

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS



CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE.....	3
ARTICLE ONE The Church.....	3
ARTICLE TWO The Purpose.....	3
ARTICLE THREE Articles of Faith.....	4
1. The Scriptures.....	4
2. The Triune God.....	4
3. The Decree of God.....	5
4. Creation.....	5
5. Providence.....	5
6. The Fall of Man.....	5
7. Sovereign Grace.....	5
8. The Saving Work of Christ.....	5
9. Justification Through Faith Alone.....	6
10. Regeneration.....	6
11. Sanctification.....	6
12. Perseverance.....	6
13. The Church.....	6
14. Worship.....	7
15. Ordinances.....	7
16. Christian Liberty.....	8
17. The Roles of Men and Women.....	8
18. The World to Come.....	9
19. Charismatic Signs and Wonders.....	9
ARTICLE FOUR Covenant.....	10
ARTICLE FIVE Membership.....	10
ARTICLE SIX Discipline.....	12
ARTICLE SEVEN The Board of Elders.....	12
The Board of Deacons.....	15
ARTICLE EIGHT Functions of the Board of Elders.....	15
ARTICLE NINE The Priority and Purpose of Supplemental Educational Ministries..	16
ARTICLE TEN The Priority and Purpose of Auxiliary Societies.....	18
ARTICLE ELEVEN Meetings.....	19
ARTICLE TWELVE Support.....	19
ARTICLE THIRTEEN Church Government.....	19

ARTICLE FOURTEEN	Profits and Dissolution.....	20
ARTICLE FIFTEEN	Ratification.....	20
ARTICLE SIXTEEN	Amendments.....	20
ARTICLE SEVENTEEN	Beliefs and Behavior of Employees and Volunteers.....	21

THE BY-LAWS

ARTICLE ONE	Establishment of By-laws.....	22
ARTICLE TWO	Absenteeism.....	22
ARTICLE THREE	Audit of Church Books.....	22
ARTICLE FOUR	Church Government.....	23
ARTICLE FIVE	Compensation.....	23
ARTICLE SIX	Annual Congregational Meeting.....	23
ARTICLE SEVEN	Power of Purchase.....	24
ARTICLE EIGHT	Facility Use.....	24
ARTICLE NINE	Recognition of Marriages, Weddings.....	25

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

THE CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We the members of Christian Fellowship Church do hereby ordain and establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE ONE

THE CHURCH

The Church shall be known as the Christian Fellowship Church of Livingston Park. The Church shall at all times hereafter be and remain unaffiliated with any denomination in Church government and discipline. Fellowship with other churches of like faith and order is to be encouraged.

ARTICLE TWO

THE PURPOSE

The purpose of this Church is to glorify God through both biblical worship, the prime focus being the edification of Christians through the preaching of God's Word of grace (Acts 20:32), and biblical evangelism, the proclamation of God's saving grace expressed in the shed blood and finished atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary (Matt. 28:19-20). The manner of this defense of the faith, once delivered to the saints (Jude 3), both at home and abroad, shall be in harmony with God's holy Word, the Bible, until the return of His Son.

ARTICLE THREE

ARTICLES OF FAITH

We align ourselves with an historic, sovereign grace, baptistic lineage which has found expression in the following confessions: 1. *The First London Confession* of 1644; 2. *The Second London Confession* of 1689; 3. *The Philadelphia Confession* of 1742.

1. The Scriptures

We believe the Bible alone is the Word of God consisting of the sixty-six (66) Books of the Old and New Testaments, is inspired of God, and inerrant in the original writings. As such, this providentially preserved and reliable record is the final authority in all matters of faith and life including church councils and creeds. Thus it is its own best infallible interpreter (Isa. 8:20; 40:7-8; II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:19-21).

2. The Triune God

We believe in one God, the Maker, Preserver, and Ruler of all things, eternally existing in three distinct persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who are of the same substance and equal in power and glory (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; I Cor. 8:4).

