

REVEREND ALLEN B. BAITY

THE VISION

In 1917, Reverend Allen B. Baity was given a vision by the Lord to establish a church in Athens, Alabama, that would be part of the Round Island Creek Missionary Baptist Association. Reverend Baity, along with his wife, Tennie Gilbert Baity, and other strong supporters of his God-given vision, planned and built the church known as MASON CHAPEL.

Reverend Baity loved the Lord and welcomed the task of ministering to God's children. Reverend Baity's personal home was demolished and he along with his wife, grandchildren and a small band of Christian soldiers built the church in the exact location where his home once stood. Reverend Baity decided to call the newly built structure SWEET HOME, but members of his family say he studied on the name for a while. Reverend Baity wanted the home that the Lord had blessed him with to be a home to all that stepped through its door. We strive to keep Reverend Baity's vision of SWEET HOME being a beautiful earthly home for all that enters. Reverend Baity was pastor of MASON CHAPEL/SWEET HOME for twenty-three years. He went to his heavenly home in 1950.

REVEREND ALLEN B. AND TENNIE GILBERT BAITY



“For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: thou it tarry, wait for it: because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”

Habakkuk 2:3

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We the members of Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church have written and adopted the following Constitution and By-Laws to coincide with 1 Corinthians 14:40. We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

I. NAME & LOCATION:

This body is known as the Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church, located at 803 Westmoreland Street, Athens, Alabama 35611.

II. OBJECTIVES:

The Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church exists for the purpose of communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. This Church is commissioned by Christ to maintain and to expand His Kingdom through the ongoing, Spirit-led work of Evangelism, Bible Study, Worship, Prayer, and Fellowship.

III. MISSION STATEMENT:

The Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church is a word-centered ministry seeking to fulfill our God-given purpose. Our foundation is the word of God and we believe the word of God in its entirety. We are committed to

providing holistic ministries that will equip, empower, and inspire all persons. We are committed to foster the spirit of excellence through Jesus Christ.

IV. PURPOSE

The Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church exists to:

- * Exalt the Savior through Worship
- * Explain the Scriptures through Discipleship
- * Equip the Saints through Ministry
- * Edify the Saints through Fellowship
- * Evangelize the Sinner through Missions

and implement other ministries as determined by the Holy Spirit.

V. THE MOTTO:

"Linking People Together To Fulfill God's Purpose".

VI. RELATIONSHIP

This church is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation with common Baptist Churches. Insofar as it is possible, this church will cooperate with and support the Round Island Creek Missionary Baptist Association. This does not exclude the church from affiliating with other state and national Baptist associations.

All regular and special business meetings of the church will be transacted according to the Robert's Rules of Order (revised), but the church may adopt special rules, if desired, not in conflict with the Holy Scriptures,

Constitution, these bylaws or generally accepted rules of parliamentary procedure

VII. STATEMENTS OF BELIEF:

This Church subscribes to the Articles Of Faith, which should be adopted by Baptist churches at the time of organization:

I. The Scriptures.

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that 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 shall be tried.

II. The True God.

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible 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.

III. The Fall of Man.

We believe the Scriptures teach that Man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgressions fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

IV. The Way of Salvation.

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

V. Justification.

We believe the Scriptures teach that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the

Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

VI. The Freeness of Salvation.

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by cordial, penitent and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own determined depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

VII. Regeneration.

We believe that the Scriptures teach that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith, and newness of life.

VIII. Repentance and Faith.

We believe the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our prophet, priest and king, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

IX. God's Purpose of Grace.

We believe the Scriptures teach that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

X. Sanctification.

We believe the Scriptures teach that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on

in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means especially the word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

XI. Perseverance of the Saints.

We believe the Scriptures teach that such only are real believers as endure to the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

XII. The Law and Gospel

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts, arise 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 connected with the establishment of the visible church.

XIII. A Gospel Church

We believe the Scriptures teach that a visible 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; that its only scriptural officers are Bishops or Pastors, and Deacons whose Qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

XIV. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

XV. The Christian Sabbath

We believe the Scriptures teach that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath, and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreations, by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public, and by preparation for that rest that remaineth for the people of God.

