

COVENANT
OF THE SOUTH NORFOLK BAPTIST CHURCH

November 30, 1893

"Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith having been baptized of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, we do now, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully unite into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

"We engage, therefore, 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 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 also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, back-biting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Saviour.

"We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Saviour to secure it without delay.

"We, moreover, engage, that, when we move 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."

CONSTITUTION

As adopted by the South Norfolk Baptist Church, December 14th, 1893, being the same as is in force at the Berkley Avenue Baptist Church, with amendments to date, May 1st, 1946.

Article One

This Church shall be known and designated by the name of the South Norfolk Baptist Church.

Article Two

1. No individual shall be admitted to membership or communion in this Church who has not been immersed upon a creditable profession of faith and repentance.
2. Individuals who have thus been baptized out of the bounds of this Church, shall be required, on application for membership to produce either satisfactory evidence of baptism, or a letter of dismissal from some regular Baptist Church.

3. Unbaptized persons desiring admission into the Church shall present themselves before the Church, be examined in regard to their Christian experience, etc. If such examination prove satisfactory, they shall be received as candidates for baptism; and when immersed in gospel order, shall be entitled to receive the right hand of fellowship, to enjoy all the privileges of the Church, and be subject to all the obligations thus assumed.

Article Three

1. When any member or members, shall in the providence of God move remotely from this and nearer to some other Church, it shall be the duty of such to apply for a letter of dismission, which shall be granted, if the individual be in full standing: and unless such application is made, after twelve months' removal, an satisfactory reason must be given for such delay. Members shall be held subject to the jurisdiction of this Church until regularly received by another.

2. Letters of dismission shall remain in force for a period of six months only from date, and shall contain a request to the Church which which they may be deposited to motify this Church of the fact.

Article Four

1. Every member shall be expected to attend the regular business meetings of the Church as follows: the annual business meeting for the election of officers, Monday night after the first Sunday in December; quarterly business meetings, Monday night following the second Sunday in April, Monday night following the second Sunday in July, and Monday night following the second Sunday in October.

2. The Pastor of the Church shall have power at any time to convene the Church to examine the claims of candidates for bapitism or membership. He shall also have power, with the concurrence of one or more of the Deacons, to call meetings for business whenever it may be deemed necessary.

Article Five

1. It shall be the duty of the Church to secure the stated ministrat-ion of the Word by a competent minister of the Gospel of the same faith and order, who shall be countenanced and sustained by the Church in all his lawful endeavors, and for whose comfortable maintenance and his household (if any he may have) faithful provision shall be made.

2. The connection between the Pastor and the Church shall not be discussed by either party without giving the other three months previous notice of the intention to dissolve it, except in the three following cases; 1st, when the dissolution is affected by mutual consent. 2nd, when the Pastor is convicted of immoral conduct. 3rd, when the Church is guilty of a gross violation of the compact made with her Pastor.

Article Six

1. The Church shall avail herself of the service of Deacons, one-third of whom shall be elected annually, to serve for a term of three years. No Deacon shall be eligible for re-election until one year after the expiration of his term of office. The number of Deacons was fixed at fifteen by the quarterly business meeting Monday night following the second Sunday in April, 1946. The Deacons shall meet one month prior to the Annual Business

meeting for the nomination of officers.

2. It shall be the duty of the Deacons to see that arrangements are made for the support of the Pastor are faithfully attended to, and to see that the indigent members of the Church have their wants supplied. Moreover, it shall be their duty to aid the Pastor in visiting the sick and the afflicted; and in his absence they shall endeavor to have the pulpit supplied and see that the regular meetings are kept up, and faithfully observed.

3. The Deacons shall constitute a standing committee with authority to enquire into and make recommendations to the Church, in all matters of discipline.

4. No case of discipline shall be brought before the Church previous to the consideration of it by the "Committee", unless under such circumstances as obviously to justify a departure from this rule. When a case before the church, they shall cite the persons it may be necessary there to appear and make such arrangements as shall facilitate the action of the Church.

Article Seven

1. The Church shall avail herself of the services of a Clerk, Treasurer, and such other officers as from time to time may be deemed necessary.

Article Eight

The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed at least once a month, at such time as may be supposed proper. Every member shall be expected to attend upon this ordinance and the repeated wilful neglect of it, if persisted in after remonstrance and instruction by the Pastor, the Deacons, or the Church, shall be regarded as demanding exclusion from the Church.

