

Constitution of
The First Regular Baptist Church
of Northumberland, Pennsylvania
(adopted February 6, 1980)

Preamble

We the members of The First Regular Baptist Church of Northumberland, Pennsylvania, do ordain and establish the following articles to which we voluntarily submit ourselves:

Article I - Name

The name of this church shall be The First Regular Baptist Church of Northumberland, Pennsylvania.

Article II- Purpose

The purpose of this church is to glorify the God of the Scriptures in promoting His worship, evangelizing sinners, and edifying saints. To this end we are committed to proclaiming God's perfect Law and His glorious Gospel of Grace in Jesus Christ throughout the world, and to defending "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 3)

Article III - Articles of Faith

We do hereby adopt as the fullest expression of our faith the London Confession of Faith of 1689 in either its original or modern language texts. The ultimate authority in all matters of faith, order, and morals is and must be the Bible alone, which truth is clearly set forth in the opening article of the Confession itself. This historic document, however, is an excellent summary of "the things most surely believed among us." We accept the same not as an authoritative rule or code of faith, whereby we are to be fettered, but as an assistance to us in controversy, a confirmation in faith, and a means of edification in righteousness. Here the members of our church will have a body of Divinity in small compass and by means of Scriptural proofs will be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us. (1 Peter 3:15)

Article IV - Membership

Section 1. Requirements for Membership

Any person who professes repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been

baptized upon the profession of his faith, who expresses substantial agreement with the doctrines and aims of this church, and who intends to give wholehearted support to its ministry and to submit to its government shall be eligible for membership.

Section 2. Types of Membership

Each member of the church is acknowledged to form a vital part of the body and to have a peculiar function in the life of that body (I Corinthians 12:14-27, Ephesians 4:11-16). Practical considerations, however, require that certain distinctions be recognized in the membership of this church.

A. Regular members. All who are received into the membership of the church according to the procedures set forth in Section 3 of this Article, who continue in regular attendance at the stated meetings of the church, and who do not come under the corrective discipline of the church as set forth in Article VI shall be considered regular members in good standing and entitled to all the rights and privileges of membership in the church.

B. Temporary members. Persons who come to live in our area for a limited period of time (college students, military personnel, persons on special work assignments, etc.) may be received into the membership of the church on the same basis and in the same manner as persons who have permanent residence in our geographical area. If such a person is already a member of a church in his place of permanent residence, he need not be released from the membership of his "home church" but will be regarded as a temporary member while in our midst, enjoying all the rights and privileges of regular membership. When such a person terminates his period of temporary residence and leaves our area, he will automatically be released to the fellowship of his "home church" and no longer be regarded as a member of this church.

C. Associate members. Regular members who move away from our area and who can not find another local church with which they can conscientiously unite will, at their request, be retained as associate members of this church. Such persons must maintain regular communication with the church in order to maintain their associate membership in it. Nevertheless, they are urged to seek diligently a church with which they can unite elsewhere. An associate member shall not be allowed to vote in any business meeting of the church. At the discretion of the elders, associate membership may also be granted to invalids, Christian workers, and others whose relation to the church involves unusual circumstances.

Section 3. Procedures in the Reception of New Members.

A. A person who desires to become a member of the church may apply to the elders and request to be interviewed by them. During the interview the elders shall seek to determine whether that person has a creditable profession of faith in Christ, has been Scripturally baptized, is in substantial agreement with the doctrines of the church, and intends to give wholehearted support to its ministry and to submit to its discipline.

B. If the applicant is or has been a member of another church, special effort will be made to determine the person's standing in that church and his reasons for leaving. At the discretion of the elders, a letter of inquiry concerning the person's standing may be sent to that church before his acceptance as a member in this church is determined.

C. If the elders are satisfied that the applicant meets the requirements for membership, they shall announce the same to the congregation on two successive Sundays. The congregation shall pray for the applicant and make any pertinent comments to the eldership

concerning the applicant's manner of life or doctrine. If no objection is raised which the elders consider to be valid, the person will be publicly received into the membership at a stated meeting of the church, usually, the next meeting for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The elders may postpone the reception of a person unto membership until proper investigation can be made concerning objections which in their judgment are sufficiently serious.

