

# BEREAN

BAPTIST CHURCH

## The Constitution Doctrinal Statement and Covenant

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## **Article I. Name**

The name of the church shall be The Berean Baptist Church of Queen Creek. It was incorporated in 1998, in the State of Arizona.

## **Article II. Governance**

This church is an autonomous New Testament church. It shall always be local, free and independent of outside earthly governance, answerable only to Jesus Christ, its Head. As such, it shall be congregational in its form of government. The eligible voting members represent the final authority in all matters affecting the organization. It has the right to cooperate and associate with other biblical groups on a voluntary basis. This church shall conduct its affairs in accordance with the rules and procedures contained in this Constitution and in submission to the letter and spirit of the Word of God and the doctrinal statement of the church.

## **Article III. Doctrinal Statement & Covenant**

### **Doctrinal Statement**

#### **1. Scripture.**

We believe in the verbal (every word), plenary (complete), Divine inspiration of the original manuscripts of the Holy Bible as found in the Old and New Testaments; that they were transmitted by God to man without error; that they were intended to be the supreme guide and standard in faith and practice.

While we believe that God has miraculously preserved His written Word and that the English Bible is extremely accurate and indeed the Word of God, we do not believe in the verbal inspiration of any particular translation. (*Isaiah 40:8; Luke 24:13-27; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21*)

#### **2. The True God.**

We believe in one true God, eternally existing in three persons equal in every Divine attribute and one in essence, known to man as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that Each is coequal and coeternal; that Each has an individual identity and separate responsibilities. (*Genesis 1:1; 26; Exodus 20:2-3; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-4, 5:17-27, 10:30, 16:7-8, Acts 5:3-4, 2 Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:6-11*)

#### **3. The Father.**

We believe the Father orders and disposes all things according to His own purposes; that He alone is sovereign; that in His sovereignty, He neither authors nor condones

sin; that He has known from eternal past those who would accept His offer of salvation from sin; that He saves all who come to Him through Jesus Christ, adopting them as sons and becoming their Father. (*Genesis 1:1-31; Habakkuk 1:13; John 1:12, 6:44, 8:38-47; Romans 8:15, 28-30, 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:4-6, 9-11, 3:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Hebrews 12:5-9*)

#### **4. Jesus Christ.**

We believe that Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, being true God and true man; that He lived a sinless life; that He died on the cross, shedding His blood as a substitutionary sacrifice to provide atonement for the sins of all mankind; that He arose bodily from the grave and ascended to Heaven; that He now resides at the right hand of the Father where He intercedes on behalf of believers. (*Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38, 23:22-47; John 20:10-29, 21:5-15; Romans 5:10-11; Colossians 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:6, 3:16; Hebrews 4:15, 7:24-25, 9:11-15, 10:9-12, 12:2; 1 John 2:1*)

#### **5. The Holy Spirit.**

We believe the Holy Spirit restrains evil, convicts of sin, and bears witness to the truth of the Gospel; that He is the agent of the New Birth, indwelling every believer once and for all at the moment of conversion, baptizing him into the Body of Christ; that He seals the believer and equips him for service with spiritual gifts; that He comforts and helps the believer as he lives out his faith. (*Matthew 28:19; John 3:5, 7:38-39, 15:26, 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 12:7-13; Ephesians 2:13-14, 4:30, 5:17-18; 2 Thessalonians 2:7; Titus 3:4-6*)

#### **6. Creation and Man's Fall.**

We believe God created all things by direct act in six literal twenty-four hour days that man was the special creation of God, made in His image to rule in His stead on earth; that man, in the person of Adam, was created in innocence but, by voluntary transgression, fell into sin; that the result of man's sin is physical and spiritual death, which is separation from God; that every person is born with a sinful nature and becomes a willful sinner through personal choice, and so is without excuse before God. (*Genesis 1-3; Psalm 51:5, 58:3; Ezekiel 18:4,20; Romans 1:20, 3:10-26, 5:10-21, 6:230*)

