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MANUAL

OF THE

First Baptist Church of Ringoes.

CONTAINING

AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE CHURCH,

ARTICLES OF FAITH,

COVENANT, AND CONSTITUTION.

RINGOES, N. J.

PRINTED FOR THE CHURCH.

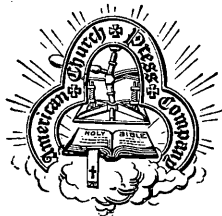
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4 St. Mark's Place, N. Y.

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT.

THE First Baptist Church of Ringoes was constituted by mutual agreement of its constituent members September 1, 1868, and was recognized by a council of neighboring churches the following day. The names of the twelve constituent members were as follows : David F. Bond and wife, from Lambertville Church ; Wm. Daily and wife, from Flemington Church ; Eldridge C. Green and wife, from Sandy Ridge Church ; Aaron C. Hill and wife, from Flemington Church ; John Reading and wife, from Flemington Church ; Mrs. Hannah Young, from Sandy Ridge Church ; A. B. Larison, M.D., from Sandy Ridge Church.

During the first year ministers from neighboring churches or theological students from Crozier Seminary supplied the pulpit.

Divine Service being held each Lord's Day in the chapel, which had been built and dedicated previous to the organization of the Church.

During this time several were added to the Church by Baptism. The first pastor was Rev. A. B. Larison, who served the Church from December, 1869, to September, 1872.

During this period the Church was blessed with two revivals, and fifty-one members were added by Baptism. On

- the 25th of September, 1872, Brother Larison entered into rest. For nearly a year after his death the pulpit was supplied by students from Crozier Theological Seminary.

September 14, 1873, Rev. E. J. Pearce, of Upland, Pa., accepted the call of the Church, and is the present pastor. The Church membership at the present date (June 6, 1874), is eighty.

ARTICLES OF FAITH.

ART. 1. We believe that there is one only living and true God, the Maker, Upholder, and Governor of all things.

ART. 2. We believe that God has given a revelation to man, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; that they were written by men divinely inspired; that they contain no mixture of error; that they are the only ground of Christian doctrine, and that they are an infallible rule of faith and practice.

ART. 3. We believe that there is one only living and true God, an Infinite, Intelligent Spirit, whose name is JEHOVAH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and Earth; inexpressibly glorious in honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the FATHER, the SON and the HOLY GHOST; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

ART. 4. We believe the Scriptures teach that man was created holy, and free from sin, but he wilfully violated the law of his Maker, and fell from his first estate, and lost all communion with his God; and that in consequence of his apostasy from God all his posterity come into the world destitute of holiness, without the least inclination to spiritual goodness, "prone to evil," and are by nature "children of wrath," subject to disease, material and spiritual, and to eternal death.

ART. 5. We believe that the only way of salvation from this state of guilt and condemnation is by faith in the righteousness and atonement of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, who took upon Him our nature, came into this world, suffered and died upon the Cross, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

ART. 6. We believe that in view of the atonement all men are called upon to repent, to a reformation of life, and to the exercise of faith in the LORD JESUS CHRIST; and the offer of salvation is to be made to all who will believe. But that those only who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and have received the gift of repentance and faith, shall be finally saved.

ART. 7. We believe that all who ever have been, or ever shall be, brought to the exercise of faith and repentance, were chosen in CHRIST JESUS before the world began; that in consequence of the eternal love of God to them through JESUS CHRIST, the influences of the Holy Spirit are given to regenerate the heart, without which none ever would, in the exercise of their own free agency, turn from sin to holiness.

ART. 8. We believe that nothing can separate true believers from the love of God, but that they are kept by His power through faith unto salvation; yet they are liable to frequent relapses into sin, for which the Scriptures abound in admonitory cautions, which are to be faithfully urged by the ministers of the Gospel.

ART. 9. We hold that entire freedom from sin is never attained in this life; yet constant growth in grace is not only desirable, but possible, and the importance of which ought to be urged upon every professing Christian.

ART. 10. That those who die in a state of infancy, before they are capable of distinguishing between good and evil, are saved through the merits of CHRIST.

ART. 11. We believe that there will be a resurrection from the dead, both of the just and the unjust, and that CHRIST will come the second time to judge the quick and the dead ; when those who die impenitent and unreconciled to God, will be sentenced to everlasting shame and misery as a just dessert for their sins. And those who have been renovated by grace, and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, will be completely delivered from the dominion of sin, and admitted into the New Jerusalem with songs of everlasting rejoicing, and so shall they be ever with the LORD.

CHURCH COVENANT.

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 in the name 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 enter 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 of our means, according to our several ability, as the LORD shall

prosper us, 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 and excessive anger; to shun all places of vanity, to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; 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 sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to deal in tenderness with the infirmities of each other according to the rule in Matt. xviii. 15-17, and v. 23-24. We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we shall 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.

