

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Of
Abiding Love Ministries

Constitution

Article I - NAME AND GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Corporate name of this organization shall be Abiding Love Ministries, and it shall be organized in general agreement with the commonly held principles and practices of other such Biblically based Seventh Day Baptist congregations.

Article II - MEMBERSHIP

There shall be two types of membership in this organization, hereafter referred to as “church”.

Section A: Fellowship membership - Any person professing personal faith in Jesus Christ of Nazareth as their Lord and Savior and participating on a regular basis over a period of 3 months in the fellowship and ministries of the church, with their agreement, will be noted to be a fellowship member of the church at the next Ministry Council meeting..

A. A Fellowship member who does not continue in regular participation in the worship and ministry of the church without reasonable extenuating circumstances, and who after pastoral visitation or visitation by a team of spiritual leadership (under the guidelines of Matt 18:15-17) does not resume regular participation shall be considered to have removed themselves from Fellowship membership.

Section B: Covenant Membership - Any person may request to become a Covenant Member of the church after establishing the following prerequisites:

- A. Regular participation in the fellowship and ministries of the church for a minimum period of at least 6 months, being of an age to bear responsibility, and demonstrating readiness to share in the responsibilities of Covenant Membership.
- B. Profession of relationship with God through personal faith and belief in His Son Jesus Christ of Nazareth.
- C. Pursuing understanding and obedience in all God’s righteousness beginning with the scriptural teaching of being baptized by immersion in water.
- D. Becoming knowledgeable in -
 - ✓ the common convictions of faith as proclaimed by the church;
 - ✓ the organizational structure and commitments of the church;
 - ✓ and the documents guiding the organizational workings of the church; and through examining the scriptures, to see if these things favorably
 - ✓ compare with Biblical teachings of Godly faith and practice. Such knowledge may be accomplished through individual studies followed by adequate interview with a pastor or other ordained spiritual leadership of the church, or through completion of a Full Disciple class provided by the church.

E. All Covenant Membership requests will be considered at a regular Ministry Council meeting.

2 - **Sustaining and Removal from Covenant Membership**

A. No person shall hastily be received into Covenant Membership without evidence of a clear faith and commitment to Godliness in Christ Jesus, without recommendation by the Leadership Council, and affirmation by majority vote of those present at a regular Ministry Council meeting.

B. Covenant Membership shall continue as long as both the individual and general body of Covenant Members of the church are in agreement that God has drawn the individual and the group to labor together for Christ..

C. Any person who requests removal of themselves from Covenant Membership and establishes relationship with another assembly of followers of Jesus Christ, will continue to find prayer support that God's perfect Will and work will be fully accomplished in them. Such a person will be granted a letter of good standing, unless there has been a serious lack of obedience to the Gospel.

D. Any person, who requests in writing, a letter of transfer to another member church of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference USA and Canada will be granted the letter after Ministry Council approval..

E. . Any person who is absent from regular participation in church over a quarter's time shall be visited by spiritual leadership of the church to seek to understand any extenuating circumstances which might have arisen or if some difficulty or change of heart has occurred; always with a desire to restore the covenant relationship.

1. Without clearly established reasonable extenuating circumstances for less than regular participation, the person will be considered to have removed themselves from any offices or areas of responsibility where the church may have asked them to serve.

2. A regular Ministry Council meeting shall determine if the person has also removed themselves from Covenant membership.

3 No person shall be restored to Covenant Membership until
a. such membership is again requested.
b. adequate pastoral ministry to evaluate a restored level of commitment has occurred.

c. and appropriate reconsideration by the church.

F. Any person who requests removal from Covenant Membership and who does not establish relationship with another assembly of Christian faith will be considered amongst those remembered by prayer and included in the outreach ministry of all members of the church.

Section C - Voting - All members have a right and responsibility to participate and to voice their discernment and understanding in both the regular and special meetings of the church, as God has given them insight, however the right to vote is reserved to Covenant Members.

Covenant of the Family of Abiding Love extended to a Covenant Member

We, who have committed ourselves to Christ and have joined His work as fellow laborers in God's work through Abiding Love Ministries; do covenant to encourage you in the Lord Jesus Christ; to exhort you to the fullest obedience of Love before our God and Father; to rejoice in your joys, to weep in your sorrows, to sustain you in the effort to walk as Jesus did, and to provoke both you and ourselves to the deepest, closest personal relationships both to Christ and each other which we together can attain. We will stand (join) with you in mutually seeking to develop a deeper Love and a climate for growing up in faith together. We will pray for you, and for ourselves, that Christ alone may be seen as the sole authority in our lives. We commit ourselves to lead the way as servants and to eagerly labor to increase our fellowship, worship, and study as we together walk in humility before our God. As long as God permits you to be in our midst, we will seek to identify and use the natural abilities and the Spiritual gifting God has placed in you for the advancing of His kingdom. Should you stray from fellowship in Christ, we will continue to seek to minister to you; to understand and correct any failing in ourselves as a fellowship of believers, and to seek to be fully reconciled to one another.

