

# BOOK OF FAITH AND ORDER

REVISED FEBRUARY 19, 2023



# MISSION STATEMENT



“Piqua Baptist Church exists to proclaim the excellences of Jesus Christ through gospel-centered preaching, Christ-exalting worship, Christ-forming discipleship, and Christlike service in Piqua Ohio, Miami County, and the world until Christ is all.”

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## **BYLAWS**

### **NAME**

The name of this corporation is Piqua Baptist Church. This corporation will be further referenced in these Bylaws as "Piqua Baptist Church" and the "Church".

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Piqua Baptist Church exists to proclaim the excellencies of Jesus Christ through gospel-centered preaching, Christ-exalting worship, Christ-forming discipleship, and Christlike service in Piqua Ohio, Miami County, and the world until Christ is all.

### **OFFICES**

The office for business transactions of Piqua Baptist Church is located at 1402 W High St in Piqua Ohio, 45356. The office is located in Miami County.

### **NONPROFIT STATUS**

Piqua Baptist Church is a nonprofit organization under the laws of the state of Ohio. Federal tax exemption is granted under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3).

### **PURPOSES**

The Church is organized and shall be operated exclusively for religious, charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Church's purposes also include the limited participation of the Church in any other activities, including taxable activities, but only to the extent the activities would be permitted by a tax-exempt organization. More particularly, but without limitation, the purposes of this Church are:

- (a) to promote the Christian religion by any appropriate form of expression, within any available medium, and in any location, through the Church's combined or separate formation, of a church, ministry, school, or charitable institution, without limitation;
- (b) to ordain, employ and discharge ordained ministers of the gospel, and others, to conduct and carry on divine services at the place of worship of the Church, and elsewhere;
- (c) to collect and disburse any and all necessary funds for the maintenance of said Church and the accomplishment of its purpose within the State of Ohio and elsewhere;
- (d) to make distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended; and
- (e) to promote, encourage, and foster any other similar religious, charitable and educational activities; to accept, hold, invest, reinvest and administer any gifts, legacies, bequests, devises, funds and property of any sort or nature, and to use, expend, or donate the income or principal thereof for, and to devote the same to, the foregoing purposes of the Church; and to do any and all lawful acts and things which may be necessary, useful, suitable, or proper for the furtherance of accomplishment of the purposes of this Church; provided, however, no act may be performed which would violate Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as it now exists or as it may hereafter be amended.

### **POWERS AND RESTRICTIONS**

Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws and in order to carry out the above-stated purposes, the Church shall have all those powers set forth in the Code, as it now exists or as it may hereafter be amended. Moreover, the Church shall have all implied powers necessary and proper to carry out its express powers. The powers of the Church to promote the purposes set out above are limited and restricted in the following manner:

The Church shall not pay dividends and no part of the net earnings of the Church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its organizers, officers or other private persons, except that the Church shall be authorized and empowered to make payments and distributions (including reasonable compensation for services rendered to or for the Church) in furtherance of its purposes as set forth in these Bylaws. No substantial part of the activities of the Church shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Church shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publication or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provisions of the Initial Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws, the Church shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by (i) a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or corresponding provisions of any subsequent federal tax laws, or (ii) a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or corresponding provisions of any subsequent federal tax laws. Upon the dissolution of this organization, assets shall be distributed to one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

In the event this Church is in any one year a "private foundation" as defined by Section 509(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or corresponding provisions of any subsequent federal tax laws, it shall be required to distribute its income for such taxable year at such time and in such manner as not to subject the foundation to taxation under Section 4942 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or corresponding provisions of any subsequent federal tax laws; and further shall be prohibited from: (a) any act of "self dealing" as defined in Section 4941(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or

corresponding provisions of any subsequent federal tax laws; (b) retaining any "excess business holdings" as defined by Section 4943(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or corresponding provisions of any subsequent federal tax laws; (c) making any investments in such manner as to subject the foundation to taxation under Section 4944 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or corresponding provisions of any subsequent federal tax laws; or (d) making taxable expenditures as defined in Section 4945(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or corresponding provisions of any subsequent federal tax laws. The Church shall not accept any gift or grant if the gift or grant contains major conditions which would restrict or violate any of the Church's religious, charitable, or educational purposes or if the gift or grant would require serving a private as opposed to a public interest.

## **AFFILIATIONS**

Piqua Baptist Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control. Recognizing, however, the benefits of cooperation with other churches in the fulfillment of its purposes, the Church may voluntarily affiliate with other churches and conventions by a passing vote of the Elders.

