Qualifications

1. A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation.
2. Completion of Baptism as described in the SABF Believers Baptism Position Paper (Attachment #2)
3. Completion of new member's orientation class. Candidates for membership and new members need to attend the Church Membership Class to learn and understand the privileges and responsibilities of members to God and the church.
4. Agreement with SABF's statement of faith. It shall be the duty of church members to uphold the Statement of Faith, Constitution and Bylaws, and Covenant of SABF. It is important that those who unite with us in membership realize this is a covenant relationship which commits each one of us to a relationship of mutual accountability.

Section III: Rights of Membership

Every member shall have the right to vote in the following matters: the annual calendar and budget of SABF; the calling of a pastor; the affirmation of church leadership; eligibility for church leadership; congregational meetings; the disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of SABF; the merger or dissolution of SABF; acquisition of property; and amendments to SABF's Constitution or Bylaws.

Section IV: Termination

Members shall be removed from church membership for the following reasons:

1. Death.
2. Transfer of membership to another church.
3. By personal request of the member.
4. Dismissal by the pastors/Elders according to the following conditions:

- a. The member's life and conduct is not in accordance with the Statement of Faith and or members covenant in such a way that the member hinders the ministry influence of the church in the community.
 - b. Procedures for dismissal of a member shall be according to Matthew 18:15-17 or Titus 3:10-11.
5. Because of the covenant relationship we desire among our membership a member that does not have any contact with SABF for a period consisting of 12 or more months, without making known to the church leadership their intention to be away for an extended period, shall be removed from membership as the pastoral team/Elders deem appropriate. Missionaries on the field and shut ins are exempt.
 6. The purpose of church discipline or dismissal is the ultimate restoration of the member to fellowship in the body.

Section V: Restoration of Members

Members dismissed from SABF shall be restored by the unanimous agreement of the pastors/Elders according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8.

Section VI: Voting Limitations

Each member is entitled to one vote. Voting by proxy is prohibited.

II. MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

Congregational meetings of the members shall be held in the times, in the manner and the purposes set forth below:

1. An annual meeting of the church shall be held prior to February 15 of the new year. The primary purpose of the meeting is to receive and adopt the annual report, the church calendar and budget for the coming year.
2. SABF may change the dates of the annual or other scheduled meetings by notifying the members at least 10 days in advance.
3. A special congregational meeting may be called at any time by the Pastor/Elders.
4. Notification of members for congregational meetings may be given by any one of the following methods:
 - a. Distribution of written material to the congregation in attendance at a Sunday service.
 - b. Oral announcement to the congregation at a Sunday service.
 - c. By letter to members.
5. Forty percent of the membership is necessary for a quorum. If a quorum is not met a second meeting can be called no less than 7 days later and the members attending are the quorum?
6. Members shall be notified no less than 10 days prior to a meeting.

III. CHURCH OFFICERS

All church officers must be members of SABF in good standing.

Section I: The Pastor

A. **Qualifications:** The qualifications for pastor shall be consistent with those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. His training, skills, and experiences are needed in this area of leadership.

B. Responsibilities

- (a) These generally fall into the following areas: Preaching, teaching, casting Godly vision, pastoral counseling, administration, planning, and guiding SABF to grow and fulfill its purposes.
- (b) To live a life of private and public integrity before his family and congregation.
- (c) He shall lead and equip SABF and all its leaders in fulfilling its values and practices.
- (d) The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all on-going teams except the Pastor Search Team.
- (e) He shall work with the church leaders in securing pulpit supply in times of his absence.
- (f) The pastor will be in scriptural mentoring relationships with church leaders. He will also be encouraged to have a mentor in order to support and strengthen his ministry at SABF.

C. Call

- (a) A pastor shall be chosen and called whenever a vacancy occurs.
- (b) A Pastor Search team consisting of 4 to 7 people shall be recommended by the Church Leadership team with affirmation by the Elders.
- (c) The Pastor Search Team will prayerfully consider and make a recommendation to the Church Leadership Team. Once the Church Leadership Team has affirmed the pastoral candidate, the candidate will be invited to meet with the church over a weekend of activities that will allow the church to get to know the potential pastor and ask questions.
- (d) The pastor's election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, following a time of meeting the candidate and the Sunday service.
- (e) Two-thirds of the congregation is necessary for a quorum and an affirmative vote of 75% of those members present is necessary to extend a call to the pastoral candidate.

D. Terms of Service

- (a) The chosen pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by either his request or the request of the church. Should SABF terminate the relationship, the pastor will be compensated two weeks salary for each

year served up to a maximum of 8 weeks. Should the pastor terminate the relationship a minimum 30-day notice will be given.

- (b) There shall be a written a mutually agreed upon job description and offer of ministry employment made with the pastor outlining expectations and roles. This should also include salary, vacation time and benefits.

Section II: Church Staff

SABF shall employ or call staff, as the Lord leads.