Covenant of a Covenant Member with the Family of Abiding Love

I covenant with the family of Abiding Love Ministries to gladly join you in fellowship, worship, and service in our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the only begotten Son of God the Father. As long as God permits, I will labor in your midst so that together we may be about Our Father's business, I will seek to be a responsible contributor to Christ's kingdom by both personal effort and through prayerful ministry through this body of believers. I gladly accept my responsibility as part of the overall work, fellowship, and worship of the church; and will eagerly share in both its blessings and responsibilities. I will seek to be a part of the solution of every problem and not willingly be a partner in contributing to a problem within the church fellowship. If I see error I will gently seek to correct with words offered with humility and love; if I see need I will gladly seek to be part of the solution for that need. And if others feel I am in error, I will listen to their concern and seek to understand what God would have me to do.

Article IV - Key Principles of Faith - Abiding Love holds the following principles to be key to a vital life of faith and conduct as a body of believers.

- A. A personal responsibility for conscience before God and man.
- B. A personal call to ministry with all saints as the Holy Spirit has granted gifting and natural abilities (as part of this royal priesthood of all believers)..
- C. A commitment to the active and persistent task of every local church to effectively evangelize and nurture individuals to Christ and to establish as many new bodies of believers (churches) in as many places (communities) as God opens the door. (permits).
- D.. A commitment to give respect to God's clearly called and confirmed leadership who are expected to pray, teach, and offer spiritual guidance through this body of believers.
- E. A confidence that God's Will is best established in the mouths of many counselors, therefore relying on a congregational form of confirmation of God's purposes for this church,.

- F. An agreement that the Bible is the only inspired written revelation of God's truth and Will for all mankind, and any new understanding for faith or practice should not be in conflict with the balance of scriptural teaching.
- G. A conviction that God's plan for all men from creation commands, and in no wise prohibits, the enjoyment of the holiness God established in the Sabbath day which His Word declares to be for all generations and all nations.

Article V - Mission Statement: To let God so arise in us, that others may see and glorify God and so come to personal faith in Christ, and that we encourage one another to reach out beyond ourselves to form new groups of believers as God may grant each opportunity.

Article VI - Officers and Leadership

Pastor and other pastoral staff

Pastors will be added from within the body of the church or may be called from other bodies of believers as the church determines at the time of each need.

Only one pastor shall be called to be the senior pastor of the church.

The senior pastor, as the principle shepherd (under God) of the church, shall continue in leading the work of the church, as long as the Spirit confirms in both the pastor's heart and the people's heart that God is working for the clear good of the church and community in that leadership.

The senior pastor shall have a major role in the call and on going ministry of any staff pastors the church might deem important to the work or any apprentice pastors that rise up within the church ministry, as they must work with Biblical respect under his leadership, and their ministries therefore may also end when the senior pastor's work is drawn to a close in the church because of some unresolved and persistent dissatisfaction amongst the people with the leadership of the church.

No associate pastor or apprentice pastor who has actively or by obvious silence encouraged the dismissal or resignation of a pastor shall be considered for the position of head pastor for a period of 5 years .from the prior head pastor's completion of ministry in the church.

Moderator

A moderator shall be selected from amongst the Covenant Members for a specific term of office, and shall preside at Ministry Council meetings of the church, both regular and special, and is responsible to assure that every member has a voice in the consideration of issues, and to see that a proper vote without either haste or undue delay shall be taken when it is clear that a growing conviction is arising about God's purposes in every matter.

An assistant moderator may be selected from the Covenant Members for a specific term of office, or may be appointed as needed, Pro Tem, in the extended absence or inability of the moderator to be available to preside over the regularly scheduled or properly called special meetings of the church

Clerk

A.A Clerk shall be selected from amongst the Covenant Members for a specific term of office, and shall keep an accurate record of the considerations and actions of the church, and shall be guardian of the historical documents of the church which

shall be kept secure, but readily available to all members of the church . The Clerk may also be requested to send correspondence on behalf of the church from time to time.

