

GARDEN STATE FELLOWSHIP OF REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES CONSTITUTION AND ARTICLES OF FAITH

Proposed revision to the CONSTITUTION (First Reading)
(**Bold Print are proposed changes**)

ARTICLE I. Name:

Garden State Fellowship of Regular Baptist Churches.

ARTICLE II. Purpose:

Section 1. To provide a Biblical fellowship of Regular Baptist Churches and to encourage and promote the establishing of Regular Baptist Churches at home and abroad. This fellowship shall seek to maintain the independence of such local churches.

Section 2. To regularly hold and conduct religious services and activities for spiritual training, Bible instruction, spiritual edification and Christian Fellowship of the people and Churches who comprise this Fellowship.

Section 3. To operate and maintain the property known as New Life Island in accordance with the above stated purposes.

ARTICLE III. Meetings:

There shall be at least three meetings of the fellowship a year; FALL, WINTER, and SPRING, with the spring meeting being the ANNUAL MEETING, at which time the election of the council shall take place. Any other meetings shall be called by the council. A quorum shall be at least one-third (1/3) of the voting messengers of the fellowshiping churches.

ARTICLE IV. **Cessation of Fellowship:**

Section 1. Any Church may withdraw from the fellowship at an time for any reason sufficient to itself.

Section 2. Any church which is believed to be no longer in agreement with the Constitution or the Statement of Faith of the Fellowship, and has not voluntarily withdrawn itself from the Fellowship shall be contacted by the Council of Six regarding its position and be given an opportunity for defense before the Council and /or the Fellowship. Upon satisfactory evidence of disagreement being presented by the Council of Six, and upon

its recommendation, this church may be removed for the roll by majority vote at any business meeting of the G.S.F.R.B.C.

Section 3. If a G.S.F.R.B.C. church ceases to be a Baptist church or removes “Baptist” from its name, the Council of Six shall contact the church. Upon satisfactory evidence presented by the Council of Six, and upon its recommendation, this church may be removed from the roll by majority vote at any business of the G.S.F.R.B.C.

Section 4. No one who is under the discipline of a fellowshiping church shall serve as an officer or an auxiliary to the Council of Six pr any committee until such time as the fellowshiping church reinstates him.

Section 5. Any church that remains inactive for three years will be contacted as to its intentions. If no positive result is discovered, and upon the Council’s recommendation, this church may be removed form the roll by majority vote at any business meeting of the G.S.F.R.B.C.

ARTICLE V. Fellowship and Voting Privileges. (*Renamed from Article IV*)

Section 1. Any Baptist Church in the State of New Jersey which does not cooperate with **the National Council of Churches**, or any of its auxiliaries, the American Baptist Convention, **or the Southern Baptist Convention**, but which does subscribe to the constitution and articles of faith herein contained, may, upon submitting to the secretary written notice to the effect that it desires fellowship, be received into the fellowship by a majority vote of the messengers present and voting at the next meeting. We encourage churches to seek our fellowship by signing our Doctrinal Statement.

Section 2. This fellowship would encourage auxiliary groups, such as Women’s, Men’s, Young People’s, or other worthy projects. Their existence must be approved by the vote of the fellowship upon the recommendation of the council.

Section 3. No limit shall be placed on the number privileged to attend the meeting from any fellowshiping church, but each church shall designate three of its members as messengers who shall be entitled to vote at meetings.

Section 4. Should the fellowship ever employ salaried servants they shall not be entitled to vote.

Section 5. All business sessions of the fellowship and of the council shall be conducted according to Roberts’ Rules of Order.

ARTICLE VI. Officers and Their Election (**Renamed from Article V**)

Section 1. The officers of the fellowship shall consist of a council of six men from as many fellowshiping churches, three of whom shall be elected for two years

annually. No officer shall exceed himself after serving two full terms.

Section 2. The council shall appoint annually a chairman who shall preside at their sessions and at the annual business meeting and it shall appoint a secretary and treasurer of the fellowship and such other officers and committees as may be deemed necessary.

Section 3. The council shall be elected in the following manner: Five weeks before the annual meeting the secretary shall send to each fellowshipping church a call for nominations, together with a list of fellowshipping churches and their pastors.