Section 4. Termination of membership.

A. By physical death. When a member of the church is removed from our midst by death, his name shall automatically be removed from the membership roll.

B. By dismissal. When it is so requested, the elders may grant to a departing member in good standing a letter of dismissal to the fellowship of another church. No such letter may be given to a member who is at the time under the corrective discipline of this church. The elders may refuse to grant a letter of dismissal to any church which in their judgment is disloyal to "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) or does not exercise godly care over its members.

C. By exclusion. If a member habitually absents himself from the stated meetings of the church without showing just cause, or if due to relocation he ceases to maintain a vital contact with the church, he may be excluded from the membership at the discretion of the elders. Also, any member who personally so requests may, after due admonition, be excluded from the membership. In such cases, no congregational approval of the action shall be needed; the elders shall simply announce to the congregation that such a person is no longer a member. If an excluded member applies again for membership, the procedures set forth in Section 3 of this Article will again be followed.

D. By excommunication. The grounds and

procedure for such action are set forth in Article VI, Section 2C.

Article V - Conduct

The conduct required of members is summarized in the church covenant, which follows:

We the members of the First Regular Baptist Church of Northumberland, desiring to be a church which brings honor to God, do set forth the following covenant of membership.

We acknowledge that we are wretched sinners, fully deserving of the wrath and curse of God for all eternity. We believe, however, that by the grace of God we have been reconciled to Him on the basis of the redemptive work of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who took our sins upon Himself, bearing the penalty in His own body on the tree, and fulfilled in His own person the obedience we owe to the righteousness of God. We believe that this redemption has been effectually applied to us His people by His Holy Spirit, who works in us true faith and repentance, thereby uniting us to Christ. We therefore renounce all merit of our own and put all our trust only in the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Since we have been bought with a price and are not our own, we desire to honor, serve, worship, praise, and glorify God in all that we say and do, living our daily lives in loyal obedience to all the moral precepts established in His Word. To this end we will endeavor to maintain secret prayer and regular study of the Scriptures, that God might grant us growth in grace and in our knowledge of Him. We will labor for the extension of the kingdom of God both at home and to the ends of the earth, prayerfully seeking to seize every opportunity to bear witness to our faith in Christ both by consistent Christian conduct and by the testimony of our lips.

Recognizing the centrality of the home in the purposes of God, we will seek to obey the directives of His Word concerning family life, as loving husbands, submissive wives, and obedient children. Further, we will give priority to family worship and other activities necessary to the building of loving, communicative families who are maturing spiritually, emotionally, socially, and intellectually.

We recognize the church to be the body of Christ and acknowledge the importance of each member to the proper functioning and growth of the whole body. Therefore, we will seek to love one another without offense or hypocrisy, to labor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, to watch over one another for good, to encourage, comfort, and admonish one another in love, and to pray with and for one another. We will not neglect the assembling of ourselves together, but will regularly attend the stated meetings of the church unless providentially hindered, that we might render to God the corporate worship which is due unto Him, and that we might endeavor for the edification and spiritual benefit of the whole body. We also promise to cheerfully support the work of Christ in His church with tithes and offerings and to willingly submit ourselves to the authority of the overseers of the church.

Finally, amidst the good and evil of this life, we will humbly and earnestly seek to live to the honor and glory of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Amen.

Article VI - Church Discipline

Section 1. Formative Discipline.

Every disciple (follower) of Christ must be under His discipline (His instruction and correction), which is administered to each one through the church, according to I Corinthians 12: 12-27 and other passages. Mutual

submission to one another and to the overseers whom the Lord has set over His church (Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 5:5) will result in the sanctification of each member individually and of the whole body of the church collectively (Ephesians 4:11-16). There are occasions, however, when failure in the application of this formative discipline makes the application of corrective discipline necessary.

