

CONSTITUTION
AND
DOCTRINAL STATEMENT OF
THE
FIATT INDEPENDENT
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Fiatt, Illinois

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PREAMBLE:

We, the members of the Fiatt Christian Church (Independent), Fiatt, Illinois, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves:

ARTICLE I-THE NAME

This organization shall be known as the Fiatt Independent Christian Church, of Fiatt, Illinois. (The congregation voted on 7/28/02 to amend the constitution and the official name)

ARTICLE II-THE CHARACTER

Section A-Policy

Its government is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other church body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations and privileges of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among churches of like precious faith.

Section B-Doctrine

The belief and teaching of this church are summarized in the following statements:

1. The Holy Scriptures.

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God; the final authority for faith and life, inherent in the original writings, infallible and God-breathed. (11Tim. 3:16, 17; 1 Pet. 1:20, 21; Matt. 5:18; Jn. 16:12)

2. The God-Head.

We believe in one Triune God; eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; co-eternal in nature, power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Deut. 6:4; 11 Cor. 13:14; Matt.18:19)

3. The Person and Work of Christ.

a. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. (Jn. 1:1, 2; 1:14; Lk. 1:35)

b. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through His death on the Cross as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifices; and that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead. (1 Pet. 2:24; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:3-5)

c. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God, whereas our High Priest, He fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. (Acts 1:9, 10; Heb. 9:24; 7:25; Rom. 8:34; 1Jn. 2:1, 2)

4. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.

a. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the world of sin of righteousness; and of judgment; and that He is the Supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ, indwelling in and sealing them unto the Day of Redemption. (Jn. 16:8-11; 11Cor. 3:6; 1Cor. 12:12-14; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 1:13, 14)

b. We believe that He is the Divine Teacher who guides believers into all truth; and that it is the privilege and duty of all saved to be filled with the Spirit. (Jn. 16:13; 1Jn. 2:20, 27; Eph. 5:18)

5. The Total Depravity of Man.

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that Adam's sin caused the race to fall, we inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and that man is totally depraved, and of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Gen. 1:26, 27; Rom. 3:22, 23; 5:12; Eph. 2:1-3,12)

6. Salvation.

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins. (Eph. 2:8-10; Jn. 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18,19)

7. The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers.

a. We believe that all the redeemed, once saved are kept by the power of God, and thus are secure in Christ forever. (Jn. 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1; 8:38, 39; 1Cor. 1:4-8; 1Pet. 1:5)

b. We believe that it is the privilege of the believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Rom. 13:13, 14; Gal. 5:13; Tit. 2:11-15)

8. The Two Natures of the Believer.

We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for the victory of the new nature over the old nature in the flesh through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit; and that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural. (Rom. 6:13; 8:12, 13; Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:10; 1Pet. 1:14-16; 1Jn. 1:8-10)

9. Separation.

We believe that all saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded of God. (1Tim. 3:1-5; Rom. 12:1, 2; 14:13; 1Jn. 2:15-17; 1Jn. 9-11; 11Cor. 6:14-18)

10. Missions.

We believe that it is the obligation of the saved to witness by life and word to the truths of the Holy Scriptures and seek to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind. (Mk. 16:15; Acts 1:8; 11Cor. 5:19, 20).

11. The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts.

a. We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowal of all His gifts; and that evangelists, pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today. (1Cor. 12:4-11; 11Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:7-12)

b. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith in accord with His own will for the sick and afflicted. (Jn. 15:7; 1Jn. 5:14,15)

12. The Church.

a. We believe that the Church, which is the body and espoused Bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born again believers of the present age. (Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:25-27; 1Cor. 12:12-14; 11Cor. 11:12)

b. We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures. (Acts 14:27; 20:17; 20:28-30; 1Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-11)

13. The Ordinances of the Church.

a. We believe in the dispensational view of Bible interpretation but reject that extreme teaching known as "Hyper-Dispensationalism", such as that teaching which opposes either the Lord's Table or Water Baptism as a Scriptural means of testimony for the Church in this age. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:41, 42; 18:8; 1Cor. 11:2, 23-26)

b. We believe in baptism, not as a means of salvation, but as an outward expression and testimony of an inward work of grace; and that as such baptism of believers alone is Scriptural. We furthermore believe that immersion is the only Scriptural mode of baptism. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 10:47, 48; Rom. 6:4, 5)

c. We believe in the ordinance of the Lord's Table as a means of testimony and fellowship for the Church, not as a means of salvation, but as a token of remembrance of the death of Christ till he comes. (Lk. 22:19; 1Cor. 11:23-26)

14. The Personality of Satan.

We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the fall, that he is openly declared the enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6, 7; Isa. 14:12-17; Matt. 4: 2-11; 25:41; Rev. 20:10)

