

CHAIN OF LAKES COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
CONSTITUTION

- I. Name. The name of this organization shall be Chain of Lakes Community Bible Church (hereinafter called the "church"). It is organized in Lake County, Illinois, as a religious corporation under the laws of the State of Illinois.
- II. Purpose. The corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, religious and educational purposes, within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the corporation shall carry out the functions of a church, including the conduct of regular religious worship. The church exists to glorify God, advance his kingdom and enjoy him forever, by exalting God in worship and prayer, engaging in a caring church community, equipping the saints through preaching, teaching, training and mentoring, and evangelizing through word and deed.

No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers or other private persons, except that the corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth above. No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law) or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law.)

- III. Abbreviated Statement of Faith. We believe in:

A. God

The only true God, the almighty Creator of all things,
existing eternally in three persons –
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – full of love and glory.

B. The Bible

The unique divine inspiration,
entire trustworthiness
and authority of the Bible.

C. The Human Race

The value and dignity of all people:
created in God's image to live in love and holiness,
but alienated from God and each other because of our sin and guilt,
and justly subject to God's wrath.

D. The Lord Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, fully human and fully divine,
who lived as a perfect example,
who assumed the judgment due sinners by dying in our place,
and who was bodily raised from the dead and ascended as Savior and Lord.

E. The Way of Salvation

Justification by God's grace to all who repent
and put their faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

F. The Holy Spirit and Our Calling

The indwelling presence and transforming power of the Holy Spirit,
who gives to all believers a new life and a new calling to obedient service.

G. The Church

The unity of all believers in Jesus Christ,
manifest in worshipping and witnessing churches
making disciples throughout the world.

H. Future Things

The victorious reign and future personal return of Jesus Christ,
who will judge all people with justice and mercy,
giving over the unrepentant to eternal condemnation
but receiving the redeemed into eternal life.

To God be the glory forever.

IV. Expanded Statement of Faith

A. God¹

There is one God, the creator, preserver, and governor of all things. This God is spirit. His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth are infinite, eternal, and unchangeable.

God exists eternally in three persons, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are of one substance, sharing the same attributes and glory, and worthy of the same worship, confidence, and obedience.

B. The Bible²

Our knowledge of God's existence and power comes in part from the existence of the created world (this is what is called "natural revelation"), but it is the Bible, the Word of God, that perfectly reveals the nature, works and purposes of God. The Holy Scriptures contain a divine revelation of God's will as regards to our salvation and Christian life. It is the divine and only authority, completely sufficient for all Christian life and faith.

The Bible was uniquely inspired of God through the agency of the Holy Spirit, who superintended those who originally wrote our Bible in such a way that they wrote down God's very word so that it is completely trustworthy, without error and authoritative in all it teaches.

The Holy Spirit also opens our eyes to convince and teach us of the Bible's truth.

C. The Human Race³

Human beings, including unborn children, were created in the image and likeness of God. They therefore have a value and dignity that mere humanism could never give them. We were created to glorify God and enjoy him forever and to be stewards over God's world. But Adam fell from his high position and sinlessness. This estranged him -- and all humanity that followed him -- from the Holy God. Without God's grace in Christ the human race is, therefore, in a state of sin and misery, under God's righteous wrath, guilty, alienated from God and justly condemned to eternal separation from God in

¹ Gen. 1:1, 26-27; Ex. 3:13-15; 20:1-7; 34:6-7; Dt. 6:4; Job 38:1-11; Ps. 24:1; Isa. 6:3; Mt. 6:9; 28:19; Jn. 4:24; Acts 17:24-28; I Pet. 1:2; Rev. 4:8,11.

² Ex. 20:1; Deut. 18:18; Jer. 30:1-2; Ex. 31:18; 34:27; Ps. 119; Mt. 4:4; Jn. 10:35; 14:26; 15:26; Rom. 3:1-2; I Cor. 2:13; I Thess. 2:13; II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:20-21.

³ Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7, 16-17; 3:1-19; 6:5; Ps. 8:3-6; 14:2-3; 51:5; 53:2-3; Is. 54:6; Mt. 15:19; Rom. 2:14-15; 3:9-18, 23; 5:12, 18, 19; 6:23; I Cor. 10:31; Rev. 21:8.

hell. We are unable to save ourselves, live holy lives or relate well to one another in human society.

D. The Lord Jesus Christ⁴

The Son of God became incarnate (that is, He took on a human body). He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. In Christ, God united His complete divine nature with a complete human nature (like ours but without sin) in one person. He is fully divine and fully human; both natures, human and divine, were whole, perfect, indivisible, inseparable and yet distinct.

To accomplish our salvation, Jesus lived a sinless life, was a perfect example, and died on a cross, assuming the judgment rightly due sinners, shedding His blood for the forgiveness of sins. This is often called the “substitutionary atonement.” On the third day, He rose from the dead in the body which had been laid in the tomb, victorious over Satan. He then ascended to the Father where, in His exalted position, He now intercedes for us.

E. The Way of Salvation⁵

1. Redemption. Salvation from sin and spiritual death were accomplished by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but also, through His obedience as a perfect man to God, He reversed the effects of Adam’s disobedience. Therefore our present life on earth is also part of God’s redemptive plan.
2. Justification. The Bible describes some aspects of our salvation in “forensic” (that is, legal, or courtroom) terms. God not only forgives believers, but because Christ took our place under the judgment of God, though sinless Himself, God declares us without guilt, or “justified.” This is by God’s grace alone and received by faith alone.
3. Regeneration. Salvation is imparted by the Holy Spirit. He convinces us of our sin, gives us spiritual birth (the biblical term “born again” also carries the sense of being “born from above”), enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renews our wills. He makes us able to receive Christ as He is offered to us in the gospel.
4. Repentance and Faith. Salvation is received when we repent of our sin, believe in Christ and trust in the merits of His death. Upon trusting in Him as our Lord and Savior, we pass out of death and into everlasting life.

⁴ Ps. 2:6-7; Is. 52:13-53:12; Mt. 1:18-25; 11:27; Mk. 14:61-62; 10:45; Lk. 1:31-33; 2:10-11; Jn. 1:1-3, 14; 3:16; 5:22-23; 8:58; 10:30; 14:8-9; 20:30-31; Acts 2:21-35; Rom. 1:3-4; 5:8; I Cor. 15:3-8; II Cor. 5:18-21; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-20; I Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 4:15; I Pet. 2:21-24; Rev. 22:13.

⁵ Ps. 32:1-2; Mk. 10:45; Jn. 1:12-13; 3:3-7; 5:24; 10:27-29; Acts 2:38; 16:31; Rom. 3:21-28; 5:1-11; 8:1-4, 28-39; II Cor. 5:18-19; Eph. 2:8-10; Phil. 1:6; Tit. 3:4-7; I Pet. 2:24; I Jn. 1:9

5. The New Testament warns against yielding to temptation and also against turning away from the faith (called “apostasy”) in such passages as Matthew 6:13 (in the Lord’s Prayer), 26:41 and Jude 21. At the same time it assures us that God, who grants us eternal life, will keep us secure in His love and power.⁶ This is known as “eternal security” or the “perseverance of the saints.”

F. The Holy Spirit and Our Calling⁷

As the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit applies the work of Christ to our hearts. He effectively calls us to God in Christ. He unites us to Christ through regeneration. He sanctifies us (makes us holy) by conforming our character to the character of Christ.

The Spirit indwells us, comforts us, guides us, and instructs us. He empowers us for godly living and calls us to serve God obediently in this world. He assures us of our salvation so we can know that nothing will separate us from the love of God.

G. The Church⁸

The true church is that company of believers who have been born again in Jesus Christ and are united into a living body, of which He is head and every Christian is a part. In this sense the church is not a building or an earthly institution, but a worldwide fellowship which transcends all cultures and spans of history.

The church’s purpose consists of worship, service, evangelism, and mission. We are to evangelize and make disciples throughout the world. One way God empowers His church for this task is by giving each believer gifts for the work of the ministry. Some are called to special ministries. Among those specially called are evangelists and pastor-teachers. They are not the only “ministers,” but are to equip every believer for service (ministry).

