

MANUAL

OF THE

FIRST

PENTECOSTAL

CHURCH

OF

LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS

Prefatory.

FIRST.

By Divine authority we understand that God has one living church on earth, composed of all who believe in Christ and do his will.

SECOND.

We learn by the writings of the Apostles that local churches were established for mutual benefit and convenience; and wherever there are Christians who meet in any place for the worship of God, and to attend to the ordinances of the gospel, they do constitute such a church, being in harmony with the apostolic plan.

THIRD.

Therefore, we who have been accustomed to meet together for the worship of God, do, by the order of the gospel, hold ourselves to be an established church.

Articles of Faith.

We, the First Pentecostal Church of Lowell, Mass., heartily accept the Summary of Doctrines of the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America, as follows:

We believe in one God, Maker and Ruler of heaven and earth, revealed as the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection.

In the Holy Scriptures as His inspired word, and the only rule of faith and practice.

In the fall of man from his original condition of holiness, his condemnation as a sinner, and God's sovereign grace and love in redemption.

In the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered and died for the sins of men, and is risen and exalted a Priest and King.

In the free offer of eternal life to all in the

gospel, and the aggravated guilt of those who reject it.

We believe in the necessity of repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that all who truly repent of their sins, and believe in Christ as a personal Savior, are freely justified through the merit of Christ's atoning sacrifice, and also are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, whereby the soul is freed from the dominion of sin, and brought into the glorious assurance of the children of God.

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

We believe that entire sanctification is that act of the Holy Spirit whereby the regenerate soul is cleansed from inbred sin and made pure in heart, enabling the believer to love God with all his heart, mind, soul and strength, which implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love remains in the soul; that all the thoughts, words and actions are prompted by pure love; that entire sanctification does not exclude ignorance or mistake, nor an involuntary transgression of some unknown divine precept. That en-

ture sanctification includes the baptism with the Holy Ghost. It is subsequent to regeneration.

It is received like regeneration in an instant, by faith, not by works which we have done, but by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

We believe in imparted, not imputed, sanctification. We believe it is divinely attested by the Holy Ghost.

We believe it is received as soon as the regenerate soul sees its need, makes an entire consecration to God, and trusts alone in the atoning merit of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe in the divine institution of the Christian ministry and the visible church of Christ, composed of all real believers with its initiatory and memorial rites; baptism and the Lord's supper.

That according to the example of the Apostles, sanctioned by the repeated presence of Christ himself after his resurrection, the first day of the week is to be observed as the Lord's day.

That the present life is man's only day of grace, and the soul enters at death into conscious blessedness or misery.

That there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust, at the coming again of the Son of Man: the one to life eternal, and the other to shame and everlasting contempt.

Government.

ARTICLE I.

RECEPTION OF MEMBERS.

SECTION 1. Persons may be received into the Church on probation who give unmistakable evidence of being born of God.

SEC. 2. Persons may be received into full membership after a period of six month's probation, or by a letter of recommendation from any evangelical church or on confession of faith, provided they first be approved by the Official Board.

ARTICLE II.

DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERS.

SECTION 1. It is the duty and privilege of members to attend all the means of grace as far as possible; maintain family worship, secret prayer, reading of the scriptures, and by precept and example adorn their profession as followers

of Christ Jesus. They shall have the right to vote at all Church business meetings.

SEC. 2. Probationers shall have all the right and privileges of members, except that of voting and holding office.

ARTICLE III.

SEVERANCE OF MEMBERSHIP.

SECTION 1. Letters of recommendation may be given by the pastor to any member in good standing to any evangelical church.

SEC. 2. Letters of dismissal may be granted by the pastor to any members who may so desire.

SEC. 3. In case the Church is without a pastor the clerk may give such letters when authorized by the Official Board.

SEC. 4. Any member of the Church accused of immoral or unchristian conduct shall be waited on by a committee appointed by the Official Board, who shall advise him of such charge preferred against him. If he shall acknowledge the charge as true and show a penitent spirit, and be ready to follow such advice as the committee may suggest, he may be borne with; but if he

denies the charge, he should be cited to appear before the Official Board for trial, and in case of his failure to appear or furnish sufficient reasons for his non-appearance, or, appearing and on trial found guilty, shall be dropped from the roll of membership; such decision shall be final.