15. The Second Coming of Christ.

We believe in that "Blessed Hope", the personal, imminent, pretribulational, premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to earth with His saints to establish His millennial kingdom. (1Thess. 1:10; 5:9; 4:14-18; Zech. 14:4-11; Rev. 19:11-16; 3:10)

16. The Eternal State.

a. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. (Matt. 25:46; Jn. 5:28, 29; 11:25, 26; Rev. 20:5, 6, 12, 13)

b. 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, when spirit, soul and body are re-united to be glorified forever with the Lord. (Lk. 23:43; Rev. 20:4-6; 11 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 3:21; 1Thess. 4:16,17)

c. We believe that the souls of the unsaved remain after death in conscious misery until the second resurrection when the soul and body are re-united and they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment. (Lk. 16:19-26; Matt. 25:41-46; 11Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6, 7; Mk. 9:43-48; Rev. 20:11-15)

ARTICLE III-MEMBERSHIP

Section A-Conditions of Membership

The conditions for membership in this church are:

- a. A regenerated life. The candidate must have placed his faith in the death and resurrection of Christ as the only hope of his salvation. AND ...
- b. He must give testimony to his faith in believer's baptism. If the candidate has, as a saved person, been immersed elsewhere, he need not be baptized again.
- c. A pastor and his wife are automatically made members of the church when he is hired.

Section B-Reception of Members

The person desiring membership in this church should make his desire known either by presenting himself for membership at the regular invitation or by relating that desire to the pastor privately. Each candidate shall relate his Christian experience to the pastor or deacons. The pastor shall seek to counsel and ascertain the candidate's genuine conversion, and if the candidate is apparently genuinely converted, he shall be recommended to the approval of the church. If the candidate is a member of another church, the clerk shall write to that church, telling the candidate's desire to unite with this church. The "right hand of fellowship" shall be given publicly at the next regular meeting of the church.

Section C-Dismissal of Members

Membership may be severed by death, by letter, or by vote of the church.

- a. By Letter: A member in good standing may, upon application, receive a letter of commendation and dismissal from this church in order to unite with another church of approved character.
- b. By Discipline: When the church, in the exercise of its lawful authority and discipline withdraws fellowship from one proven to have fallen into gross sin, his membership immediately ceases. (Matt. 18:15-18; Gal. 6:1)

Section D-Duties of Members

It is the duty of all members to endeavor, by the grace of God, to live a life worthy of their high calling in Christ Jesus, that the testimony of the church be not hindered. With such an attitude of devotion to Christ he will attend all the services of the church, which are possible for him to attend; he will support the church with his tithes and offerings; he will serve in whatever capacity he can; and he will pray for the ministry of the church.

ARTICLE IV-GOVERNMENT

Section A-Government Defined

The government is vested in the body of believers of which the church is composed.

Section B-Business Meetings

The Annual Meeting shall be held in March each year, the last day of February being the end of the church year. At this time there shall be elected one deacon, one trustee, the

treasurer, and any committees. Annual reports shall be given by the pastor, the treasurers, and the Sunday School Superintendent.

Section C-Special Business Meetings

Special meetings of the church may be called by the pastor or on request of the official board, or on the written request of any five adult members specifying the objects thereto. In case of important business, such a notice shall be given at the worship services on the Lord's Day preceding the day fixed for such a meeting. No special meeting of importance shall be held on the same day on which the notice was given.

Section D-Election by Secret Ballot

The church members shall elect all officers by secret ballot, and a simple majority of all votes cast, shall be required to elect. All important matters of business shall be decided by secret ballot, and also any controversial matters.

Section E-The Right to Vote

The right to vote on church affairs is limited to members of the church in good standing, if teen 15 years of age or over. This right may be denied to those who have for the six months prior thereto failed to support the church financially or failed to participate regularly in all its scheduled meetings. Such members, unless hindered by real sickness, old age, absence due to being in the armed forces or in school away from home, etc. shall automatically be classed as inactive members without the right to vote.

Section F-Quorum

Even regularly scheduled business meetings shall not be held if there is not a quorum, in this case seven of the active members present to represent the mind of fellowship on matters of business.

Section G-Procedure

Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed at all business meetings.

Section H-Officers

a. Officers of the Church: The officers of the church shall be the Pastor, three or more Deacons, three Deaconesses, three or more Trustees, a clerk, the Treasurer, and the Sunday School Superintendent.