Section 2. Corrective Discipline.

A. General Statement. Corrective discipline becomes necessary when heretical doctrine or disorderly or scandalous conduct appears among the members of the church. In all such cases, reasonable efforts must be made to resolve difficulty, correct error, and remove offense through counsel and admonition before more drastic steps are taken (Galatians 6:1, James 5:19-20). When admonition is not heeded, suspension of some of the privileges of membership may need to be imposed, and if this measure fails, excommunication from the membership of the church may be necessary. The principles of Scripture given in the passages cited below must be carefully followed. Corrective discipline has for its aims the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the church, and the restoration and spiritual growth of the offender.

B. Suspension. (1) Any conduct on the part of a member which disturbs the peace of the church or prejudices its testimony may require that the offending brother or sister be debarred by action of the elders from participating in certain activities of the church according to the gravity of the offense. A suspension shall be announced to the congregation by the elders and shall remain in force until the suspended member gives evidence of true repentance and change of conduct. When a suspended member can be restored to full fellowship, this also shall be announced to the congregation by the elders. While a member is under such discipline, he shall be treated by the congregation

according to the directions given in I Thessalonians 3:6-15. Although such a person is considered to be walking disorderly, he must still be regarded as a member and not as one cut off from the church.

(2) If a member has sinned publicly but shows hopeful signs of repentance, including submission to the admonitions of the elders, it may still be necessary to suspend him for a time from some of the privileges of membership lest reproach be brought upon the church, lest others be emboldened to sin, and lest the offender himself fail to test his own soul and realize the gravity of his offense. Those who humbly submit to the imposed discipline shall afterwards be wholly forgiven and publicly received back into the full fellowship of the church.

(3) In the case where a person is accused or suspected of gross sin and absents himself from the congregation, refusing to meet with the elders that the matter may be investigated, the elders shall announce to the congregation that that person is suspended from the membership, and such suspension shall continue in force as long as the conditions giving rise to it continue.

C. Excommunication. (1) According to the teaching of Holy Scripture a congregation must cut off from its fellowship and visible membership any person who teaches or insists on holding false and heretical doctrine (1 Timothy 1:19-20; 6:3-5), who blatantly or persistently conducts himself in a manner inconsistent with his Christian profession (I Corinthians 5:1 ff; Matthew 18:15 ff), or who persists in disturbing the unity or peace of the church (Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:9-11). In such a case the elders shall make earnest efforts to bring the offender to true repentance and reformation, but if these efforts fail, they shall report the same to the congregation at a specially called business meeting of the church and recommend that the offender be excommunicated -- which must be done, according to

Scripture (Matthew 18:17; I Corinthians 5:4), by action of the entire church. To be valid, an act of excommunication must have the approval of at least two thirds of the members present and voting.

(2) It is the duty of the church to forgive and restore to full membership any excommunicated person who gives satisfactory evidence of his repentance and reformation (II Corinthians 2:6-8). This shall be done, on recommendation of the elders, in a duly convened business meeting of the church by at least two thirds of the members present and voting.

Article VII - Ordinances

Section 1. General statement.

There are two ordinances of special significance which our Lord has commanded us to observe, namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. (These are sometimes referred to as "sacraments".) Neither of them has saving merit, nor is any grace imparted to the recipient through the water of Baptism or the bread and the cup of the Supper. These ordinances are not means of "special grace", but they are "special means of grace" and powerful aids to the faith of the believers who participate in them.

Section 2. Baptism.

Only confessed disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ are proper candidates for Baptism, and all such persons should be baptized. Believing that Baptism is the God-ordained door of entrance into the visible community of the people of God, we shall receive into the membership of the church only those who have been baptized in the Biblical manner, which is by immersion and "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2: 38ff; Matthew 28:19).

Section 3. The Lord's Supper

Whereas Baptism is the initiatory ordinance by which one enters the visible church and should be observed

only once by each believer, the Lord's Supper should be celebrated frequently by the assembled church (I Corinthians 11:26). While this is a most holy ordinance and should be observed with solemnity and dignity, the bread and the cup of the Supper are and remain only symbols of the broken Body and the shed Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper shall, under normal circumstances, be celebrated by the church on the first Lord's Day of each month.