B.An Assistant Clerk may be selected from the Covenant Members for a specific term of office, or may be appointed as needed, Pro Tem, in the extended absence or inability of the Clerk to be available to record the regularly scheduled or properly called special meetings of the church.

Financial Secretary

A.General Responsibilities - A Financial Secretary shall be selected from amongst the Covenant Members for a specific term of office, and shall be responsible to handle weekly offerings, special offerings, donations, and the other financial income and expenditures of the church. The Financial Secretary shall maintain current and accurate accounts and shall maintain appropriate records of those accounts. While the confidentiality of each donor shall be maintained, the records of deposits and authorized expenditures and the tracking of the church budget and accounts shall be readily available.

B.Handling of Offerings: The Financial Secretary shall be responsible to protect the integrity of the church, as well as their personal reputation by maintaining written records of the count of the cash portions of all offerings with another church member after weekly Sabbath worship, or other special events where offerings are received, to verify the cash amount received. The total number of open checks can be recorded as part of that record, but only the Financial Secretary and the donor are to know the amount and what person gave what tithes and love offerings to the Lord by means of checks or other instruments of financial transfer.

C.An Assistant Financial Secretary may be selected from the Covenant Members for a specific term of office, or may be appointed as needed, Pro Tem, in the extended absence or inability of the Financial Secretary to be available to receive the tithes and love offerings of the church, and shall handle those funds under the instructions of the Financial Secretary of the church, in harmony with the responsibilities and procedures outlined in the adopted Constitution and By Laws of the church.

Eldership and Diaconate

A.A body of spiritual counselors to the pastor and the church shall be chosen and ordained to offer spiritual insight and advice, and to assist the pastor in ministry to the church. Those chosen to minister should not be hastily selected or ordained, but shall be clearly established in the maturity of their faith and obedience to God, since their ordination is expected to be for life. Any previously ordained person who joins, and agreeably works within the church, may be invited to participate with the Eldership and Diaconate upon recommendation of the pastors and Eldership and Diaconate and after announcement to the church at a regular Ministry Council meeting, and vote at a following regular Ministry Council meeting.

B.Some of the Eldership and Diaconate members shall be designated to be listed for a specific term of service to serve with the Trustees.

Trustees

The Trustees of the church shall be composed of the Moderator, a designated number of representatives from the Eldership and Diaconate, the head pastor, and a specified number of general representatives from the pastors and Covenant members of the church and shall be selected as established in the By Laws. The Trustees shall have general oversight and make recommendations to the church regarding the material possessions and properties of the church, and shall be listed as the legal representatives of the church in matters of the civil affairs of the church. The Trustees shall be responsible to carry out the legal directives of the church, and to see that the church is in compliance with the laws of man as appropriate before God. Emergency pending actions which cannot be delayed to a regular Ministry Council meeting, authorized by the Trustees, are subject to review and ratification (or rejection) at the next regular Ministry Council meeting.

Article VII - Meetings

- A. Regular** - Regular Ministry Council meetings of the church shall be held on the odd numbered months of each year on the same designated night of each month established by the church in the By Laws. Such meetings are the privilege and responsibility of all members and any church participants who wish to be involved in the review of the current ministries, responsibilities and obligations of the church; to consider work which is approaching; and to plan and seek together to accomplish all that God would have done in the days ahead.
- B. Special** - Special meetings of the church may be called by the Moderator or Head Pastor of the church to consider concerns of compassion or coordination of ministry planning which can not be delayed until the next regular Ministry Council meeting.
1. No action shall be taken at special meetings which violate other parts of the Constitution, or which commit the church to legal commitments or entanglements which could significantly change or hamper the present and future work of the church.
 2. Other special meetings may established at regular Ministry Council meetings to consider specific issues assigned to that meeting. No issues other than the published and designated purpose for that meeting may be adopted or considered at a special meeting. However communications and requests for consideration of issues arising from the meeting may be expressed, but must be held for action until a future regular Ministry Council meeting

Article VIII- By Laws

By Laws covering additional details of the workings and organization of this church will be added as the church determines the need. Adopted By Laws must be in full compliance to the Constitution of the church.

Article IX - Amendment - This constitution may be amended at a regular Ministry Council meeting of the church by a 3/4 majority of the total number of the Covenant Members of the church , after:

- A. Properly informing each covenant member of the proposed changes,
- B. Holding at least one prior Regular Ministry Council meeting where the proposed amendment was presented in written form and after one or more following regular Ministry Council meetings for questions, clarifications, and consideration of suggestions and modifications to the proposed amendment.