The Church Ministry Board will consist of the officers of the church and the chairmen of the boards of Christian Education, Missions, Women's Ministry, Youth Ministry, and Finance.

b. The Pastor: The qualifications and duties of the pastor are listed in 1Pet. 5:1-4 and 1Tim. 3:1-7. The pastor shall be chosen by a two thirds majority vote of the church membership present, He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees. The relationship between the pastor and the church may be severed at any time by mutual agreement or by a sixty-day notice given by either party. If during the term for which the pastor is elected, he should fall into gross sin, should preach anything which could properly be termed heresy, or should show definite inclinations towards modernism, a group of five resident voting

members may call for a vote of his dismissal, following the proceedings of a special business meeting.

c. The Deacons: The qualifications and duties of the deacons are listed in I Tim. 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7. One deacon shall be elected each year to serve a three-year term if they remain members in good standing during this time. They shall have charge with the pastor over the spiritual affairs of the church; watching over the needs of the poor on behalf of the church; assisting the pastor visiting the sick and indifferent; counseling the pastor in regard to church policy; helping with the ordinances of the church; giving advice in regard to membership; and considering all grievances before they are brought before the church.

d. The Trustees: One trustee shall be elected each year to serve a three-year term, if he remains a member in good standing during this time. They shall have charge over the maintenance of the church buildings and property. They shall represent the church in signing legal documents, in keeping the property insured and in general watching after the material affairs of the church.

e. The Clerk: The clerk, elected for one year, shall keep records of all business transacted and interesting items of history of the church, of all important correspondence, and such other records as may pertain to this office; and have in custody any other papers or documents as directed by the congregation or the official board.

f. The Deaconesses: The deaconesses, to be elected each year, shall assist in the ordinances as required, shall have charge with preparing the elements for the Lord's Supper.

g. The Treasurer: The treasurer of the church shall be elected for one year, shall hold and disburse all church funds, shall keep itemized accounts of their receipts and expenditures, and make an Annual Report of the same to the church; and shall open the books for inspection on request of the official board at any time.

h. The Sunday School Superintendent: The Superintendent shall be elected for one year and shall be charged with the supervision of the Sunday School. He/she shall engage the teachers, arrange the classes, select the studies and conduct the teachers and officers' meetings. He/she shall submit important changes to the board for their approval and give a report at each Annual Meeting as to the average Sunday School attendance for the year in comparison with other years.

Section I-The Pulpit Committee

The pulpit committee shall be composed of five members, a deacon, a trustee, two women, and an older teenager elected by the church. The function of the pulpit committee is to seek out the names of possible candidates, to send some of the committee to hear such possible candidates, to secure pulpit supplies during the time the church is without a pastor, and to recommend such candidates as they can approve for the vote of the church.

ARTICLE V-THE ORDINANCES

Section A-Baptism

Baptismal services will be held as often as is deemed necessary to baptize new converts and other Christians who may not have been immersed, but who wish to be.

Section B-The Lord's Supper

The Communion service will be held on the first Sunday morning of each month. Any believer in fellowship with the Lord shall be invited to partake of the elements in remembrance of Christ.

ARTICLE VI-OFFERINGS

This church is supported by love offerings. No one is obligated to pledge only as the Scripture enjoins. (See 11Cor. 9:6-8; 1Cor. 16:2; Gal. 3:8)

ARTICLE VII-LICENSING AND ORDINATION

Section A-Licensing

When one of the members of the church feels the call of God and has shown the gifts of the ministry, he shall be granted at his request and by two-thirds majority vote of members and voting, a license to preach the gospel of Christ, and to perform the work of the ministry as God gives opportunity. This license may be renewed annually at the regular annual meeting by two-thirds vote of members present and voting. If not renewed, it becomes invalid.

Section B-Ordination

If the church unanimously decides that one of its licensed preachers possesses the scriptural qualifications for full ordination, the deacons of the church shall call a council of ministers and brethren to examine the qualifications of the candidate, to which council the property and business of ordaining shall be wholly referred.

ARTICLE VIII-AMENDMENTS

Any of these by-laws, except the doctrinal statement, may be altered, amended, or repealed at any regular meeting, by two-thirds majority of the church members present and voting, provided however, two weeks' notice of proposed change has been given at any regular church service.

ARTICLE IX-DISSOLUTIONMENT

In the case of dissolution of The Fiatt Independent Christian Church, the remaining assets, after all obligations are honored, will be transferred to Faith Bible Camp at Yates City, IL and the camp must be exempt under the section 501(c)(3) at the time of our dissolution. If the camp is no longer active, the assets of The Fiatt Independent Christian Church will be transferred to another Christian organization or mission that does meet the exemption to be determined by the membership.

AMENDMENT 2020-1

Marriage, Gender and Sexuality

a. We believe in God the Creator's view of marriage, gender and sexuality. (Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:18-25)

b. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is rejection of the image of God within that person. (Genesis 1:26,27)

c. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning; the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Genesis 2:18-25; Matt. 19:4-6)

d. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1Cor. 6:18, 7:1-5; Heb. 13:4)

e. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. (Heb. 13:4)

Approved 10-18-20
Passed unanimously