## **MEETINGS**

### **A. Public Worship**

Meetings for public worship shall be held at such times and places as shall be provided under the direction of the Elders. The Elders have the authority to call business meetings and special meetings as needed.

### **B. Membership Gatherings**

The Elders shall call a gathering of the members no less than 2 times per year for reception of new members, release of former

members, matters of mutual encouragement, decision making, church discipline, and any other reason deemed important by the Elders. Attendance at these gatherings is encouraged. Unless extenuating circumstances prevent it, members shall be notified no less than two weeks prior to a gathering.

## **GOVERNMENT**

A plurality of elders shall govern this church. A fuller description of this church governance is outlined in articles 3.2-3.6 of this document.

## **VALUES**

The values of this organization are essential for its mission. These values create the necessary context required to promote effective decision making. Thus, whenever the leadership constructs long range goals, short term objectives, and implementation strategies, it must do so in a manner consistent with these values. The values are listed below:

### **A. Biblical Authority**

Piqua Baptist Church commits itself to conforming to the full authority of the Scriptures which alone are sufficient for life and godliness. It seeks to submit itself to the proclamation of the whole counsel of God, to the regular exposition of biblical passages, and to the truths it proclaims.

### **B. Genuine Worship**

Piqua Baptist Church commits itself to exalting the matchless reputation of God through worship that is in accordance with biblical teaching. The essential elements of this worship are the reading of Scripture, preaching and teaching the Bible, reverent observance of the ordinances, participation in common prayer, and singing to God's glory.

### **C. Ethical Integrity**

Piqua Baptist Church commits itself to developing a ministry characterized by ethical integrity as evidenced through honest communication, mutual accountability, and responsible stewardship. Its membership desires genuine relationships that characterize all of its life.

### **D. Evangelistic Fervor**

Piqua Baptist Church commits itself to fulfilling the "Great Commission" by equipping its members for personal evangelism, supporting and praying for missions at home and abroad, and praying for spiritual revival.

### **E. Ministry Training**

Piqua Baptist Church commits itself to equipping its members for the work of Christian ministry through education in the Scriptures. This training is intended to enable members to serve and edify fellow believers through the employment of their spiritual gifts in discipling relationships.

### **F. Community Atmosphere**

Piqua Baptist Church commits itself to develop a community atmosphere characterized by mutual love and prayer for one another. The members encourage one another to bear each other's burdens, to serve and strengthen individuals and family units by demonstrating Christ's love through hospitality to all.

### **F. Cultural Engagement**

Piqua Baptist Church commits itself to shaping its members to a counter-cultural society formed by God's Word and Spirit for the common good. We seek to sacrificially serve our neighbors and enemies, working for the physical and spiritual good of those outside our church. We work for our neighbor's peace, security, and well-being, loving them in word and deed.

# STATEMENT OF FAITH

The statement of faith for Piqua Baptist Church is divided into two parts: the congregational affirmation of faith and the elder's affirmation of faith.

## THE CONGREGATIONAL AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The congregational affirmation of faith is considered our theological foundation. They are, we believe, the essence of the gospel and therefore minimum requirements for membership at Piqua Baptist Church.

### 1.1 The Scripture

We believe the Holy Scriptures contained in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God. They are the final authority of faith and life, the complete and divine revelation of God to Man. We believe it is verbally inspired, infallible, without error in the original manuscripts, totally sufficient and trustworthy. Scripture is the sole authority for the church. (Numbers 23:19; Psalm 12:6; Proverbs 30:5; Matthew 24:35; John 14:26, 17:17; Romans 1:18-32; 1Thessalonians 2:13; 2Timothy 3:16; 2Peter 1:21; Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2; 2 Peter 3:16; 1 Corinthians 14:37; 1 Corinthians 2:13)

### 1.2 God

We believe in one true and living God, eternal and self-existent, who is to be worshipped, adored, and obeyed. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. He has eternally existed in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who know, love, and glorify one another. All that God does He does for Himself and for His glory. God is supremely joyful in the fellowship of the Trinity, each Person beholding and expressing His eternal and unsurpassed delight in the all-satisfying perfections of

the triune God. (Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; 6:4; Ephesians 4:6; John 1:1, 3; 1Corinthians 8:6; 2Corinthians 3:17; Proverbs 8:27-30; 1 Timothy 1:11; Matthew 12:18 ; 25:23; John 15:11; John 17:26; 1Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17; 1Peter 4:11; Colossians 1:16)