Article VIII - Church Officers

Section 1. General statement

Jesus Christ alone is Head of the church (Colossians 1:18), and He governs His church through officebearers whom He appoints and who are endowed by His Spirit with the gifts and graces needed to accomplish their work. Office-bearers in the church are of two kinds, elders (also called "bishops") and deacons (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13). It is the duty of the church to seek and discover among its members those to whom Christ the Lord has imparted the necessary gifts and graces for office-bearing, and after formally recognizing them by common suffrage, to set them apart by united prayer, and then to submit to their authority.

Section 2. Elders

A. Whereas in new or small congregations only one man may have the gifts requisite to his being recognized as an elder, the Scriptures appear to indicate that normally there should be a plurality of elders in the local church (Acts 20:17; Philippians 1:1). These are also called "bishops" (meaning "overseers") because they are charged with the oversight of the assembly (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2). While every elder bears spiritual rule (and must be "apt to teach"), some will be more engaged in formal and public teaching, while others will be more exclusively engaged in the details of ruling. See I Timothy 5:17.

B. In view of the fact that the responsibilities of this

office are numerous and grave, it is highly desirable that at least one elder should devote his full time to the work of the ministry and the oversight of the church. Such "teaching-ruling elders" are usually referred to as "pastors", for while the ruling elders all share the pastoral responsibility (I Peter 5:2), the "pastor-teachers" "labor in the word and in teaching" "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry" (I Timothy 5:17; Ephesians 4:11-12). The church is responsible to give adequate financial support to such men (I Corinthians 9:9-11; I Timothy 5:17-18). Any man thus called to this office must be able conscientiously to affirm his agreement with the Confession of Faith and the Constitution of the church. The Pastor shall seek to discharge all the functions of his office as set forth in the Scriptures and in keeping with the exercise of his own distinctive gifts of ministry. In conjunction with the ruling elders, he shall have general oversight of all the church and its ministry and functions.

C. Elders are responsible for the spiritual ministrations of the church, the implementation of discipline, and the oversight of the souls of the church's members "as they that shall give account" to God. (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:2-3). The elders shall have the general oversight of all the church's affairs. The conduct of all church business and the work of all church organizations shall be subject to their supervision and government. The elders shall appoint the Principal of the Christian School, the Superintendent of the Sunday School, and the directors of all church groups. These in turn, upon request, shall be responsible to present to the elders for their approval, all proposed teachers, leaders, and programs. The elders shall also appoint the church treasurer, church clerk, and any other necessary positions. Gifted men who are not recognized as elders may engage in public preaching and teaching, provided they are godly in character and walk, but the exercise of their gifts must be under the direction and control of the elders. While the elders are overseers of the flock, they

are themselves members of the flock. Therefore, each elder as an individual is under the oversight of his fellow elders and is subject to the same discipline as are all the members of the church.

D. The qualifications for a man chosen to fill the office of elder are clearly set forth in Scripture, particularly in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The church should endeavor to discover and then formally to recognize all the men whom the Holy Spirit has endowed with the requisite gifts and graces and has set over the church, but only such men. Thus when men have been ordained to this office, the church will have the confidence that it has recognized the overseers whom the Holy Spirit has set over it (Acts 20:28). It is evident, therefore, that neither the number of elders nor the length of their term of office can be fixed by the church.

Section 3. Deacons

A. The qualifications for a man chosen to fulfill the office of deacon are particularly set forth in Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13. The number of deacons shall not be fixed. The church shall choose as many as are needed for the work to be done from among the men who give evidence of having the Scriptural qualifications for that office.

B. The ministry of mercy in our church and community is a special responsibility of the diaconate. The deacons shall see that the sick, the sorrowing, the aged, and the fainthearted receive spiritual and physical comfort. They shall minister the Word of God and administer the benevolence funds of the church to those who are in need. They shall be vigilant for opportunities to do good, especially to those who are of the household of faith. They shall be watchful to assist the elders in every possible way.