Officers of the Church.

HOW CHOSEN.

SECTION 1. The officers of this Church shall consist of a pastor, and assistant pastor when desired, a clerk, treasurer, elders, deacons, trustees, superintendent of Sunday school and class leaders. These officers shall constitute the Official Board. (If preferred a Standing Committee may take the place of elders and deacons.)

SEC. 2. A pastor may be called or chosen, by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Church present and voting, at any meeting duly called for that purpose, having first been recommended by the Official Board.

SEC. 3. An assistant pastor may be chosen in the same manner, only with the approval of the pastor.

SEC. 4. Trustees shall be chosen according to the laws of the state.

SEC. 5. Elders, deacons, clerk and treasurer

shall be elected annually, by ballot, by the majority vote of the members present and voting, having first been nominated by a committee, consisting of the pastor and two members chosen by the meeting. The number of elders and deacons desired shall be determined by each annual meeting, and any vacancy occurring during the year may be filled by the pastor.

SEC. 6. Class leaders shall be appointed by the pastor with the approval of the Official Board.

SEC. 7. A pastor's aid society and praying band may be organized under such rules and regulations as shall be approved by the pastor and Official Board.

SEC. 8. All licensed and ordained ministers who are members of the Church may have a seat in the Official Board.

SEC. 9. All candidates for local preachers' license, having been recommended by pastor and Official Board, may be duly licensed by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, at any regular or special business church meeting, such license shall be renewed yearly.

SEC. 10. In case of resignation or dismissal of

the pastor, at least a two months' notice shall be given by either party. Such resignation or dismissal of pastor shall be decided at any regular or special business meeting of the Church by a majority vote of members present and voting.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS.

SECTION 1. PASTOR—In addition to all the usual work of the ministry in building up the spiritual interests of the Church, the pastor shall preside at all business meetings of the church and Official Board, and shall be *ex officio* member of all societies, bands and committees formed or appointed by authority of the Church, and shall co-operate with them in their work.

SEC. 2. THE OFFICIAL BOARD—Shall have charge of all the temporal and financial interests of the Church, hire and have charge of the janitor, fix his salary, also fix the amount of salary to be paid the pastor, and devise means to pay the same, with all other current expenses of the Church. They shall elect one of their number a financial secretary, who shall receive all the revenues by envelopes, collections, etc., and keep ac-

count of same and then turn over all funds into the hands of the treasurer.

SEC. 3. CLERK—To keep record of all business meetings of the Church.

SEC. 4. TREASURER—Shall receive all funds from the financial secretary, and disburse the same as directed by the Official Board, keep an exact account of all such receipts and disbursements and make a monthly statement to the Official Board, and an annual report to the Church.

SEC. 5. DEACONS—In addition to their duties as members of the Official Board, shall render such assistance to the pastor as he may suggest.

SEC. 6. CLASS LEADERS—The class leaders shall exercise a godly care over the members of their classes, and notify the pastor of any who may desire to join the class and would like to be received on probation in the Church; also notify the pastor and Official Board of any who are walking disorderly.

SEC. 7. PASTOR'S AID—Shall be composed of all who desire to unite under such rules as they shall adopt subject to the approval of the pastor.

They shall have charge of the funds for the relief of the poor of the Church and shall distribute the same according to their best judgment by a majority vote of the society. No money shall be given out of the poor fund to any person outside of the Church without first securing the approval of the pastor. They shall also aid the pastor in visiting the sick and others who may need help. They shall also aid in collecting funds to help meet the current expenses of the Church and any other work desired by the pastor.

SEC. 8. PRAYING BANDS—May be organized to hold meetings in missions and elsewhere to spread holiness, subject to the approval and co-operation of the pastor.

SEC. 9. Trustees shall hold the deed of the Church property and see that it is kept insured and in proper repair.

Sunday School.

Sunday school may be organized under such constitutions and by-laws as it may adopt, subject to the approval of the Official Board.

RITUAL.