### 1.3 God the Father

We believe and teach that God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and administrates all things according to His gracious purpose. As the holy, absolute, and omnipotent Ruler of the universe, He is sovereign in creation, history, and redemption. Within the Trinity, the Father directs the work and ministries of the Son and Spirit to accomplish that glory. (1Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; Matthew 23:9; Numbers 23:19; Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11; Ephesians 4:27-28; John 5:23-24; 6:38; 14:16-17)

### 1.4 God the Son

We believe and teach that the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, is the Son of God, equal with the Father in essence and subordinate to Him in purpose. All things were created by Him and for Him, and He is supreme over all things visible and invisible. He is the God-Man with two natures, truly God and truly Man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. He lived a sinless life, died on the cross as a substitute for sinners bearing the judgment of their sins, and was raised bodily from the dead as a testimony to the sufficiency of His sacrifice and as a guarantee of His people's future resurrection. Upon His resurrection and ascension, the Father seated Him at His right hand and put all things in subjection under Him. There He sits making intercession for His church. He will come again to judge mankind. (John 1:1,14; 10:30; Luke 1:35; Ephesians 1:20; Isaiah 7:14; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:3; 4:15; 1Peter 2:22; 1John 3:5)



## 1.5 God the Holy Spirit

We believe and teach that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is a divine Person, co-equal with God the Father and God the Son. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin and convinces of the gospel of Christ. He regenerates, sanctifies, and imparts spiritual gifts to believers. He provides assurance of salvation, and intercedes in prayer for them. (Acts 1:8; 2Thessalonians 2:13; 1Peter 1:2; 1Corinthians 12:4, 11; 1John 3:24; Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 8:27; Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 3:5-8; Titus 3:5-6)

## 1.6 Man

We believe man was created in the image and likeness of God; but that in Adam's sin the human race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God. Man is totally depraved and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. Although God created humans morally upright, our first parents lost their righteousness and forfeited their standing with God when they sinned against Him. Since Adam represented all mankind, his sin brought the imputation of guilt upon all of his offspring, and consequently his offspring are born in sin and corrupted in all faculties of his whole being. Humans are slaves to iniquity, unable to delight in God, and unable to overcome their own preference for self-rule. (Genesis 1:27; 2:15-17; 3:1-24; 6:5-7; Psalm 14:1-3; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Romans 3:9-20; 5:12-21; 8:7-8; Ephesians 2:3; Colossians 1:21; 1Corinthians 2:14; Titus 1:15-16))

## 1.7 Salvation

We believe salvation is the gift of God brought to man, received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on the cross in the place of sinners for the forgiveness of their sins. It is man's responsibility to repent of his sin and accept the free offer of God's grace through Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:8; 2Corinthians 9:15; Romans 8:32; 2Corinthians 5:21; 1Peter 2:24)

## 1.8 The Church

The universal church of Jesus Christ, consisting of all believers everywhere, finds its expression in the local church. The local church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is solely made up of born-again persons, who organize under godly leadership, gather regularly for preaching, worship and prayer, observe the biblical ordinances of baptism and communion, and hold one another accountable to obedience to the faith through church discipline. Members of the local church are empowered by the Holy Spirit to fulfill the Great Commission. The local church is autonomous, free of any external authority or control. (Matthew 28:19; John 17:6-25; Romans 12:6-8; 1Corinthians 5:7-13; 11:23-26; 12:4-7; 14:26; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:11-12; 6:18; 2Timothy 4:1-2; Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 3:15-16; 2Thessalonians 3:14-15; James 5:19-20)

## 1.9 Ordinances of the Church

The Lord gave two perpetual ordinances to His church: baptism and communion. The ordinances are outward, visible signs of an inner, spiritual grace.

Baptism is the church's act of affirming a believer's union with Christ by immersing them in water, and a believer's public act of committing themselves to Christ and His people, thereby marking them off from the world. Faith in Jesus Christ and repentance for sin are prerequisites for Baptism. It signifies believers' fellowship with Christ in his death and resurrection and their being engrafted into Christ; it portrays to them the remission of their sins because of Christ's sacrifice on their behalf. Believers are to be immersed in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Communion, or the Lord's Supper, is a church's act of communing with Christ and each other, commemorating Christ's death by partaking in bread and wine, and a believers act of receiving Christ's benefits and renewing his commitment to Christ and His people, thereby making the church one body and marking it off

from the world. All who desire to receive the Lord's Supper must examine themselves, so that they express proper reverence for the Lord and his sacrament, lest they sin against his body and blood and bring judgment upon themselves. The Supper is the gift of Christ for his own people, so unbelievers, and Christians who live with the knowledge of unconfessed sin must refrain from participating. (Matthew 26:17-30; 28:18-20; 3:16-17; Acts 2:14-41; 8:12-40; 16:25-40; 18:7-8; Romans 6:1-4; 2Corinthians 10:14-17; 11:17-34)