C. The deacons shall have general executive powers to administer the business affairs of the church.

It shall be the deacons' responsibility to prepare the church budget and submit it to the elders each year. When the congregation has approved the budget, it will be the deacons' responsibility to administer it. The duty of caring for and maintaining the church's properties shall belong to the deacons.

D. The deacons shall not encumber, transfer, sell, or purchase any real estate for the church except by the express authorization conveyed by a majority vote of the membership present at a duly called congregational meeting. No obligation shall be incurred to spend over \$1,000.00 on one item without the special vote of the congregation, unless that item already appears in the adopted budget.

E. The deacons must fulfill the duties of their office in cooperation with and subjection to the elders. They shall notify the elders of all their meetings so that a representative may be present.

Section 4. Appointment of Officers

A. The appointment of elders and deacons for office within the local church is the responsibility of the local church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Lord's appointment is recognized both by the inward conviction of the individual involved, and by the approval of the church observing the possession of those gifts and graces required by Scripture for the office concerned. The recognition of office bearers is a matter of such importance that it should never be dealt with without much prayerful waiting upon God and an honest perusal of the relevant passages of Scripture and a frank evaluation of those who are being considered as potential office bearers. Each member of the congregation has a spiritual responsibility to be intelligently informed regarding the above mentioned matters. It should be the desire of the congregation to come to one mind regarding those office bearers to whom they must submit in the Lord, but should such

unanimity not be fully realized, no less than a three-fourth majority of the members present and voting shall be required for the election of an office bearer.

B. The names of potential office-bearers shall be set before the congregation on three successive Sundays. The congregation shall then be urged to examine carefully the Scriptural qualifications (I Timothy 3 and Titus 1) and to seek the Lord's clear direction regarding the nominee. Any pertinent comments are to be made to the elders during this time. When the time comes to consider a nomination during a business meeting of the church, the candidate for office and any members of his immediate family who are present shall be requested to leave the room while his qualifications are openly discussed by the entire congregation in the fear of God and the light of Scripture. A written ballot shall then be taken. The vote will stand as it is first given in the written ballot. Following the recognition of an office-bearer by Vote of the congregation, he shall be publicly installed in his office at a regular worship service by the prayer of the whole church and the laying on of the hands of the existing elders.

C. Each year, one month prior to the annual congregational meeting, a questionnaire shall be distributed to the members which shall include an opportunity for each member to submit in writing to the elders suggestions, if any, for nominations to the office of elder or deacon. The questionnaires shall be returned by two weeks prior to the annual meeting, and any member receiving a substantial number of the suggested nominations submitted, allowing his name to stand, and having the approval of the elders, shall be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting for consideration. A future congregational meeting will be called to follow through on the procedure for recognition of elder or deacon, as outlined in the above paragraph. The elders alone may at any other time during the year nominate a candidate or candidates to either or both

offices and call a special congregational business meeting for their considerations. In no case may a man be nominated to either office without his knowledge and prior consent.

D. Office-bearers are subject to the same rules of discipline as are other members of the church. They shall hold office as long as they are faithful to their calling and have the confidence of the congregation. If the life or ministry of an office-bearer shall violate the standards of this church, and a majority of the other officers so recommends, the man may be released from his office immediately following a specially-called congregational meeting by a majority vote of those members present and voting. An officer may, however, resign his office without prejudice if for good and valid reasons he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of it.

Section 5. Advisory Committee.