#### **7. Satan.**

We believe Satan is a real being, created by God as the Angel Lucifer; that Satan rebelled against God in an attempt to usurp God's sovereign position leading part of the angelic host into rebellion with him; that he currently leads his fallen host in the deception of mankind and rules as the unholy god of this age; that one day Satan and his followers will face eternal judgment in a literal place called Hell. (*Genesis 2:1-5; Job 1:6-7; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Isaiah 14:112-21; Matthew 4:1-11, 25:41; John 8:44, 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4, 11:1-4, 13-15; 1 Peter 5:8-9; Revelation 12:3-9, 20:1-3, 7-10*)

## **8. Salvation.**

We believe escape from the condemnation of sin and restoration of fellowship between man and God is provided by God to man solely through the finished work of Christ upon the cross of Calvary and that no works, no matter how good, can make salvation more secure; that this justification is provided for all men on the grounds of Grace; that salvation must be accepted individually by faith in response to conviction of sin and repentance toward God to become effective; that all who accept Jesus Christ as Savior are eternally secure. (*John 3:14-18, 10:27-29; Acts 4:10-12, 16:30-32, 20:20-21; Romans 5:1, 9, 8:15, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Timothy 4:10; Titus 3:4-7; Hebrews 10:4-14; 1 Peter 1:18-19, 2:24*)

## **9. Sanctification.**

We believe in the sanctification of the believer as one set apart for the Master's use; that the believer is positionally sanctified at the moment of salvation; that the believer is progressively sanctified as the result of the Holy Spirit's ongoing work in the believer's life after salvation that the believer will one day be perfectly sanctified when he sheds this earthly body with its inherent sin nature and receives his glorified eternal body. (*John 16:12-14, 17:17; Acts 20:32; Romans 6:1-22; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30, 6:11; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:16-17; Ephesians 5:26-27; Philippians 3:20-21; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 4:3-5, 5:23; Hebrews 2:11; 10:10, 14; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 3:2*)

## **10. The Church and Its Mission.**

We believe the church is a New Testament Institution established by Jesus Christ to accomplish His work in this age; that the church's work for this age of making disciples is set forth in the Great Commission; that the church represents in this world the living, spiritual body of Jesus, who is its head, and His future bride in glory; that it is comprised universally of all believers from Pentecost until the rapture; that it is represented by local assemblies of immersed believers covenanted together and corporately meeting to worship, fellowship and serve together; that each local assembly has the absolute right to govern itself and is answerable only to Jesus the Christ; that each local church is to be led by men serving in the biblical offices of pastor and deacon; that the church observes the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper until Christ returns; that baptism is by single immersion for believers; that the Lord's supper is a commemoration of the Lord's death, reserved for those who are saved and walking in obedience to the Lord. (*Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 2:28-47, 8:30-39; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 6:4-5, 7:17, 11:26-34, 12:14-27; Galatians 1:2; Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:11-15, 5:23-32; Colossians 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Timothy 2:12, 3:1015*)

## **11. Separation.**

We believe God's children are called to be separate from wickedness, living lives of holiness as unto God; that separation applies to the individual as well as the church body; that separation entails avoidance of worldly practices in obedience to the direct commands of Scripture and in subjection to the conscientious application of biblical principles and requires the believer to refrain from alliances or fellowship with groups or individuals which deny the basic fundamentals of the faith or choose to walk in open defiance of clear commands of Scripture. Such would include evangelicals who practice or tolerate ecumenical evangelism and inclusive fellowship with groups holding unsound doctrines. We oppose the charismatic movement in all its various manifestations. (*Amos 3:3; Matthew 18:15-17; Luke 12:51; Romans 12:1-2, 14:5-8, 16:17-18; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 5:11-12; Colossians 3:1-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-18; 1 Timothy 1:19-20, 6:3-5; Titus 3:10-11; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 10-11*)

## **12. Marriage.**

We believe that God's Word upholds the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman for life. (Matt. 19:5-6)

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a monogamous marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, polygamy, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24; 19:5-13; 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thes. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)

## **13. Things To Come.**

We believe in the personal, imminent, bodily, pre-tribulational and premillennial return of Christ in the air to call away the church; that the dead in Christ shall rise first followed by the living saints; that the judgement seat of Christ and the seven year tribulation will follow the rapture; that Christ will return with His church at the close of the tribulation to judge the living nations and establish His millennial kingdom on earth; that the unrighteous dead shall be raised at the close of the millennial kingdom and stand in their bodies at the Great White Throne Judgement to be condemned to eternal punishment in a literal place called Hell along with Satan; that Christ will reign eternally as King of kings and Lord of lords with the righteous in a literal place called Heaven.