XVI. Civil Government

We believe the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except only 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.

XVII. Righteous and Wicked

We believe the Scriptures teach that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that 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.

XVIII. The World to Come

We believe the Scriptures teach that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day, Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness

VIII. 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 Spirit, 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 and holiness; to give it a place in our affections, prayers and services above every organization of human origin; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, towards its expenses, for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. In case of difference of opinion in the church, we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to study diligently the word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintance; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be kind and just to those in our employ, and faithful in the service we promise others; endeavoring in the purity of heart and good will towards all men to exemplify and commend our holy faith.

We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others; to participate in each other's joys, and with tender sympathy bear one another's burdens and sorrows; to cultivate Christian courtesy; to be slow to give or take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, being mindful of the rules of the Saviour in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to secure it without delay; and through life, amid evil report, and good report, to seek to live to the glory of God, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When we remove from this place, we engage as soon as possible to unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

DEACONS MINISTRY

A. Qualification Of Deacons

Deacons are to function as servants of the church in accordance with the meaning of the word and the practice of the New Testament.

1. A deacon should be a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit, wisdom, and honesty. (Acts 6).

2. A deacon should be a person who fully supports the biblical work of the ministry in the church. He should be in attendance in Sunday School, Morning Worship, and Bible Study.
3. A deacon should be a person who leads a Christian moral life in the community and everywhere he goes. (I Timothy 3:8-13)

MOTHERS' BOARD MINISTRY

The Mothers' Board Ministry seeks to glorify God, being mindful of His great purpose for our lives, which is to promote unity and harmony among our fellow man, and to give and serve.

TRUSTEE MINISTRY

A. Qualifications of Trustees

Trustees are to function as servants of the church in all matters dealing with church property and finances. Trustees should be persons of good moral character, possessing wisdom, integrity and an honest reputation.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

A. Qualifications of Finance Committee

1. Finance Committee members must be individuals of good moral character, possessing wisdom, integrity, and an honest reputation.
2. Finance Committee members should have a positive credit history, and should be able to provide proof of his/her worthiness to handle church finances if requested by the church body.

3. Finance Committee members should be bonded through an approved bonding company.

CHURCH CLERKS

- A. The Clerks shall be elected by the Church. An individual must be a member of this church for a minimum of 3 years before being elected as a clerk.
- B. The Clerks shall keep suitable records of all church transactions including names of members with dates of admission, termination, of death, records of baptism, records of letters issued for discontinued memberships, all records of finances received and disbursed, legal notices, and documents.

CHURCH SECRETARY

- A. Present announcements of church activities to the membership during regular church services.
- B. Make sure all letters of correspondence are posted on the church bulletin board.
- C. Make sure all church conferences are tape-recorded and written minutes are given to the Pastor and Chairman of Deacons' Ministry.
- D. Assist, as needed, in the preparation of obituaries for deceased members, and handle ordering of floral arrangements for funerals on behalf of the church.

E. Assist the church clerks, as necessary, in carrying out duties related to membership records.

BUILDING & GROUNDS STAFF

A. Maintain an awareness of the condition and appearance of the church building and grounds.

B. Report minor repairs as required.

C. Perform general housekeeping duties, and purchase housekeeping and maintenance supplies as needed.

SOUND/AUDIO COMMITTEE

This committee shall consist of a minimum of two members. The committee's duty is to have a working knowledge of all audio equipment. At least one member should be scheduled to operate equipment at all services. The church should call a committee member for any special occasions where the sound system is required. This committee is responsible for the audio tape ministry, the maintenance and upkeep of the sound system, and of all related audio equipment used in the church and for the assignment of a qualified person to work said equipment.

CHURCH MUSICIANS

The church shall employ musicians who will assist the choirs in carrying out the music ministry of the church. Musicians must be Christians and must be of good moral character. It is the responsibility of the musicians to regularly attend rehearsals of the choir(s) they are affiliated with. Musicians are selected by the individual choirs and submitted for approval by the Deacons. If the church has more than one regular service on a particular Sunday, the musician(s) for that day are expected to be available to support the church.