Each fellowshipping church shall, at least two weeks prior to the annual meeting, select and send to the secretary three nominations for the council.

The secretary shall tabulate all lists and the six highest names shall be considered the nominees.

The annual election shall take place at the call of the chairman who shall present the names of the six nominees, whereupon the voting messengers present shall each vote by ballot for three of the council. The three nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be considered elected.

In the event one of the members retires from the Council of Six before his term expires, his successor shall be chosen from among the six nominees presented at the previous annual meeting. The three who were not elected shall be considered alternates and shall be listed 1st, 2nd, and 3rd alternate according to the number of votes received. The appointment to fill a vacancy shall be made in the order listed: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

ARTICLE VII. Amendments: **(Renamed from Article VI)**

This constitution may be amended at any annual meeting of the fellowship by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the messengers present and voting, providing that such an amendment has been presented in writing at the previous meeting.

ARTICLE VIII Statement of Non-Inurement: **(Renamed from Article VII)**

No part of the net earnings of the Fellowship shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to its members, trustees, officers or other persons except that the Fellowship shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payment and distribution in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II.

ARTICLE IX Political Non-Involvement: **(Renamed from Article VIII)**

No substantial part of the activities of the Fellowship shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Fellowship shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or the distributing of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any political candidate for public office.

ARTICLE X Dissolution Clause: **(Renamed from ARTICLE IX)**

In the event of the dissolution of the Fellowship, its assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within meaning of section 501(c3) of the Internal Revenue Code or corresponding section of any future federal tax code to a fund, foundation or corporation organized and operated exclusively for the purposes specified in section 501 (c3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The assets of the Fellowship may be distributed to such organizations as the members, by majority vote, shall decide provided, however, that no distribution shall be made to any organization having a purpose or purposes in conflict with this fellowship.

NOTE: Fellowship in this Association does not involve a church in any relationship to any other organization.

ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. We believe in the Divine Inspiration and Authority of the Scriptures. By this is meant a miraculous guidance of the Holy Spirit in their original writing, extending to all parts of the Scriptures equally, applying even to the choice of words, so that the result is the very Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Moreover, it is our conviction that God has exercised such singular care and providence through the ages in preserving the written Word, that we now have reliable texts in the original languages; and that every essential particular is preserved in the trustworthy translations commonly accepted by the true churches today.
2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.
4. We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also that spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and, in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word, and deed.
5. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice. We believe that salvation is only in Christ and His shed blood, and that this salvation is a gift of God, receivable through faith alone, apart from any works on the part of the recipient (whose only works up till the time of his salvation have been “dead works” and “wicked works”.)
6. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God.
7. We believe it is incumbent on believers to maintain good works and provide things honest in the sight of all men; however, not in order to be saved, but because we are saved.
8. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension to Heaven, and in His present life there for us, as High Priest and Advocate.
9. We believe in the “Great Commission” of our Lord Jesus Christ (to give the gospel to every creature) in both its worldwide and local phases.
10. We believe that at any moment the rapture of the saved may occur, when “the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven” to catch up His people to meet Him “in the air.”

11. We believe in the personal, bodily, and premillennial return of the Lord Jesus Christ to set up His kingdom on the earth.
12. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust – the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.
13. We believe that Christ left two ordinances for His local church to practice, namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, symbolizing said believer's union by faith with Christ in His death and resurrection. And we believe that the Lord's Supper is a symbolic memorial feast by which we look back in faith to the cleansing blood of the cross; look up in love to our Heavenly Father as we feast upon the virtues of His Son, showing the Father what we have found in the Son, and we look forward in hope to our Lord's promised return.

THE STEPS TO FELLOWSHIP IN THE G.S.F.R.B.C.

1. Read carefully the Constitution and Articles of Faith at a regular business meeting of your church.
2. Vote church acceptance of the same.
3. Instruct the clerk of the church to send confirmation of this action to the Secretary of the Garden State Fellowship with a request for admission to the fellowship.
4. Additional copies of this statement may be secured from the Secretary.

Approval Date