## Covenant

As a bond of unity among us, this church accepts for its members the following covenant:

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and on profession of our faith in Him, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We promise that we will watch over and counsel one another in the spirit of brotherly love, that we will remember one another in our prayers, and that we will aid each other in sickness and distress.

We further agree, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian Love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to give it a sacred pre-eminence over all institutions of human origin and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We further covenant to maintain family and secret devotion; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances, to live carefully in this present world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements. And exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from everything that will cause our brother to stumble or that will bring reproach upon the cause of Christ; and to strive to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, that amid evil and good report we will humbly and earnestly seek to live to the honor and glory of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## **Article IV. Purpose**

The purpose of this church shall be to glorify God in a manner consistent with the teaching of Scripture. This work shall include:

1. Evangelizing the lost both at home and around the world through personal soul-winning, church outreach, and the preaching of the Word of God.
2. Edifying believers through the systematic teaching and preaching of the Word of God.
3. Carrying out the Scriptural responsibilities of a New Testament Church.

## **Article V. Limitation of Liability**

No person who is now, or who later becomes, a contributor of money, time or talent to this corporation shall be held personally liable in financial or other legal actions concerning the corporation.

## **Article VI. Membership**

### **Section 1. Qualifications.**

The membership of this church shall be comprised of persons who have professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and have given evidence of their regeneration. They must have been baptized by immersion after salvation. They must accept and agree to abide by the constitution and doctrinal statement of this church.

### **Section 2. Procedure.**

Anyone desiring to become a member of this church shall appear before the pastors or deacons to determine qualification for membership and receive advice and instruction before being presented to the church for membership. Candidates will then be given an opportunity to give their testimony of faith in Christ and baptism before the church at a regular church meeting. Admittance to membership will be by majority vote of those eligible members present to hear the individual's testimony.

### **Section 3. Privileges and Responsibilities of Membership.**

#### **1. Privileges.**

- a. To vote in business meetings (18 years and older)
- b. To be fed in the Word by the pastor and other leaders of the church.
- c. To be edified by regular fellowship with other believers.
- d. To be supported in time of need.
- e. To participate in all regular activities of the church.

#### **2. Responsibilities.**

- a. To commit to continual growth in Christ.
- b. To pursue biblical direction and standards in life.
- c. To preserve the unity of the church.
- d. To maintain separation from the world.
- e. To support the ministry of the church through faithful attendance, prayer, financial support of tithes and offerings, and participation in the ministry opportunities provided.
- f. To provide for and receive from leaders and fellow members loving, biblical admonishment.
- g. To love each member of the church as part of the household of faith and a brother or sister in Christ.

#### **3. Transfer or Removal of Membership.**

- a. Members who unite with other churches shall be removed from membership.
  - i. Letters of transfer will be granted to members in good standing to a church of like faith.
  - ii. Membership will be removed for those who request to have their name removed upon review of the pastors or deacons.
- b. Unless providentially hindered (such as sickness, conditions of employment, etc.), members who do not attend regular meetings of the church for six months shall be removed from membership.

#### **4. Discipline.**

- a. Church discipline is a necessary act commanded in Scripture
  - i. To preserve the unity and purity of the local body of believers, (1 Corinthians 5:7-11)
  - ii. To restrain others from committing sin (1 Timothy 5:20)
  - iii. To ultimately restore an erring member to fellowship with the Lord and the Church (Galatians 6:1)
- b. Church discipline may only be enacted in response to proven flagrant, divisive and sinful behavior.
- c. If a member of Berean Baptist Church is found to have participated in flagrant, divisive, sinful behavior, the senior pastor will approach the individual and ask for repentance. After a period of prayer and reflection,

if there is no repentance, the senior pastor will ask one or more pastors to accompany him to further discuss the matter with the individual and seek repentance. After a period of prayer and reflection, if there is still no repentance, officers will bring this matter before the church as a recommendation to administer church discipline. Discipline will still take place even if the person attempts to short-circuit the process by leaving the church or by not coming to the disciplinary meeting. If at any time during this process there is judged to be genuine repentance on the part of the individual, the matter shall be immediately terminated.