SECTION I. INFANT BAPTISM—They brought young children to Christ that he should touch them, and his disciples rebuked those that brought them, but when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein, and he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them.

Dearly beloved, for as much as this child is now presented by you for Christian baptism, you must remember that it is your part and duty to see that (he) be taught as soon as (he) shall be able to learn, the nature and end of this holy sacrament. And that (he) may know these things the better, you shall call upon him (or

Business Meetings.

SECTION I. The annual meeting of the Church shall be held on the first Wednesday in January to hear reports of pastor, clerk, treasurer, Official Board, trustees and Sunday school superintendent; and to elect officers for the ensuing year, their term of office beginning the next Sunday after election; also to consider any other business pertaining to the interests of the Church. Eleven members shall constitute a quorum at any Church meeting.

SEC. 2. The Official Board shall meet once a month, on the Monday before the first Sunday, to hear reports of financial secretary and treasurer and pray and plan for the best interests of the Church.

SEC. 3. Special Church meetings may be called by the pastor or by the clerk at the request of ten members of the Church; due notice being given at a public meeting of the need and object of such meeting.

her) to give reverent attendance upon the appointed means of grace, such as the ministry of the Word and the public and private worship of God; and further, you shall provide that (he) shall read the holy scriptures and those other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health in order that (he) may be brought up to lead a virtuous and holy life, remembering always that baptism doth but represent unto us that inward purity which disposeth us to follow the example of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Do you, therefore, solemnly engage to fulfill these duties so far as in you lies?

Answer—We do.

[After the child has been named, the minister shall baptize, saying (repeating name of child), I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!] [Ex-tempore prayer.]

SEC. 2. ADULT BAPTISM—There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; the same came to Jesus by night and said unto him: Rabbi, we know that thou art

a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him, Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, how can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered: Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he can not enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Well, beloved, you have come hither desiring to receive holy baptism. Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of this world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh so that thou wilt not follow or be led by them?

Answer—I do.

Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son, our Lord, and that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; that he arose again the third day; that he ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, and from thence shall come again at the end of the world to judge the quick and the dead? Dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost; the one universal church; the communion of saints; the remission of sins; the resurrection of the body, and everlasting life after death?

Answer—I do.

Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?

Answer—This is my desire.

Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments and walk in the same all the days of thy life?

Answer—I will.

[Then shall the minister sprinkle or pour water upon the candidate or immerse him into the water, saying:

I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.] [Ex-tempore prayer.]

SEC. 3. ADMISSION ON PROBATION—That none may be admitted hastily into the Church, all persons seeking fellowship with us on profession of faith, shall stand a six months' preparatory membership on trial, in which proof may be made both to themselves and to the Church of the sincerity and depth of their convictions.

Dearly beloved: You have by the grace of God made your decision to follow Christ and to serve him.

Your confidence in so doing is not to be based on any fitness or worthiness in yourself, but solely on the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, on His death and intercession for us.

That the Church may know your purpose you will answer the following questions:

Have you prayerfully and thoughtfully considered the question of uniting with this Church on probation?

Answer—I have.

Do you believe you have met with a change

of heart and that your sins have been forgiven?

Answer—I do.

Will you guard yourself against all things contrary to the teaching of God's word and endeavor to lead a holy life, following the commandments of God?

Answer—I will.

Will you give reverent attention upon the appointed means of grace, in the ministry of the Word, and in the private and public worship of God?

Answer—I will.

Brethren, these persons having given satisfactory responses to our inquiries, have any of you reason to allege why they should not be received as probationers in this Church?

[No objection being offered, the minister shall extend to the candidates the right hand of fellowship as probationers in the Church.] [Ex-tempore prayer.]

SEC. 4. RECEPTION OF FULL MEMBERS—
Dearly beloved, you have come hither seeking the great privilege of union with the Church of God, the Church for which Jesus died to sanctify

and cleanse, that it might be presented to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

It is proper that you should confess your faith, and declare your purpose in the presence of God and these witnesses.

Do you know your sins are all forgiven?

Answer—I do.

Have you the witness of the Spirit to that fact?

Answer—I have.