Article Nine

1. Every member shall be held subject to the jurisdiction of the Church, and shall be required to submit to its decision. A majority of the Church shall rule in all cases, except such as may otherwise be provided for. Every member shall be held liable to Church discipline who shall wilfully and habitually neglect the stated meetings of the Church whether for business or devotion - who shall cast injurious reflections upon a brother - aid in circulating reports affecting unfavorably the Christian character of a brother, bring charges against a brother contrary to the rule in Matthew 18:15-17, indulge irreconcilable enmity against a brother, and refuse to hear the Church, reproach the Church for any of its acts before unbelievers; hold and teach doctrines contrary to the doctrines of the cross, disturb the peace of the Church or who shall "in fine" live in the wilful neglect of any known duty, the wilful commission of any known sin, or wilfully violate any scriptural rule.

Article Ten

1. At each Communion Season, a collection shall be taken up for the benefit of the poor of the Church, which shall be distributed by the Deacons and concerning which they shall report annually, when the Church may give any special directions concerning it.

2. The Pastor, with the advice of two or more of the Deacons, may take up extra collections at any time.

Article Eleven

The property of this Church shall be vested in the hands of three Trustees under such arrangements as shall most effectually secure a legal tenure. The immediate management of the Meeting House shall be committed to the hands of the Pastor and the Deacons, who shall be privileged to allow or prohibit the use of the same on all occasions, but any two of them may prevent its use. If at any time a majority of the Church shall depart from the principles embodied in the annexed "Declaration of Faith" the property of the Church shall belong to the minority, however, small, who adhere to these principles.

Article Twelve

These articles (except the second article and the last clause of the eleventh) may be altered or amended with the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present at any regular business meeting of the Church, provided such alterations or amendments, unless unanimous consent is given for their immediate consideration, shall lay over until the next regular business meeting before being acted upon.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions adopted by the South Norfolk Baptist Church in regular business sessions.

First, realizing that a pipe organ is a very delicate instrument, and that considerable expense is attached to its operation, and having made inquiry among our sister churches as to the policy governing the use of their organs; We the Board of Deacons in special session Sunday morning, June 21, 1925 recommend that practice on the pipe organ of the South Norfolk Baptist Church be limited to the duly elected Church Organist, Assistant Church Organist, and the Pianist of the Sunday School, when said Pianist shall have qualified as hereinafter provided.

Provided that the duly elected Pianist of the Sunday School shall upon presentation of evidence that said Pianist had completed twelve hours of instruction on a Pipe organ under an accredited teacher of pipe organ music, be permitted to arrange with the Church Organist for one practice period, of one hour, weekly during the term of office of said Sunday School Pianist.

Second, that there may be economy, continuity of purpose and plans in the purchase, sale and change of church property, we, the Board of Deacons of the South Norfolk Baptist Church, recommend that the church reaffirm the responsibilities of the Trustees; namely, First, that all changes, sales and purchases of church property, rests solely in the hands of said trustees as the duly elected custodians of church property and the legal representatives of the church, subject to their instruction by the church.

Third, that all organizations of the church be enjoined to refrain from contracting debts which shall obligate them or their successors to make payments extending over a period of months or years.

Fourth, it shall be the duty of the financial secretary at the end of each fiscal year to present to the Board of Deacons the names of all members of the church who have not contributed to the church during the previous year according to the record of the financial secretary. These persons shall automatically be placed on an inactive list by the deacons, during the time that any member is on the inactive list they shall not be entitled to vote or be elected to office in the church. Should any such person resume their church obligations within one year they may be returned to the active list by action of the Board of Deacons. The deacons may excuse such persons as they judge to be incapable because of physical or other disability of meeting the requirements of this rule. The membership of all others shall automatically expire at the end of one year on the delinquent list.

Adopted by the South Norfolk Baptist Church at its Annual Business Meeting December 5, 1938.

RESOLUTION:

Be it resolved that a nominating committee be secured for the purpose of presenting to the church, nominees for teachers and officers of the Sunday School, for officers of the Training Union, and General officers of the W.M.U. This committee shall be formed as follows:

The deacons will make recommendations to the church for approval. On this committee there must be two deacons and at least two women. There shall be seven on this committee in all, and they shall be taken equally from the three organizations. The term of office shall be for one year and no member shall be eligible for re-election on this committee in consecutive years.