- d. Administration of church discipline will result in the issuance of a letter of dismissal and removal of the individual's name from the registry of membership.
- e. If the disciplined individual demonstrates evidence of sustained repentance, then the senior pastor with the counsel of the pastors may recommend that individual to the church for reinstatement of membership. The reinstatement process shall follow the normal membership process.

## **Article VII. Officers**

### **Section 1. General Information.**

1. The elected officers of the church shall be the senior pastor, associate pastors, and deacons. Officers may recommend other positions such as clerk and treasurer to be approved by the Church.
2. Officers shall be spiritually mature, loyal to the Word of God, faithful in attendance, and supportive of the church. Their moral conduct shall be free from reproach and carnal indulgences (such as intoxicating beverages, tobacco, narcotic drugs, or other worldly practices).
3. Officers, except the pastor or associate pastors, may be removed by affirmative vote of a majority of members at any time with or without cause. An affirmative vote of three-fourths of the members is required to remove a pastor.
4. Any officer who intends to resign must give a written notice of his intentions to the deacons thirty days before it is to take effect.
5. The pastors or deacons may appoint committees for various purposes from time to time as the need arises. A committee will cease to exist when the officers believe that it has fulfilled its purpose.

6. A vacancy in any office, for any reason whatsoever, may be filled by vote of a majority of the pastor and deacons. The officer elected to such vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the term of the officer he replaces.

## **Section 2. Pastors.**

1. A pastor shall meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4.
2. A pastor shall be a man who has never been divorced.
3. A pastor shall be licensed or ordained by a church of like precious faith.
4. The pastor shall be spiritually mature, evidencing a concern for lost souls and the children of God, and shall be in agreement with the constitution and doctrinal statement of this church.
5. The senior pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the congregation and the administrative oversight of the church and shall be considered president of the corporation for all legal purposes. He shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees.
6. Senior pastoral vacancies shall be filled by a call from the church. If possible, senior pastoral vacancies may be filled by an associate pastor of the church. Such a call shall be extended by a church vote of an 85% majority at a meeting called for this purpose and announced from the pulpit for two Sundays immediately preceding the vote. The candidate is free to accept or reject the call. Upon acceptance of the call, the pastor, his wife, and his saved and baptized children shall be accepted into membership of the church.
7. In the case of a senior pastoral vacancy, the associate pastors/elders shall assume the position of temporary leadership in the church providing for the filling of the pulpit by qualified speakers, and assisting the search for a senior pastor. In calling a Pastor, the church shall elect a pulpit committee of no less than three members to present names of candidates to the congregation for consideration. The current pastors and deacons shall be ex-officio members of the pulpit committee. The candidates shall have the opportunity to preach to the church.  
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8. A pastor shall serve until he resigns or is removed from office by the church.

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<sup>1</sup> The Pulpit Committee shall be governed by their own bylaws.

9. If a pastor intends to resign, he must submit his resignation in writing to the pastors at least 30 days prior to his resignation date.
10. Pastors shall examine candidates for church membership.

### **Section 3. Deacons.**

1. Deacons shall meet the qualifications of Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.
2. Deacons shall be men who have never been divorced.
3. Deacons may be reelected after three years of service. Terms will be staggered so that all terms do not expire concurrently. They shall be nominated by the pastors and elected by a simple majority church vote at the annual business meeting. The number of deacons shall be augmented or diminished at the annual business meeting upon the recommendation of the pastor.
4. Deacons shall serve as trustees of the church for legal purposes.
5. The deacons shall choose from among themselves annually the following officers: chairman and secretary.
6. In the event of resignation or removal, the pastors may appoint a qualified replacement to fulfill the term of the vacated office.
7. Deacons shall assist the pastors in promoting the welfare of the church, helping to care for the needy and sick, administering the Lord's Supper, maintaining the church property, and other temporal duties.
8. Deacons may also examine candidates for membership.

### **Section 4. Clerk**

1. The clerk may be a man or woman who shall serve a term of one year. The Clerk shall be nominated by the pastors and deacons and elected by majority church vote at the annual business meeting.
2. The clerk shall keep minutes of all church business meetings and a complete record of church membership. The clerk shall also serve as historian of the church.