Do you believe in the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures as set forth in the articles of religion of this Church?

Answer—I do.

Have you read our form of church government?

Answer—I have.

Will you cheerfully be governed by our form of church government, hold sacred the ordinances of God and to the best of your ability, seek to promote the welfare of your brethren and the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom?

Answer—I will.

Will you cheerfully contribute of your means towards the support of the Church?

Answer—I will.

Do you renounce the devil and all of his works; the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, and will not follow nor be led by them; but will yield yourself to God in constant obedience to all the Divine requirements?

Answer—I do.

Do you believe in the doctrine of entire sanctification, as a second, definite, instantaneous work of grace, subsequent to regeneration, and that it is not only the privilege, but the duty of everyone to seek and find the experience as soon as they receive light concerning it?

Answer—I do.

CHURCH COVENANT.

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and on a 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 promise by the aid of the Holy Spirit to forsake the paths of sin, and to walk in the ways of holiness and righteousness before God all the days of our lives. With this view, we engage, “not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is,” but exhorting one another daily to strive together for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, doctrines, ordinance and discipline; to contribute cheerfully

and regularly to the support of the ministry, and other expenses of this Church; the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel throughout the earth.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; 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, backbiting and 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 Saviour. We further engage to walk together in Christian love and watchfulness, giving and receiving admonition with meekness and affection; 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 be slow to take offence, but always ready for reconciliation, and, mindful of the rules of our Saviour, to secure it without delay.

We, moreover, engage that when we remove

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.

Do you cheerfully accept the obligations imposed by the Church covenant?

Answer—I do.

Brethren, these persons having given satisfactory responses to our inquiries, have any of you reason to allege why they should not be received into full membership in this church?

[No objection being offered, the minister and Official Board shall then extend to the candidates the right hand of fellowship as full members in the church.] [Extempore prayers.]

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

SEC. 5. THE LORD'S SUPPER—My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. On the night before he suffered death on the

cross and did there make, by the oblation of himself, once offered a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, he did institute and command us to continue a perpetual memory of his precious death until his coming again.

In the same night that he was betrayed he took bread and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me. Likewise after supper he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins; do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me.

INVITATION [all stand].—Wherefore ye that do earnestly repent of your sins and are in love and charity with your neighbors and intend to follow the commandments of God, and walk from henceforth in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort. [Ex-tempore prayer of thanksgiving.]

Burial of the Dead.

SEC. 6. FORM FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD.
—The minister going before the corpse shall say:

I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. (John xi:25, 26.)

I know that my Redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy the body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. (Job xix:25-27.)

We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. I Tim. vi:7; Job i:21.

Psalms xc. I Corinthians xv:41-58.

[At the grave, when the corpse is laid in the earth, the minister shall say]:

Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live and is full of misery; he cometh up and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth as it

were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.

In the midst of life we are in death; of whom may we seek for succor, but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins are justly displeased? Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death. Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our heart; shut not thy merciful ears to our prayers, but spare us, Lord most holy; O God, most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy judge eternal, suffer us not at our last hour for any pains of death to fall from thee.

[Then while the earth shall be cast upon the body by some one standing by, the minister shall say]:

Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, in his wise providence, to take out of the world the soul of the departed, we therefore commit his (or her) body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, looking for the general resurrection at the last day, and the life of the world to come through our Lord Jesus, at whose second coming in glorious majesty to

judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in Him shall be changed and made like unto His own glorious body; according to the mighty workings whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, from henceforth blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors.

Lord have mercy upon us.

Christ have mercy upon us.

Lord have mercy upon us.

[Extempore prayer and benediction.]

FORM FOR CHURCH CERTIFICATE.

This certifies that.....
the bearer, is an acceptable member of the First
Pentecostal Church, of Lowell, Mass., and is
affectionately commended to the fellowship of
thein
or any other evangelical church where he (or
she) may present this certificate.

.....Pastor.
OrClerk.

FORM OF DISMISSAL.

This certifies that the bearer.....
is hereby dismissed from membership of the First
Pentecostal church, of Lowell, Mass., at his (or
her) own request.

.....Pastor.
OrClerk.