ADOPTED, 1870.

SECTION I.

OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.

ART. 1. The officers of the Church shall consist of the Pastor, Deacons, Clerk, Treasurer, and Trustees.

ART. 2. The Pastor shall have the spiritual oversight of the Church, and shall be elected by the members.

ART. 3. There shall be three Deacons appointed for an indefinite period of time.

It shall be the duty of the Deacons to take charge of the financial affairs of the church; they shall collect the Pastor's salary—having the congregation so divided among themselves, that each one shall have a certain portion from which to make collections. Each one shall upon each successive year, visit, as soon as possible, every member of the Church in his district, and solicit from said member such contributions as he may feel it his duty and privilege to give toward the support of the Gospel. A record of such contributions shall be kept.

ART. 4. The Treasurer shall be appointed annually from among the Deacons. It shall be his duty to keep a correct account of all moneys paid in and paid out. At each annual Church meeting he shall make a report of all money received and expended—stating for what purpose it was expended. He shall not pay out money except by order of the Church.

ART. 5. It shall be the duty of the Clerk to keep correct minutes of all meetings of the Church, and read the same to the Church when called upon so to do. He shall keep a list of the names of the Church members, officers, and various committees, and furnish lists of the same to the chairman of a meeting when desired. At the expiration of his term of office he shall transfer all books and papers belonging to the Church to his successor.

ART. 6. The Trustees shall be the legal custodians of the Church property. They may, by order of the Church, sell or purchase Church property, and convey or receive titles.

The Trustees shall not allow the Church building to be used for a place of entertainment at *which fees of admission are charged*.

SECTION II.

MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH.

ART. 1. The stated meetings of the Church are the following:

For public worship and Christian instruction twice on the Sabbath.

A prayer and conference meeting on Thursday evening of each week.

A covenant meeting on Saturday afternoon before each Communion season—that is, before the first LORD'S Day in February, and in every alternate month throughout the year.

A meeting for business on the Saturday afternoon before the first LORD'S Day in February, and in every alternate month throughout the year.

ART. 2. The business meeting before the first LORD'S Day in February shall be the annual meeting, and shall convene at the close of the covenant meeting held at that time; at this meeting shall be elected Trustees, a Clerk, a Treasurer and Standing Committee; and such other officers and committees as the Church may think proper. At this

meeting the Treasurer shall make his report, and all other annual reports, which the Church shall require, shall then be presented.

ART. 3. In the election of officers, all the members of the Church shall be entitled to vote. All questions shall be decided by a majority of votes, except when the Church shall have previously determined otherwise.

ART. 4. The Pastor shall be "ex-officio" moderator of all stated meetings of the Church, and in his absence the Church shall elect a moderator for each occasion.

ART. 5. The established rules of order in other deliberative assemblies shall be observed in the transaction of business.

SECTION III.

ADMISSION OF MEMBERS.

ART. 1. Persons desiring to unite with the Church by baptism, must first give satisfaction to the Pastor concerning their religious character, and be by him proposed to the Church for membership, at a stated meeting, previous to the one on which they are to be examined.

ART. 2. On the question of reception being put, a vote of two-thirds of the members present shall be necessary to elect the candidate a member.

ART. 3. Persons wishing to unite with this Church by letter or experience must first apply to the Pastor, and by him their case will be brought before the Church; three-fourths of the votes cast shall be necessary to elect them members.

SECTION IV.

DISMISSION OF MEMBERS.

ART. 1. In voting letters of dismission to other churches the Clerk of this Church shall specify in the letter the period of time each shall be valid.

ART. 2. No letter shall be given to the individual who wishes to remove his membership, but shall be sent to the clerk of the church with which he wishes to unite.

ART. 3. The Clerk shall issue no letter of dismissal until certified by the Treasurer, that the pecuniary obligations of the applicant have been discharged.

SECTION V.

COLLECTION OF FUNDS.

ART. 1. The Pastor's salary shall be paid quarterly, and shall be raised as the Church may from time to time direct. All the members are expected to contribute to it as the LORD may prosper them.

ART. 2. A collection shall be taken at the morning Service of each LORD's Day; this shall go toward paying the current expenses of the Church.

ART. 3. A collection for the benefit of the poor members of the Church shall be taken at every Communion season, immediately after the administration of the same.

ART. 4. Other expenses of the Church shall be paid as the Church may from time to time direct.

ART. 5. It shall be the duty of the Pastor and Treasurer, jointly and severally, to ascertain, as far as possible, the amount collected yearly within the Church and congregation for general objects of benevolence, and for the Treasurer to report the same in his annual report.

ART. 6. Any article of this Constitution may be amended, at the annual meeting of the Church, by a two-thirds vote of the members present; such amendment having been proposed at a previous regular meeting; and any article may be suspended by a majority of votes at any regular meeting of the Church.