(Adopted by the South Norfolk Baptist Church, July 10, 1950 at its Quarterly Business Meeting.)

(Explanation)

The committee is to be elected at the July Quarterly Business Meeting and will function as follows:

1. Sunday School

Bring first the nomination of the Superintendent. Upon election the nominating committee shall be supplemented by the Superintendent which will bring to the church nomination of the general officers, Associate Superintendent, Department Superintendents, Secretary, Chorister, Pianist, and other needed Officers. The nominating committee shall be enlarged by the addition of these officers and will complete the list of nominations of all teachers and departmental officers. (Vacation Bible School officers should be secured by the same procedure.)

The completion of the election of these officers should not be later than the first week in September.

2. Training Union

The nominating committee shall bring to the church a nominee for Training Union Director. Upon election he shall be added to the committee to select nominees for the general officers which include Associate Director, Secretary, Pianist, and Chorister and upon the election the committee shall be enlarged by these officers to bring the nominees for leaders and counselors and sponsors.

The completion of the election of these officers should not be later than the first week in September.

3. W.M.U.

The nominating committee shall select first the President who in turn will be added to the committee to select the general officers including the Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Young People's Leader. These in turn shall be added to the committee for nominating Circle Chairmen, and leaders of the auxiliary organizations. (Sunbeam Band, Junior and Intermediate G. A., Junior and Intermediate R. A., Y. W. A. and Young Business Girl's Circle.)

The completion of the election of these officers should not be later than the first week in December.

RESOLUTION:

1. That a Church Council be established.
2. That the purpose of the council be to make a comprehensive calendar of all the church activities, and correlate all phases of each organizations' program.
3. That the membership of the council be composed of the following: Pastor-Chairman, Educational Director, Church Secretary, Sunday School Supt., Training Union Director, WMU President, Music Director, Representative from the Board of Deacons, two members at large, and others to be added as our church grows.
4. That the council's work be approved by the Board of Deacons and the Church before it is put in operation.
5. That the council meet at times stated by the council itself and be subject to called meetings by the Chairman.

Adopted by the South Norfolk Baptist Church, November, 1953

The Constitution was amended October 10, 1955 at the Quarterly Business Meeting as follows:

Original: Article Four, Section 1

"Every member shall be expected to attend the regular business meetings of the church as follows: The annual business meeting for the election of officers, Monday night after the first Sunday in December; Quarterly Business Meetings, Monday night following the second Sunday in April, Monday night following the second Sunday in July, and Monday night following the second Sunday in October.

Amended: Article Four, Section 1

"Every member shall be expected to attend the regular business meetings of the church as follows: The annual business meeting for the election of church officers, (Clerk, Treasurer, Deacons, standing Committees, etc.) Wednesday night after the first Sunday in December; Quarterly Business Meetings, Wednesday night following the second Sunday in April, Wednesday night following the second Sunday in July, and Wednesday night following the second Sunday in October.

July 18, 1956

1. Eliminate the clauses whereby the S. S. Supt. automatically becomes chairman of the Board of Deacons. The Board is to elect its own chairman each year.

2. Announcements of any business meetings, whether regular or special and the business to come up are to be made at least 10 days before any such meetings. Announcements are to be made either from the pulpit, or church bulletin, or weekly Messenger.

Covenant
of the South Norfolk Baptist Church

May 5, 1965

Amendment adopted for the nomination and election of Deacons.

1. Nominations may be made from the floor provided the nominee meets the Biblical qualifications and his consent to serve has been secured.

2. Nominees (from the Deacons) for deacons will be announced 10 days in advance of the annual business meeting.

"We also engage to maintain family and social devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our blind and lame; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, back-biting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the Kingdom of our Lord.

"We further engage to value one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in prayer; to give each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the price of our Saviour to secure it without delay.

"We, moreover, engage, that, when we move 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."

CONSTITUTION

As adopted by the South Norfolk Baptist Church, December 14th, 1893, being the same as in force at the Jenkins Avenue Baptist Church, with amendments to date, May 1st, 1946.

Article I

This Church shall be known and designated by the name of the South Norfolk Baptist Church.

Article Two

1. No individual shall be admitted to membership or communion in this Church who has not been baptized upon a credible profession of faith and repentance.

2. Individuals who have thus been baptized out of the bonds of this Church, shall be required, on application for admission to produce either satisfactory evidence of baptism, or a letter of dismission from some regular Baptist Church.