The church is visibly identified in the world by the true preaching of the Word, the real fellowship of the Holy Spirit (seen in active care and discipline in the church), the right use of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and fervent, effective prayer.

Scripture employs various analogies to describe the church. It is called the body of Christ, the people of God, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. But -- among other images -- it is also compared to a family. God adopts us into His

⁶ John 5:24; 10:27-30; Rom 8:28-39; Phil. 1:6

⁷ Ps. 139:7; Lk. 9:23; Jn. 14:15-19, 25-26; 16:7-13; Rom 8:1-17, 23, 26-27; I Cor. 2:10-16; 3:16-17; 6:19; 12:1-13; Eph. 2:10; 5:18

⁸ Mt. 18:15-20; Acts 2:42-47; Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 2:14-22; 3:4-10; 4:4-16; Mt. 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8.

family and bestows on us an eternal inheritance. As we mature, we exhibit God's love for us in our own families and communities.⁹

The family is important in Scripture. Marriage was ordained by God at creation and is intended to be a union of a man and a woman, who are to live in a relationship characterized by love and submission. While Scripture recognizes (and defines) reasons for possible divorce, marriage is intended to continue unbroken as long as both partners live. Parents are to exemplify the character of Christ and children are to obey their parents.

H. Human Sexuality¹⁰

We believe sex is a gift from God to be enjoyed within the marriage relationship. We believe that God has commanded abstinence from any form of sexually intimate activity outside of a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe that participation in any activity related to fornication, pornography, homosexuality, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, and/or adultery is a sinful perversion of God's gift of sex. We believe that God created human beings male and female; therefore we hold the distinction between the two sexes to be sacred. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to change the appearance of one's sex by hormones, surgery or any other means. (Romans 1:18-32)

I. Abortion and Euthanasia¹¹

We believe that human life is a sacred gift from God and must be respected from the moment of conception (fertilization) until natural death. We believe that the intentional, willful termination of a pregnancy ("abortion") at any time after conception constitutes the taking of unborn human life. Accordingly, abortions, including for reasons of birth defects, gender selection, birth control, population control, or even in the tragic instances of rape or incest, and acts of encouraging, facilitating, or paying for abortions, are inconsistent with Scripture and the glory of God. (Psalm 139:13-16)

We oppose active intervention with the intent to produce death ("euthanasia"), whether for the relief of suffering, economic considerations, or convenience of the person, family, or society. We do not oppose the withdrawal or failure to instate artificial means of life support in patients who are clearly and irreversibly deteriorating, in whom death appears imminent beyond reasonable hope of recovery.

⁹ Gen. 2:18-24; Mt. 19:3-9; Eph. 5:22-6:4.

¹⁰ Section IV. Expanded Statement of Faith, Part H. Human Sexuality, Revised and Approved on October 26, 2014.

¹¹ Section IV. Expanded Statement of Faith, Part I. Abortion and Euthanasia, Revised and Approved on October 26, 2014.

J. Future Things¹²

Although the many references to future events in Scripture are interpreted differently by Christians, we believe that the central event is the imminent, premillennial, personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ. This “blessed hope” has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer. It leads to His sovereign and complete rule over the world (the millennium) where He will consummate the eternal plan of God.

Sadly, the unrepentant will experience hell, originally intended not for human beings but for “the Devil and his angels.” Those redeemed by the grace of God and through the saving death of Christ will be with the Lord forever.

Members must, at a minimum, agree with the abbreviated version of our articles of faith, and it is expected that, as members grow in their faith, they would come to understand and embrace the fuller statement of our beliefs set forth in the expanded statement. All those who serve in positions of leadership or authority in the church, or who teach or counsel in the church must be in accord with the expanded version.