### **1.10 Sanctification**

Having been made new and set free from the bondage to sin, God enables His elect to progressively die to all worldly and sinful pleasures and live to righteousness in the service of Christ. In the lives of the saints, the Holy Spirit produces a love of Christ and works to progressively conform each believer into the image of Christ. Through faith, God's divine power enables a transformation of a soul's deepest desires, taking on the likeness of Christ, creating a hatred of sin, and a desire for God-honoring holiness. Sanctification is throughout the whole person, yet incomplete in this life. There remains some remnants of corruption in every part, which causes a continual and irreconcilable war—the flesh warring against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. The believer lives in anticipation of God's finalization of the sanctification process, that is, the glorification of his body, which will take place either at the believer's death or when Christ comes for His own. (John 17:3-19; Acts 20:32; Romans 6:5-14; 1Corinthians 15:53; Galatians 5:22-24; Ephesians 3:14-19; Colossians 1:9-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; Hebrews 12:14)

### **1.11 Empowered By the Spirit**

Believers are filled with the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion. (Baptism in/with the Holy Spirit is a metaphor that describes our experience of being immersed into the Holy Spirit at conversion.) Subsequent to conversion, God is pleased to move

upon His people empowering them for joyful and fruitful service of the gospel, power to overcome sin, and boldness for Christian witness. The evidence of the Spirit's indwelling presence is a believer's testimony to God's glory in word and deed. (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 2:1-11; 10:44-48; 19:1-7; 1Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:13; 5:18-21)

### **1.12 Good Works**

The desire and ability to do good works does not arise from human nature but from impartation of saving grace. Good works are the fruits and evidences of genuine, living faith, but are of no account toward justification. On the contrary, justification is the root of good works, for without it men would do nothing for the love of God, but only self-love or fear of damnation. By means of good works believers demonstrate their gratitude, strengthen their assurance of salvation, and improve their Christian witness. They glorify God, who has made them new creatures in Christ. Although the works of believers are never perfect, God accepts them and rewards them because they are performed in faith and express love for him. (Psalm 116:12-14; Matthew 5:13-16; John 15:1-8; Ephesians 2:8-10; Philippians 2:12-13; Hebrews 6:11-12; James 2:14-26; Matthew 25:14-30; 25:31-46)

### **1.13 Second Advent of Christ**

Jesus Christ will return to earth in the same manner He ascended into Heaven. At His return, Christians on earth will not die but will be changed into the likeness of their Savior. The dead in Christ will arise bodily from their graves to receive a blessed immortality, as their souls reunite with their bodies to enjoy the consumption of salvation with Christ for eternity. God has kept the time of Christ's return secret, and his Word forbids speculation about it.

Believers are to watch and ever be prepared to meet their returning Savior, no matter how soon or how distant his advent will be. (Job 19:25-27; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:1-4; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 12:35-40; Acts 1:11; 1Corinthians 15:35-56; 1Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2Timothy 4:1-8; 1Peter 1:3-9; Revelation 22:12-21)

### **1.14 Eternal State**

After physical death human bodies return to dust, but spirits return to God who gave them. The souls of the redeemed are perfected in holiness and received into paradise, where they dwell with Christ and await the resurrection of their bodies. The souls of lost sinners are confined to hell, where they endure just punishment while they await final judgment at the return of Christ to earth. The Scripture acknowledges only these two places for souls separated from their bodies. (Genesis 3:19; Luke 23:43; 2Corinthians 5:1-8; 15:42-43; Job 19:26-27; Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:10-15; Philippians 1:23; Luke 16:23-24)

### **1.15 Final Judgment**

God has appointed a day in which he will judge humanity in righteousness by Jesus Christ, to whom the Father has given all authority to judge. At that time apostate angels and all human beings will appear before the Lord to account for their thoughts, words, and deeds, there to receive in accordance with what they have done while on earth, whether good or evil. God's purpose in judgment is to display the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of his elect, and to show the glory of his justice in the damnation of the lost. (Acts 17:31; 24:15; Revelation 20:13; John 5:22-27; 1Corinthians 6:3; Jude 6; 2Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36; Romans 9:22-23; 14:10-12; 2Timothy 4:8; Matthew 25:32-46)