- A. Hiring of paid staff members other than that of the calling of a pastor shall be made by the lead pastor and the Church Leadership Team. Paid staff members report to the senior pastor.
- B. A special team will be assigned by the pastor and Church Leadership Team to help gather suitable candidates.
- C. A written job description and offer of ministry employment will be prepared when the need for church staff is determined.

Section III: Elders

A. Responsibilities

- (a) The Elders will consist of at least three members. Nominations will be requested from the congregation prior to the annual meeting and presented to the Elder Search Team consisting of the Lead Pastor and two current or past Elders in good standing. This team will interview and recommend the candidates and present the qualified ones for vote at the annual meeting.
- (b) The Elders will be recommended by the Elders Search Team and voted into position with a three-quarters (3/4) majority vote by the members at the annual meetings and will serve for a term of three years to be reaffirmed annually with a one year break between terms.
- (c) Elders shall demonstrate an exemplary Christian testimony in private, family and public life; a committed Christian leader and partner of the pastor; supporter and promoter of the church faith, values, practices, programs and ministries and will display Christian maturity.
- (d) Elders serve as a team to assist the Pastoral Team in spiritual ministry to the congregation.
- (e) They seek to resolve any fellowship problem of the church.
- (f) They work with the pastors to implement any church discipline when deemed necessary and to restore people to active membership when church discipline has taken place.
- (g) In the absence of the pastor, one of the Elders will serve as an advisory member to all organizations, departments, and teams.
- (h) The Elders along with the Church Leadership Team assist the pastoral team to set and implement spiritual vision among the church..
- (i) The chairman of the Elders will represent the Elders on the Church Leadership Team. In his absence or at his request, another Elder may serve.

Section IV: Church Leadership Team

- (a) The Church Leadership Team will consist of a minimum of five members. These members will include the pastor, the chair person (to be elected by the church at the annual meeting), the treasurer, church secretary and chair persons of each church ministry team. (Elders) (Building & Finance) (Christian Education) (Missions) (Evangelism & Outreach) (Maintenance) (Youth) These names may change over time.
- (b) The Church Leadership Team serves a 12 month term over the calendar year which will be affirmed at each congregational meeting.
- (c) Along which has been previously stated in this document the Church Leadership Team's additional responsibilities are as follows: Approval of all ministry teams, approve church budget which will be presented for final approval at the congregational meeting.
- (d) The Church Leadership Team shall recommend to the church objectives and goals in keeping with SABF's purpose, values and practices. They will review the coordinated program plans recommended by the pastor, Elders and ministry teams. They will evaluate program effectiveness in terms of church goals and objectives.
- (e) The Church Leadership Team shall assist the Pastors and Elders by communicating any concerns or disagreements that they become aware of directly to the Pastoral Team and Elders and by acting as ambassadors of the vision and direction of the church to the various ministry teams.
- (f) The Church Leadership Team will issue releases and updates to the congregation as required.

Section V: Church Ministry Teams

St Adolphe Bible Fellowship shall establish such teams as needed to carry out its purpose. All team leaders and new ministry initiatives must be approved by the Church Leadership Team. All ministry team leaders on the Church Leadership Team must be members in good standing.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20, 21)

Constitution and bylaws adopted by church vote on (date) _____.

Witnessed _____ and _____.

Attachment #1

CNBC Church-to-Church Covenant

Given that we are a network of churches who give ourselves away to advance the Kingdom of God, we value the importance of being in covenant. We recognize the autonomy of the local church and will guard the ability of every congregation to have the final decision-making authority. We also see the biblical model of inter-dependence and accountability and we will grant congregational access to other churches and leaders. Therefore, being led by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to God and to one another to live out the following:

We as churches covenant together to affirm the CHURCH as God's primary vehicle to advance His kingdom:

- By committing to share Christ, send missionaries, start and strengthen churches
- By connecting churches in association
- By valuing the contribution of every church as unique and significant

We as churches covenant together to honor the rich HERITAGE God has given us:

- By upholding our commitment to the CNBC Statement of Faith By being on mission with other CNBC churches
- By partnering with the agencies and churches of the Southern Baptist Convention

We as churches covenant together to practice God's desire for INTER-DEPENDENCE:

- By realizing we can do more together than alone
- By accepting responsibility for one another
- By giving sacrificially through the Cooperative Program

We as churches covenant together to welcome God's protection found in ACCOUNTABILITY:

- By initiating dialogue with churches and leaders in times of need
- By welcoming the assistance of our churches and leaders in times crisis
- By praying together for forgiveness and restoration in times of moral failure or spiritual distress

We as churches covenant together to protect the UNITY of our churches:

- By praying for one another
- By refusing to gossip or compete with one another
- By demonstrating Christ-like loyalty and love to one another

----- *Believers Baptism*



The goal of this writing is to systematically lay out what SABF believes to be true about Christian Believers Baptism in an easy to read format. If you desire further understanding on this topic, you are encouraged to study through the footnotes, and to speak with your pastor.