V. Ordinances

Baptism is one of two ordinances or rites (along with the Lord’s Supper) established by Christ for all believers. It symbolizes the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹³ Those who are baptized identify themselves with Christ and in this way give testimony to their own faith and new life in Him. The command to baptize those who become Jesus’ disciples is part of the Great Commission.¹⁴ According to the Book of Acts, baptism immediately accompanied conversion to Christ.¹⁵ Our position is that there is historical evidence that the preferred mode of baptism in the early church was immersion, and that this is consistent with its significance in the New Testament. This seems best to represent the death and burial of Christ and is the practice of this church.

The Lord’s Supper is the context for recalling the death of Christ for us and for proclaiming it until he returns. The bread symbolizes the body of Christ given for us on the cross, and the wine in the cup symbolizes the blood of Christ through which we have redemption.¹⁶ This is also referred to as “communion” because it is an act of fellowship with Christ and with one another¹⁷, and as the “eucharist”

¹² Job. 19:25; Is. 2:1-4; 24:1-24; Jn. 14:2-3; Rom. 8:18-25; I Cor. 15:35-58; I Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 3:20; I Thess. 4:15-17; II Thess. 2:1-12; Titus 2:13; Rev. chapters 20-22

¹³ Rom. 6:3

¹⁴ Matt. 28:18-20

¹⁵ Acts 2:28,41; 8:12,36; 9:1-18; 10:47-48; 16:15,33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16

¹⁶ Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:7-23; Acts 2:42; 20:7; I Cor 11:23-26

¹⁷ I Cor. 10:16-17

(meaning “thanksgiving”) because Jesus gave thanks when He instituted the Supper, and so do we as we celebrate it.

Both baptism and the Lord’s Supper portray the substitutionary death of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Therefore, although participating in them does not save us, they do express the grace of God to us.

VI. Membership

Membership in this church is open to individuals who, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, have been born again by the Holy Spirit into the family of God and have made a public confession of this experience and who meet the requirements for membership as set forth in the Bylaws.

New members will be approved by the Elder Board and ratified by the membership under procedures set forth in the Bylaws. A member will continue to be a member of this church until his membership is terminated, as set forth in the Bylaws.

VII. Church Government

- A. The church is non-denominational and independent.
- B. Government of the church is vested in its membership, as set forth in the Bylaws. Matters reserved to the Membership include the election of Elders, Deacons, and Deaconesses, call of a Senior Pastor, approval of the annual budget, and such other matters reserved to the Membership by this Constitution or the Bylaws of this church.
- C. There will be an Annual Meeting of the membership and other meetings of the membership as set forth in the Bylaws.
- D. Elders
 - 1. The members shall appoint Elders to provide spiritual leadership and oversee the work of the church. The qualifications for Elders are set forth in I Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9, and are further delineated in the Bylaws.
 - 2. The Elders will be responsible to provide spiritual oversight and leadership for the church and its members, and shall have all authority not specifically reserved to the membership in this Constitution or in the Bylaws. The Elders will delegate authority to ministry staff as they deem appropriate while maintaining general oversight.

VIII. Officers of the Church

The Elders of the church will appoint officers of the church in accordance with the Bylaws. Officers will include a Chairman, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and such other officers as the Elders deem necessary or desirable.

IX. Service Teams and Committees

A. Servant Team

The Members will elect a Servant Team composed of Deacons and Deaconesses, as set forth in the Bylaws. Deacons and Deaconesses will provide service to the church and its members and attenders. This service will include caring for the sick and needy, visitation, and such other matters as set forth in the Bylaws or determined by the Servant Team and Elders from time to time.

B. Other Boards and Committees

The Elders may appoint such other boards, committees, task forces, and ministry teams to carry out the work of the church as they shall deem necessary or convenient. These Boards or Committees will function under the general oversight of the Elders or designated ministry staff, and will undertake those tasks specifically delegated to them by the Elders.

X. Dissolution

A. The corporation may be dissolved by following the procedures set forth in the Bylaws.

B. In the event of dissolution, the assets of the church shall be distributed to one or more organizations exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, which have purposes and doctrinal beliefs substantially similar to the purposes and doctrines of this church, selected as set forth in the Bylaws.

XI. Amendment

Amendments to this Constitution may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the Members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present, provided that the notice of meeting stated that an amendment would be on the agenda.