### **1.16 Human Sexuality**

Marriage involves the covenant union of one man and one woman in permanent sacred fidelity. Sexual intimacy is only properly exercised and pursued within the confines of marital relationship. Sexual immorality, defined as any sexual activity outside of the boundaries of the sacred marital relationship between one man and one woman, is clearly and expressly prohibited by the Lord. All forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or even lustful intent toward such, is sinful. Since the body is a creation of God, gender is biologically determined and associated gender norms are to be observed appropriate to biblical standards. Human identity, as male and female persons, is given by God and is not determined by sexual preferences. Human wholeness and flourishing comes through union with Christ and is not dependent upon sexual fulfillment. (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 5:27-28; 15:19; 19:1-9; Mark 10:1-12; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:4)

### **1.17 Family Relationships**

Men and women are created by God equal in essence, dignity, and value. Men and women serve complimentary roles and responsibilities in the home and in the church. God ordains that they assume distinctive roles which reflect the loving relationship between Christ and the church, the husband exercising headship in a way that displays the caring, sacrificial love of Christ, and the wife submitting to her husband in a way that models the love of the church for her Lord. In the ministry of the church, both men and women are encouraged to serve in the ministry of the people of God. The distinctive role of Elder/Pastor is given to qualified men. Children are a heritage of the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural correction. (Genesis 1:27-30; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1Timothy 2:11-12; 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1Peter 3:1-7; Psalm 127:3; Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

## 1.18 Missions

The commission given by the Lord Jesus to make disciples of all nations is binding on every member of His Church to the end of the age. The ultimate aim of global missions is that God would create, by His Word, worshippers from every tribe and language and people and nation who glorify His name through faith and obedience. Elders of the local church will actively seek to equip and encourage her members to engage in local and global mission initiatives and affirm those discerning God's call to cross-cultural missions work. The church shall support with finances, personnel and prayer, missionaries from other organizations who adhere to our Statement of Faith. (Matthew 28:18-20; John 4:23; Romans 1:5; 15:8-11; Psalm 67:1-5; Revelation 5:9)

## THE ELDERS AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The following expands our position on our theological foundations. We believe them to be important and edifying to the body of Christ, but recognize differing convictions. For those called to teach and preach in our church, we require full agreement on these matters.

### 2.1 The Authority of Scripture

Scripture is self-authenticating. Its authority does not depend on the testimony of human beings or of any church, but entirely on God Himself. God's intentions, revealed in the Bible, are the supreme and final authority in testing all claims about what is true and what is right. In matters not addressed by the Bible, what is true and right is assessed by criteria consistent with the teachings of Scripture. (1Thessalonians 2:13; 1John 5:9-12; 2Peter 2:20-21)

### 2.2 The Sufficiency of Scripture

Through Creation and man's conscience God has revealed His power and divine nature to all, such that no man is without excuse. Yet, these general forms of revelation are not sufficient to convey the knowledge of God and his will that is necessary for salvation. Because of His mercy and grace, God has revealed Himself and His will and all that is necessary for salvation in the sixty-six books of the Bible. The special revelation of God appears in its entirety in the Scripture, which contains all things necessary for God's glory, the salvation of sinners, and the prescriptions for life and godliness. These matters are either expressly declared in Scripture or may be deduced from Scripture. Nothing may be added, whether by new revelations or by traditions of men. (Romans 1:18-23; 2Timothy 3:12-17; Galatians 1:6-9; 1Corinthians 2:6-16; Revelation 22:18-21)

### 2.3 The Sufficiency of God

God is self-sufficient and therefore does not need anything from His creatures. He does not derive glory from them, but is infinitely glorious of His own accord. God is the source of all being, all good, the origin, and end of all things. (Job 22:2-3; Psalm 95:1-7; 119:65-68; 145:17-20; Isaiah 40:10-31; Daniel 4:34-35; Acts 7:2-50; Romans 11:33-36; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 4:12-13; ; James 1:17; Revelation 5:11-14)

### 2.4 The Sovereignty of God

God is sovereign over all things and there is nothing outside His control. In order to display the full extent of His glory, He freely and unalterably decreed from eternity all that should happen, according to His own wise and holy will. God upholds and governs all things, from the movement of galaxies to sub-atomic particles, even the hearts and wills of man. He does so in such a way that does not infringe upon the wills of His creatures, nor make Him the author of evil. He is not jointly responsible with humans for sin, and thus condemns all justly. (Numbers 23:19; Isaiah 46:9-10; Job 9:7; Proverbs 16:9, 33; 20:24; John 19:8-11; Acts

4:27-28; 27:1-44; Romans 9:14-29; Ephesians 1:3-14; Hebrews 6:16-17; James 1:13-15; Revelation 17:16-17)