What is Baptism? The English word “Baptism” carries a two-part definition.¹ One is a literal definition of what is happening, and the other is symbolic. The literal definition means to dip or immerse into. That is what we see physically taking place in the drama of water baptism. The second part is symbolic. It means that the thing being dipped, is now being identified by what it was dipped into. An example from early use of this word was in regard to the dye trade. The cloth was baptized into the dye vat, and when it came out, it was called “purple” cloth, thus being defined by the colour of the dye. The cloth is now identified by the dye it was baptized into. The person who has participated in Believers baptism, is now identified with Christ.² Baptism is an individual’s public profession that they have received salvation through the blood of Jesus, and wish to be identified with Christ and his church.³ The individual being baptized has placed to death their old sinful life, it was buried with Christ, and they are rising to walk in newness of life. Baptism is an outward expression, of the inward reality that has taken place.

Does Baptism provide salvation from sin? Salvation from sin can occur by grace alone through faith alone, apart from any “work” that we may do, including the “work” of baptism.⁴ In short, baptism does not save people from sin. When the individual repents of their sin, and places their faith in the Lord Jesus, they receive the gift of salvation, which is the forgiveness of sin. Baptism is the dramatization of what has already taken place in the individual’s life.

Why does SABF only practice immersion baptism? We understand that believer’s baptism by immersion is the most accurate portrayal of what Jesus commanded⁵ and what the early church practiced.⁶ It is the mode in which Jesus himself was baptized, thus setting the

¹ Definition of the Greek word Baptizo <https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/baptizo.html>

² Romans 6:3-11 tells of how we are Baptized into Christ, and that we now live for him, as we are identified with his death, burial, and his resurrection.

³ 1 Cor. 12:12-13 Explains that when an individual is baptized with the Holy Spirit, they become part of the body of Christ. Similarly, when an individual is baptized they are identifying themselves with the local body of Christ.

⁴ Ephesians 2:1-10 tells of how we all were dead in our sin, and by grace, through our faith in Jesus, our sins were covered, and redemption was given to all who believe.

⁵ In Matt. 28:18-20 Jesus says that we should go make disciples (followers & learners of Jesus), and when we have done that, we should baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

⁶ Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries*, March 29, 2009. WM B. Publishing co., Grand Rapids MI. pg 687

example for us.⁷ Ultimately, immersion baptism is the most effective mode to display how a believer identifies them self with Christ's own death, burial, and resurrection. When we are immersed into the baptismal waters, we are in fact identifying ourselves with Christ's own death and burial. When we are raised out of the water, we are identifying with Christ's own resurrection that we too one day will experience. As Christ left the tomb, and lives to this day, we too leave the baptismal waters, and proceed to live for Christ and his church.

⁷ Matt. 3:13-17 and Mark 1:9-11

----- *Believers Baptism*

Who should be baptized? In short, any person who has repented of their sin, trusted Jesus to be Lord of their life, and has not previously undergone believer's baptism should be baptized.⁸ We see in Scripture, that believer's baptism always follows conversion,⁹ and that water baptism is a first step of being obedient to Christ in your new life with him. In Matt. 28:19-20, Jesus' final words before his ascension, were commanding us to make disciples¹⁰ and baptize them. For these reasons, SABF only baptizes repentant believers, and does not baptise infants.

What about individuals who were baptized as a believer by a mode other than immersion? Though SABF believes immersion to be the most fitting and depictive mode, we also understand and prioritize the objective of baptism to be identification with Christ and his church. Baptism is a significant act both for the individual being baptized and for the church body witnessing the event. Personally, it is an act of obedience, by humbling yourself in submission to Christ's authority and the ordinance he gave us.¹¹ Publicly, it is a testimony to those witnessing that you have entrusted your life and eternal salvation to Jesus Christ. The believer being baptized is saying that they will no longer prioritize their own desires, but instead seek to honor Christ first in their life. Individuals that have been baptized in such a manner are eligible for church membership at SABF; even if their baptism was done in mode such as sprinkling rather than immersion.¹²

Baptism is a way that we can demonstrate the work God has done in our heart, to the watching world. If you are interested in Baptism, or have questions, please speak with the Pastor in person, by phone 204-883-2681, or by email pastor.sabf@gmail.com.

⁸ Acts 2:37-38, 41 makes it clear that once we have repented and trusted Jesus, that we are to be baptized.

⁹ Acts 2:37-41 gives plain directive that baptism follows conversion. Other instances are Acts 8:12-13, 8:34-39, 10:44-48, 16:14-15, there are no scriptural instances that verbalize baptism prior to personal conversion.

¹⁰ Disciples are followers of Christ who seek to learn and implement Christ's teaching <https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-discipleship.html>

¹¹ The Great Commission Matt 28:19-20

¹² Carl Laney captured the leadership team's thoughts completely in regard to meaning vs mode. Carl Laney, Baptism Meaning and Mode; Feb 25, 2014. <https://www.westernseminary.edu/transformedblog/2014/02/25/baptisim-meaning-and-mode/>