- C. Prayerfully considering any such proposals with the concern that nothing God would approve remains disapproved, and that nothing God would disapprove is approved by either the active or passive voices of this church.
- D. Significant adopted modifications, or modifications voted to be considered for adoption to the proposed amendment, shall lead to an automatic tabling of the amendment until the next regular Ministry Council meeting to allow for additional prayerful consideration, discussion, and possible re consideration to determine what God would hold the church accountable to do with the proposed alterations to the constitution..
- E. Final consideration of any proposed amendment as finally agreed upon at the prior Ministry Council meeting shall be given after proper announcement at two Sabbath worships, and the voting shall be taken by written ballot in such a manner that the fullest number of Covenant Members may have the opportunity to vote their understandings. All ballots submitted by Covenant Members unable to attend the specific Ministry Council meeting shall be counted with the written ballots of those present, provided that such ballots are signed by that Covenant Member and it shall be required that any comments offered in reflection of their understanding of the Lord's Will for this church are to be read prior to the casting of the written ballots of the Covenant Members present at the meeting.

BY LAWS
Of
Abiding Love Ministries

1 - Biblical Objective of Ministry - The Full Equipping of the Saints

The objective of all work of the church is the call to salvation of all people and the equipping of the saints who respond to that call to become faithful children of Almighty God.

All believers are ministers who have been gifted as the Holy Spirit has granted. The leadership and the structure of the church is formed solely for the purposes of assisting the believers in accomplishing their individual and cooperative responsibility to obey God in all things.

2 - Officers and Leadership

Pastor and other pastoral staff

- A. The head pastor shall be an ex officio member of all Task Force groups and other ministry groups created to assist in the ministry of the church. However, the pastor is not expected to participate in all such groups, and should not take a dominating role, but should relate to each group in a servant manner which mentors leadership and ministry, and so equips the saints to the accomplishing of God's work
- B. Other staff pastors may ask to participate or be invited to participate by a group or may be participants by the directives of the regular meeting which formed the ministry task force or other group.
- C. The priority work of the pastor(s) shall be a commitment to assuring good care for the flock through seeing that regular pastoral visits, in addition to crisis and counseling ministry, is appropriately provided for the needs of the people gathered in this church; as well as the Biblical commitment to leading in the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. While no pastor will be expected to provide what they are not skilled to provide, the responsibility of the pastor is to see that such care of God's people is appropriately and adequately provided, and mentoring in all areas of Christian life skills is a major part of the work of the pastor(s) of this church.

Moderator

- A. The moderator, and any assistant selected shall be responsible to be informed about the procedural processes established under the guidelines of Robert's Rules of Order for the conducting of Ministry Council meetings of the church.

B. Term of office

C. Election to office

Clerk

A. What records to be maintained

B. Minutes of Ministry Council Meetings

C. Attached copies to the minutes of written reports submitted.

D. The normal term of office

E. Term of office

F. Election to office

G. Qualifications - computer skills

Financial Secretary

- A. The Financial Secretary shall keep the financial records of the church in the manner determined as appropriate by action of the Ministry Council.
- B. Dispersements - authorized dispersements shall be made for properly submitted vouchers accompanied by matching receipts.
- C. *Audit and review - an annual audit of the records shall be authorized by the Ministry Council using either a formal or an informal process, but*
- D. *Term of office -*
 - 1 *The normal term of office for this ministry shall be for 5 years.*
 - 2 *The Financial Secretary will be approached on an annual basis by representatives of the Eldership and Diaconate to confirm willingness to continue in this ministry. This would be done prior to the annual Ministry Council meeting.*
- E. *The Financial Secretary should have the maturity, aptitude, and skills appropriate for this ministry.*

Mentoring for Officers and Ministries

The last year of the normal term of financial, clerk, or an ongoing ministry..... will be used for searching out and mentoring those amongst the Covenant members in the church who are led, or other members feel, are called of God to that ministry so that the person selected to each position will be familiar with the responsibilities and established record keeping processes of that position.

Eldership and Diaconate

- Meetings
- Chairman
- Members
- Term of service and call to service
- Function of Coordinating Nominations.

Trustees (Leadership Board)

- Meetings
- Chair
- Membership
- Term of service
- Election to office

Task Force Work

- Leadership
- Meetings and work
- Term of service

Assigned or encouraged ministries - reported to and by the persons assigning or encouraging the ministry

Job Descriptions to be provided for officers, and task force leaders of any work established within the church.