## **2.5 The Eternal Decree of God**

By His decree, and for the demonstration of His glorious grace, God has predestined His elect to eternal life through Jesus Christ. His election to salvation is out of His good pleasure, an unconditional act of free grace, given through His Son Jesus Christ before the world began. Others, whom He has left to perish in their sins, show the terrors of His justice. (Matthew 25:34; Romans 9:22-24; 11:5-8; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2Thessalonians 2:13-15; 1Timothy 5:21; 2 Timothy 1:9; Jude 3-4)

## **2.6 God's Effectual Calling**

God convinces His elect of their spiritual misery and lost condition and persuades them to embrace Christ. Until sinners receive spiritual life they are dead in trespasses and sins, hostile to God, morally unable to submit to God, and incapable of discerning the truth of the Scripture. The power to respond to God's call comes from God alone and is not from anything foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature. For the elect, the Spirit overcomes man's resistance to the gospel, wakens the dead, frees them from their bondage to sin, removes blindness, and manifests Christ in such a compelling way that He is irresistibly beautiful. Through this work of regeneration, the Spirit enables men to choose God, repent of sin, and perform what is truly good and pleasing to God. (Ezekiel 36:26-27; Acts 26:15-18; John 5:25; Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:15-23; 2:1-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15; 2Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 2:9-10)

## **2.7 Justification**

In a free act of glorious grace, God justifies the elect by faith alone, apart from any merit in them. God imputes Christ's own righteousness to them, declaring them righteous and acceptable in his

presence. The basis for this declaration is the merits of Christ alone. Through the instrument of God-wrought faith, believers are united to Christ, whose satisfaction for sin and righteousness is the grounds for acceptance with God. (Titus 3:5-7; Romans 3:23-28; 4:4-5; 5:1; Ephesians 1:19-20; 2:5,8; Galatians 2:16; 3:24; Philippians 3:8-9; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

## **2.8 Eternal Security**

All who are justified will persevere in faith and never surrender to the enemy of their souls. This is the immutable decree of God the Father in election, obtained by the blood of Christ and secured by His resurrection, and guaranteed by God's Holy Spirit. Divine providence watches over their welfare and the power of God keeps them through faith unto salvation. The assurance of salvation empowers, encourages, and inspires vigilance against the forces arrayed against it. When Christians sin, they incur God's displeasure, grieve his Holy Spirit, diminish their comforts, experience accusations of conscience, and impair their witness. Yet, because they are saints, they will renew their repentance and through faith persevere in Christ to the end of their lives. (Psalm 37:23-29; John 8:31-32; 10:25-30; Hebrews 3:14; 1 John 2:18-19; Romans 5:9-11; 8:28-30; 9:10-16; Hebrews 6:13-20; 1 John 3:9-10; John 10:27-30; Philippians 1:6 ; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 1 Corinthians 15:10; 1John 1:5-10; Ephesians 4:29-32)

## **2.9 Assurance of Salvation**

Those who are truly believers in Jesus Christ, who love Him sincerely, endeavoring to treasure Him above all, may have assurance of His salvation in this life. This certainty is not based upon a subjective impression, but upon the promises of God's grace in Christ and the evidences of that grace in their life. It is the duty of all who claim saving faith to be diligent in making their calling and election sure by attending to God's various means of

grace and by consistently examining themselves in the light of God's truth revealed in His word. This will lead God's elect to an increase of love of God, thankfulness for His mercy, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 5:1-5; 6:1-2; 8:15-17; 14:16-18 Hebrews 6:11-20; Titus 2:11-14; 2Peter 1:3-11; 1John 3:1-3)

## **2.10 Continuation of the Gifts of the Spirit**

The ministry of the Spirit continues to be as broad, tangible, and powerful among believers today as it was in the early church. The full range of spiritual gifts remain at work in the church and are given for the good of the church and its witness to the world. The Spirit sovereignly bestows gifts on every believer. Spiritual gifts are those abilities and expressions of God's power given by his grace for the glory of Christ and the building up of the church. The gifts are to be exercised in love, humility, decency and order, and always in submission to the authority of Scripture as the final revelation of God. The variety of these gifts—some more natural and some more remarkable—reflects the diversity of the members of Christ's body and demonstrates our need for one another. (John 16:4-15; Ephesians 4:7-16; 5:25-27; 1Corinthians 12:4-11, 21-30; 13:1-3; 14:1-33; Romans 12:6-8; 1Peter 4:10-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21)