While the Scriptures appear to indicate that normally there should be a plurality of elders and of deacons in the local church, there may be times in the church when God has only raised up one or two men who have clearly manifested the gifts and graces requisite for the offices. In such cases it would be contrary to the Word of God to put men into an office who do not clearly meet the requirements, just for the sake of having the normal plurality of officers. Therefore, in any situation where there are less than two elders and two deacons, the congregation shall elect from its membership three men in full communion with the church, of mature judgment and unquestioned Christian character, who shall serve as an Advisory Committee to the existing officers. These men shall meet regularly with the officers of the church. They shall have no authority but shall serve in an advisory capacity. They shall serve for a term of one year or until such time as the Lord shall raise up two or more elders and two or more deacons. During the time period that an advisory committee exists, the

membership should be in prayer that God would furnish some men with the necessary gifts and graces and that He would make His calling of them clear to the congregation.

Article IX - Congregational Meetings

Section 1. Number of Meetings.

Congregational meetings shall be held quarterly for the reception of reports and the transaction of such other business as may properly be brought before the meeting. The Annual Meeting shall be held in February. The other quarterly meetings shall be held in April, July, and October. The meetings shall generally be conducted on the second Wednesday of the month. Special business meetings may be called at other times at the discretion of the elders.

Section 2. Notice of Meetings

A. Notice of all congregational meetings shall be given at regular worship services on two successive Lord's Days immediately prior to the meetings. However, in the case of an emergency, a meeting may be called on shorter notice by notifying each regular member by mail of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.

B. Meetings for the hearing of special reports or for seeking the counsel of the congregation may be called on shorter notice, but no vote may be taken or other business transacted at such meetings.

Section 3. Quorum

The regular members present at any properly convened congregational meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Section 4. Responsibility for Meetings

The elders shall arrange the details of all congregational meetings and see that all possible preparation for their successful conduct is made. One of the elders shall preside at all business meetings except

in cases where the elders decide it would be wise for one of the deacons to preside.

Section 5. Voting

A. All regular members who have reached the age of eighteen years and are in good standing in the church may vote on any question properly brought before the congregation.

B. Unanimity of heart and mind under God shall at all times be sought and prayed for (Acts 6:5), but when unanimity is not realized, not less than a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting shall be required to make a resolution valid.

Article X - Finances

The work of this church is financially dependent upon the voluntary gifts of God's people. Before the annual congregational meeting, the elders shall obtain from the deacons an estimate of the needs of the several divisions of the work, and a general budget of the proposed expenditures for the coming year. When this budget is approved by a vote of the congregation, it shall be considered the basis for the current liabilities. No committee or board is authorized to make changes in its provisions, or to make unauthorized disbursements without the consent of the congregation. The fiscal year of the church shall begin January first (1) and end December thirty-first (31).

Article XI - Affiliation

Section 1.

We acknowledge no ecclesiastical authority other than our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Head of the Church (Ephesians 5:23) and who directs the affairs of the church through elders chosen and ordained according to the precepts of Holy Scripture. The elders themselves at all times and in all their activities stand under the authority of Holy Scripture.

Section 2.

The church may and does cooperate with other likeminded churches in matters of mutual interest and concern. We may seek the assistance and counsel of other churches in matters of special concern to us, but the decision of no other church or group of churches shall at any time be acknowledged as binding on this church.

Section 3.

When it is thought desirable to have fellowship, consultation, and cooperation with local churches of like-faith and order, this church may join itself to associations of churches. Upon recommendation of the elders, such affiliations may be entered by a vote of the congregation. Withdrawal from associations may be effected by the same procedure. Delegates to such associations shall be chosen by the elders.

Article XII - By-Laws

The elders shall draft and amend from time to time, with the advice at-id consent of the deacons, such by-laws as they shall deem necessary for the efficient implementation of this Constitution; no by-law which is in violation of any of the terms of this Constitution shall be valid.

Article XIII - Amendments

Amendments of the Constitution may be adopted by a two thirds majority of the members present and voting at a congregational meeting, provided that such amendments have been distributed by the elders in written form at least two weeks prior to the congregational meeting.