3, Church Relationships (cf Matt 18:15-18)

It is expected that the members of the church will conduct themselves in relationships to others with genuine respectfulness members to members, members to pastors, pastors to members, and pastors to pastors as the Lord requires.

- A. In the event of a misunderstanding or some offense occurring, it is expected that the individual member or pastor will seek first to clarify and seek to obtain a resolution to the misunderstanding or offense by going to the other person(s) involved and seeking to resolve the problem.
- B. If that does not restore the fellowship between the persons involved, the member or pastor is to take a neutral person to discuss the matter with the other party(ies) involved. The second person shall be responsible to hear both sides of the matter and seek to discern and mediate a commitment to a Godly resolution for the matter.
- C. In the unfortunate situation that the matter cannot be resolved by mediation, the matter shall be presented to the Eldership and Diaconate of the church for consideration and development of a recommendation to be presented to the church.
- D. Any recommended resolution of a matter to be presented for church decision should reflect both righteousness and mercy and shall be presented at the next regular Ministry Council meeting for prayer and consideration
- E. Subject - Dismissal by the third phase of the church's arbitration of misconduct, or significant failure or leadership in opposition to the direction of the church's properly voted actions..

Article VII - Meetings

Annual Meeting

Elections .

Both regular and special meetings of the church shall follow an established agenda for the conducting of business.

Regular Ministry Council Agenda:

Call To Order

Opening Prayer

Reading the minutes for the prior Ministry Council meeting by the clerk and the minutes for any special Ministry Council meetings held in the interim

1. Corrections to the minutes are to be requested.

2. Final approval of the minutes as corrected

Reports - *the following areas of leadership of the church are to report in writing in*

Matters of Spiritual Oversight and Leadership Ministry

7/5/07 Modifications Included and Additional Considerations

Pastoral
Eldership and Diaconate Report (as appropriate or requested)

Matters of Stewardship

Trustees

All Financial Reports

Task Force and other ministry groups should report (as appropriate or requested),

General Matters of the Church Ministry

Unfinished Business

Listing of the unfinished business to be considered at the meeting

1. Any additions to that list that are established by other members
2. Closing of the list of unfinished business
3. Proper consideration and parliamentary handling of the items listed.
4. Closing of unfinished business considerations.

New Considerations

Call for items to be added to a list of new recommendations and items of business consideration

1. Consideration of each item
2. Closing of new business

Communications or requests for items for future consideration.

Meeting adjourned by motion or declaration of the Moderator

Special Ministry Council Meeting Agenda - compassion or coordination

Call To Order

Opening Prayer

Explanation of the Purpose by Moderator or Pastor or their designated person(s).

Consideration of the matter

Action (Disposition of the matter)

Communications

Meeting adjournment by motion or by declaration of Moderator

Special Ministry Council Meeting Agenda - as called by a regular Ministry Council meeting

Call To Order

Opening Prayer

Explanation of the Stated Purpose as set forth by the regular Ministry Council meeting.

Consideration of the matter

Action (Disposition of the matter)

Communications

Meeting adjournment by motion or by declaration of Moderator

Amendment - These By Laws may be amended at a regular Ministry Council meeting of the church by a 2/3 majority of the total number of the Covenant Members of the church after:

- A. Properly informing each covenant member of the proposed changes,
- B. At least one Regular Ministry Council meeting where the proposed amendment was presented in written form and at least one additional following regular Ministry Council meeting for open consideration of questions, suggestions and amendments to the proposed amendment.
- C. Prayerfully considering any such proposals with the concern that nothing God would approve remains disapproved, and that nothing God would disapprove is approved by either the active or passive voices of the church.
- D. Significant modifications to the proposed amendment, shall lead to an automatic tabling of the amendment until the next regular Ministry Council meeting to allow for further prayerful consideration to determine what God would hold the church accountable to do with the proposed changes to the By Laws. Final vote to approve an amendment may be requested, accompanied by explanation, to be tabled by any member present. The request to table may be granted by simple majority of those present if the explanation is reasonable.
- E. Final consideration of any amendment, as finally agreed upon at a prior Ministry Council meeting, shall be given at a regular Ministry Council meeting and a vote shall be taken by written ballot in such a manner that the fullest number of Covenant Members may have the opportunity to vote their understandings. All ballots obtained from Covenant Members unable to attend the specific Ministry Council meeting shall be counted with the written ballots of those present, provided that such ballots are signed by that Covenant Member and it shall be required that any comments offered in reflection of their understanding of the Lord's Will for this church are to be read prior to the casting of the written ballots of the Covenant Members present at the meeting.