## **2.11 Angels & Satan**

Angels are mighty spiritual beings that were created by God. They serve Him in various ways and are specially appointed to watch over and minister to God's people. We believe that Satan is the Adversary, the author of sin and instrumental in the Fall of Man; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Psalm 148:2,5; 103:20; Luke 1:11-19; Acts 5:19-20; 8:26; 10:3-8; 27:23-24; Daniel 6:22; Genesis 3:14; 2Corinthians 11:3; John 8:44; 2Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; Matthew 8:29; 1Corinthians 15:24-26; Revelation 20:10)

## **2.12 Sanctification**

God has ordained and created all authority consisting of three basic institutions: (1) the home, (2) the church, and (3) the state. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. Believers are to pray for, honor, and obey civil authorities except where to do so would be to violate plain commands and principles of the Word of God. (Romans 13:1-7; 1Peter 2:13-17; Matthew 22:21)

## BOOK OF ORDER

The Book of Order is our theological principles applied through the membership and leadership of the church. The Book of Order guides the careful application of our convictions into the ministry of the gospel through our membership. They are our methodological convictions. We require full adherence to these methodologies for ministry partnership.

### 3.1 Christ is the Head of the Church

Christ alone is the Head of his body, the church. As the Chief Shepherd, He leads through qualified undershepherds, elders. This local assembly may seek the assistance and counsel of other churches when special concerns arise; however, it is neither accountable to nor under the direct supervision of, any other ecclesiastical body. (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18; II Timothy 3:12-17; 1Peter 5:1-4; II Peter 1:19-21; Acts 15:1-35)

### 3.2 Church Officers

The Biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities

### 3.3 Elders

This church shall be led by Christ through a plurality of Elders. Elders (known in Scripture as pastors, shepherds, overseers) are men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. They are entrusted by Christ to shepherd and oversee the flock of God. They shall exercise authoritative and decisive leadership, but they must do so as servant-leaders and faithful stewards of the community, not as lords and dictators. This is accomplished directly and indirectly through:

- the ministry of the Word, in preaching and teaching;

- establishing, protecting, and maintaining the doctrinal purity of the church;
- setting an example of reproof, rebuking, exhorting, admonishing, and encouraging members of the church;
- regularly praying for the members of the church;
- guarding against false teachers and false teaching;
- humbly and lovingly lead the church to exercise discipline when necessary for the glory of God and the good of the church;
- examining and recommending potential new members to the congregation;
- ensuring the resources of the church are stewarded wisely for the glory of Christ and prudent application of the church's mission, presenting the church with an annual budget;
- hiring, supervising, and dismissing church staff;
- conducting weekly worship services, ensuring the proper administration of the ordinances;
- ensuring the ministries of the church align with the vision and mission of the church;
- mobilizing the church for world missions;
- identifying, equipping, and appointing additional qualified elders to shepherd the church.

This church shall seek to be served by a majority of bi-vocational elders. The responsibilities of this office are numerous and the church desires at least one elder to devote his full-time to pastoral ministry. Elders are appointed by elders and affirmed by the congregation. Elders shall be equal in authority, but may be specialized in function.

### 3.4 Unity of the Elders

In making decisions for the church, elders must keep with the New Testament spirit of unity. When the elders cannot arrive at unity on a matter, further prayer and consideration of the issue must be

sought. When the elders cannot arrive at unanimity, a majority vote will decide.

### **3.5 Elder's Sabbatical**

Elders are appointed for life. However, bi-vocational elders should serve no more than six years before a sabbatical is encouraged. The length of the sabbatical shall be determined by the elders. This practice is designed to give these men time to rest for soul care and balance in their life as ministers.

### **3.6 Elder's Dismissal**

Elders are members of the flock of God. As such, they are themselves under the oversight of their fellow elders. An elder can become disqualified from pastoral ministry arising from a disqualifying sin by the factual knowledge of two or three witnesses. After the matter has been verified, the elders shall disclose these facts to the church, remove the erring elder from office, and call for his repentance. When there is repentance, the congregation should seek to reconcile him to the congregation. The process of reinstatement will be determined by the elders in relation to the circumstances, his qualification, and desire to serve again. Additionally, an elder may resign from office for reasons other than disqualification.

### **3.7 Deacons**

The church shall recognize qualified men and women whom God has gifted to serve as deacons. Deacons are men and women who satisfy the qualifications for the office of deacon set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13, who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. Deacons assist the eldership by assuming responsibility for those tasks which may interfere with the elder's ministry of the Word and prayer, and any task which promotes the unity of the church. Deacons and deaconesses shall care for the physical needs of members, oversee the benevolence fund, and attend to the accommodations for

public worship. Deacons will assist the elders in caring for the administrative needs of the church's various ministries.

### **3.8 Deacon's Nomination & Appointment**

Deacons and deaconesses may be nominated by any member of the church. Having their qualifications approved by the elders, they will be appointed by the congregation to serve three year terms.