Article XIV - Constitutional Revision

This Constitution may be revised by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at a quarterly business meeting, provided that such revisions have been distributed by the elders in written form at the

previous quarterly business meeting.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE FIRST REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCH OF NORTHUMBERLAND

The first minute book of the church, dated July 7, 1842 to August 7, 1859, gives an account of the origin of the church. The account begins with these words:

“Long time ago” a gentleman bequeathed to the care of the Trustees of the First Baptist Church in Philadelphia, a lot of one half acre, in the central part of Northumberland, to be held in trust by them, until a Baptist Church in that town should build a meeting house upon it for their own use. Under the direction of that missionary spirit which characterizes so many of the pastors in our Zion, Rev. D. Wait commenced laboring (in Northumberland)...

Rev. Wait preached the Word of God “in his own hired house to all who came to him”, and God used “the consistent life of brother Wait, his sound theological view and lucid expositions of divine truth” to the glory of His name. By the time he moved out of the area two or three persons had made professions of faith.

Meanwhile, Rev. C. A. Hewet had become the Pastor of the Baptist Church at Milton. Along with his ministry in Milton, he continued the Northumberland ministry which Rev. Wait had started. Those who made professions of faith became members of the Baptist Church at Milton, while they continued worshipping together in Northumberland.

The growth of the Northumberland ministry eventually led to the construction of a church building early in 1841 on the lot designated for that purpose. The building was first occupied on the Lord’s Day, July 3, 1842. On the following Thursday a membership was

constituted and a church covenant was approved. On Sunday, July 10, 1842 the Baptist Church building in Northumberland was dedicated to the service of God. Rev. C. A. Hewet led the service, and Rev. A. D. Gillette of Philadelphia preached the sermon. The text of the sermon was Psalm 26:8: "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honor dwelleth."

The articles of faith upon which the church was established are recorded in the minute book as follows:

1. of the Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter. It reveals the principles by which God will judge us, and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

2. of the true God

There is one, and only one, true and living God Whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, inexpressibly glorious in holiness, worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love, revealed under the personal relative names of 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.

3. of the Fall of Man

Man was created in a state of holiness under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but by choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, wholly given to the gratification of the world of Satan and of their own sinful

passions, and therefore, under just condemnation to eternal ruin without defense or excuse.

4. of the Way of Salvation

The salvation of sinners is wholly of grace through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God Who took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the law by His personal obedience, and made atonement for our sins by His death. Being risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, is every way qualified to be suitable, a compassionate, and an all-suffering Saviour.

5. of Justification

The great Gospel blessing which Christ of his fullness bestows on such as believe in Him is justification. It is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through His own redemption and righteousness. It brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

6. of the Freeness of Salvation

The blessings of salvation are made free by the Gospel. It is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial and obedient faith. Nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, except for his own voluntary refusal to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ, which refusal will subject him to an aggravated condemnation.

7. of Grace and Redemption

In order to be saved, we must be regenerated or born again. Regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind, and is effected in a manner above our comprehension or calculation, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel. Its proper evidence is found in the holy

faith which we bring forth to the glory of God.

8. of God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God according to which He regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners. Being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy. It encourages the use of means in the highest degree. It is ascertained by its effects in all who believe the Gospel.

9. of the Perseverance of Saints

Such only are real believers as endure unto the end. Their persevering attachment to Christ is the ground which distinguishes them from superficial professors. A special providence watches over their welfare, and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

10. of a Gospel Church

A church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His Word. Its only proper officers are Bishop or Pastor and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

11. of the Harmony of the Law and Gospel

The Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government. It is holy, just and good, and the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin: to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy

law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the means of Grace.

12. of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, with its purifying power. It is prerequisite to the privilege of a church relation and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church by the use of bread and wine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ, preceded always by solemn self-examination.

13. of the Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor and recreations, by the devout observance of all the means of grace both private and public, and by preparation for that Rest which remaineth for the people of God.

14. of Civil Government

Civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society, and magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

15. of the Righteous and the Wicked

There is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked. Such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked and under the curse, and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

16. of the World to Come

The end of the world is approaching. At the Last Day Christ will descend from heaven and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution. A solemn separation will there take place. The wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment and the righteous to endless joy. This judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.