## **Section 5. Treasurer**

1. The treasurer shall be a deacon or be appointed by the pastors and deacons, and approved by the congregation.
2. The duties of the treasurer shall include the financial matters of the Church.

# **Article VIII. Meetings**

## **Section 1. Church Meetings**

1. Regular meetings for worship, Bible study, and prayer shall be held on Sunday mornings, evenings, and on midweek evenings. Additional meetings may be held at other times for various activities such as fellowship groups or youth activities upon approval of the officers.
2. Business Meetings. The annual business meeting shall be held on the fourth Sunday of January. Quarterly business meetings shall be held on the third Sunday of April, July, and October. Business meetings shall be announced at least two weeks in advance from the pulpit and by announcements placed in the bulletin.
3. Special Meetings. Special business meetings may be called at any time by the senior pastor, pastors, deacons or a majority vote of eligible voters of the Church.
4. Voting Rights. All members, 18 and over, shall be entitled to cast one vote for each item under consideration in Church business meetings. Only members shall be allowed to vote. If more than one item is presented for consideration at any business meeting, each item must be voted upon independently.
5. Quorum. The presence of one-half of the voting membership at any business meeting shall constitute a quorum.

## **Section 2. Order and Conduct of meetings.**

1. Meetings shall follow the pattern specified by *Robert's Rules of Order*.
2. Business meetings shall be moderated by the pastors, the chairman of the deacons, or someone appointed by the pastors to moderate meetings.
3. All items for consideration shall be submitted in writing to the pastors or deacons for consideration and inclusion in the agenda. Only procedural motions may be made from the floor during a business meeting.
4. Agenda items may be submitted to the congregation at least one week prior to the business meeting.
5. All elections and matters of business shall be decided by a simple majority vote unless otherwise stated in this Constitution.

## **Article IX. Amendments**

This constitution and bylaws may be amended, altered, or revised by a three-fourths vote of the eligible members at a business meeting. The proposed amendments shall be made available in writing to the church two weeks prior to the business meeting.

## **Article X. Property**

### **Section 1. Procurement.**

1. This Church shall have the right to own, buy and sell tangible properties, both real and personal, in its own name and through properly elected officials, when authorized by the vote of the Church.
2. All Church properties are to be held by the Berean Baptist Church of Queen Creek in accordance with the laws of the State of Arizona.
3. Property held shall be for the use of ministry consistent with the doctrines, practice, and Constitution of this congregation.

### **Section 2. Dissolution.**

In the event of the dissolution of The Berean Baptist Church, all its debts shall be paid in full. None of its remaining assets or holdings shall be divided among its



members, but shall be irrevocably transferred by corporate vote to a ministry of like precious faith which is in agreement with the doctrinal statement of this church.

## **Article XI. Outside Agencies**

The deacons shall have express authorization, right and power to enter into one or more management agreements in order to facilitate operation of the facilities, both real property management and financial assistance such as book keeping and an annual audit of Church financial records.

## **Article XII. Miscellaneous**

**Section 1. Books and Accounts.** Books and records, including such things as conversions, baptisms, and membership rolls, of the Church shall be kept under direction of the Church clerk and in accordance with the reasonable standards of accounting procedure and practice.

**Section 2. Inspection of Books.** The membership register, current copies of minutes of all meetings and financial records, except for individual giving records shall be made available for inspection by members of the Church. Excluded from inspection are records of salary discussions, private personnel matters, disciplinary actions or other records deemed by the pastors or deacons to be potentially harmful to any other member.

**Section 3. Loans prohibited.** The church shall not lend money to or use its credit to assist its officers. Any officer who assists in making such a loan shall be liable to the Church for the amount of each loan payment plus interest, attorney fees and costs until repayment of the loan.

**Section 4. Execution of Church Documents.** With the prior authorization of the deacons, all notes, checks and contracts or other obligations shall be executed on behalf of the Church by at least two officers of the Church as the deacons shall designate, or in absence of such designation, by the pastors.

**Section 5. Fiscal Year.** The fiscal year of the Church shall be the calendar year.

Approval: This Constitution was approved by Berean Baptist Church in the Annual Business Meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2010.