### **3.9 Deaconal Specializations**

In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, the number of deacons and specialized functions of deacons will be determined by the elders and will change with the size and scope of the needs of the church. This church shall recognize deacons of Finance, Giving, Facility, and Care.

The Care Deacons shall assemble and elect from their own number, a chairman, and a secretary. No person shall be elected chairman of the Care Deacon Board without serving one year prior to being elected.

### **3.10 Ministry Teams & Leaders**

This church shall recognize Ministry Teams to serve the needs of the church and further the mission and vision of the church. Ministry Teams will be determined by the Elders and will change with the size and scope of the needs of the church. The church shall recognize qualified men and women to serve as Ministry Leaders to facilitate, direct, and oversee their respective Ministry Team. Ministry Leaders are appointed by the Elders and are accountable to the oversight of the Elders. Only members of Piqua Baptist Church may serve on Ministry Teams.

### **3.11 Membership**

Piqua Baptist Church is an elder-led congregational church, consisting of covenant members. The membership of this church shall consist of believers in Jesus Christ who give evidence of



regeneration by living consistent with their profession, who have been baptized by immersion following conversion, and who hold to the views of faith, doctrine and practice of this church. Each member must endeavor by God's grace to keep the commitments expressed in the Membership Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership.

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall complete the membership classes and be recommended by the elders for admission. Applicants will be affirmed by the members at any regular or special members gathering.

### **3.12 Duties of Members**

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Membership Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church through prayer and generous support with their time, talents, and material resources as the Lord enables. Member responsibilities include: attendance at member's gatherings, reception of new members and releasing of existing members, choosing of deacons and deaconesses, affirming the annual budget, and voting on any matter deemed necessary by the elders.

### **3.13 Members Voting**

The congregation shall vote on matters of: reception of new members; release of existing members; church discipline; any loan that results in cumulative indebtedness exceeding twenty percent of the current, annual operating budget; merger or dissolution of the Church; any proposed change to the Book of Faith and Order that would reduce or revoke a right granted to the Members in the current Book; other actions deemed major and extraordinary by the elders.

All matters meeting or exceeding a two-thirds vote will pass. Unless urgency demands otherwise, the time, place and nature of upcoming votes will be communicated to the Church three times at least fourteen days in advance. Members shall have an opportunity to submit questions, comments and concerns, which will be considered by the elders on a case-by-case basis. Voting shall take place at any regular or special gathering of the members. Only members, at least eighteen years of age, who are physically present shall be permitted to vote. Voting results shall be communicated to the members as soon as they are counted and verified.

### **3.13 Church Discipline**

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her covenant commitments or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and the example of scripture.

Church discipline is positive, corrective and restorative, to be done in the spirit of Christ's love.

God gives every believer grace to be self-disciplined, the Holy Spirit convicting of sin through His Word and granting personal repentance. Due to the blinding and entangling nature of sin, we occasionally need help from brothers and sisters.

If a significant, unrepentant sin becomes outward and thus brings dishonor upon the name of Christ, any offended member may lovingly, graciously, and privately confront the offending member with Christlike gentleness and directness. If private admonition fails, Jesus commands the offended member to involve one or two others, preferably an elder or two. If these efforts fail to bring the offending member to repentance, and if the issue is too serious to

overlook, the church must be involved. At any regular or special Member's Gathering, the elders will provide only enough information as they deem necessary to equip the church to call the offending member to repentance. If the admonition of the whole church fails to bring the offending member to repentance, they will be placed under church discipline by a two-thirds vote of the membership. The church will no longer treat the disciplined member as a fellow Christian. Instead of having casual, relaxed fellowship with the member, they will look for opportunities to lovingly bring the gospel to the disciplined member, remind him or her of God's holiness and mercy, and call him or her to repent and put his or her faith in Christ.

A withdrawal from the church while discipline is pending will not stop the process of discipline until the church has fulfilled its God-given responsibilities to encourage repentance and restoration, and to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion.

If an offense is likely to harm others or lead them into sin, or cause division, the elders may accelerate the disciplinary process and move to protect the church.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, removal from office, and excommunication. The purpose of such discipline should be: for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual being disciplined; for the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them; for the purity of the church as a whole; for the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians; for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character. Upon repentance, restoration to full-communicant membership will be recommended by the elders to the congregation and will be approved by a two-thirds vote of the membership at any regular or special Member's Gathering.

### **3.14 Release From Membership**

The church shall release a person from membership following his or her death, and will do so after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (following the process of church discipline above).