- a. God the Father is presented as the Eternal Father of the Son and the one from whom the Spirit proceeds (John 1:14; 15:26; 16:15; 17:5) and as the Father of all creation (John 8:38-45); He is declared to be the Father of all true believers (Gal. 4:6) and the author and designer of election and redemption (Ps. 2:7-9; Isa. 5:10; Eph. 1:3-14); He hears and answers the believers' prayers (John 16:23-27).
- b. God the Son, eternally existing with the Father and Spirit, is presented as the only-begotten of the Father by the Holy Spirit who was born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man, yet without sin, and is the only Mediator between God and man (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; Luke 2:1-7; John 1:1-14; Rom 9:5; Gal. 4:4; I Tim. 2:5; Tit. 2:13). As the only mediator, He exhorts us to pray to the Father in His name (Matt. 6:9; John 14:13-14).
- c. God the Holy Spirit is presented as possessing the attributes of personality and deity (Acts 5:3-4; I Cor. 2:11; 12:9-13); He guides into all truth (John 16:13); He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11); He brings to new life those who were once dead in sin (John 3:5; Eph. 2:1-6), and indwells, baptizes, seals, empowers, guides, teaches, sanctifies, and gives gifts to God's children (John 14:26; Rom. 8:14; 12; I Cor. 6:11, 19; 12; Eph. 3:16; 4; I Pet. 4). He enables our prayer to the Father (Rom. 8:26; Jude 20).

3. The decree of God.

God has decreed, in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever comes to pass (Isa. 46:9-10; Eph. 1:11). Yet God is not the author of sin (Jas. 1:13-15; I John 1:5), nor has He fellowship with sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away (Acts 4:27-28; John 19:11), but rather established, in which appears His wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree (Eph. 1:3-5).

4. Creation

All things, this world, and the human race in particular, were directly created by God in the space of six days, rather than indirectly by an evolutionary process. This creation is described in Genesis as an historic event whereby God created man from the dust of the earth; man is distinguished as a living person with holiness, and appointed dominion over the earth and its creatures (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7, 18).

5. Providence

God, as the good Creator of all things, and according to His knowledge, power, and wisdom, so maintains, disposes, and directs all things, even with the employment of means, to the praise of His glory (Matt. 10:29-31; Heb. 1:3).

6. The Fall of Man

While man was created as holy and innocent, by voluntary transgression he fell from that good and happy state. As a consequence all mankind from conception are now sinners by nature, not by constraint but by choice. Thus man became utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil, and unable to please God. Thus he is condemned to eternal ruin without defense or excuse (Gen. 3:6-24; Rom. 3:9-19; 5:12, 15-19).

7. Sovereign Grace

God, out of His mere free grace and love, has predestined some men to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glorious grace. These elect, being loved of God with an everlasting love, are redeemed, quickened, and saved, not by themselves, nor their own works or free-will, lest any man should boast, but only and wholly by God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:20-21; 9:16; Eph. 1:3-6; II Thess. 2:13-14).

8. The Saving Work of Christ

Through His mediatorial office of priest, Jesus Christ, God's Son, having lived a sinless life of obedience to the law of God, died under the curse of the law for the sins of all who truly believe in Him. This Jesus made a full and final atonement for the sins of those given to Him by the Father and for none else. Such salvation is freely bestowed upon

whomever God chooses and is not conditioned upon foreseen faith or repentance, but wholly upon the mercy and the grace of God. He, as the atoning priest and sacrifice, is now risen from the dead, ascended into glory, seated at the right hand of the Father, and is ever living to make intercession for His people. The salvation of God is therefore not merely made possible, but is actually procured, through Christ's vicarious, propitiatory death, for all who savingly believe in Him (John 3:14-16; Rom. 3:21-26; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 4:14-16; 10:11-14).

9. Justification Through Faith Alone

Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal of sinners from all sin. This He freely does, not by infusing righteousness into them but by imputing righteousness and accounting their persons as righteous, thereby pardoning their sins. This divine acquittal is not for anything wrought in them or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. This faith is not of themselves; it is the gift of God (Rom. 3:24; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9).

10. Regeneration

Regeneration is the creation of a new heart, this being wrought by the Holy Spirit, who brings to life those dead in trespasses and sins. Thus, their minds are spiritually and savingly enlightened so that they understand the Word of God, are renewed in their whole nature, and love and practice holiness. This is a work of God's free and special grace alone (John 3:5-8; Rom. 6:11; 8:10-11; Eph. 2:1-10; Tit. 3:3-7).

11. Sanctification

Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made conformable to His holiness. All believers being declared holy and sanctified at conversion (I Pet. 1:1-2; 2:9) are yet to grow progressively in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Pet. 3:18), obediently following their head and King being desirous of attaining his likeness (I John 3:2-3). While the Christian acknowledges ongoing conflict between the flesh and spirit, yet he trusts in the continual supply of strength that the Spirit of grace supplies (Rom. 7:18-8:5; II Cor. 12:7-10).

12. Perseverance

Those whom God has accepted in Christ and sanctified by His Spirit will never totally or finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end. Though they may fall into sin, through neglect and temptation whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the church, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be restored again unto repentance and kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (Luke 22:31-32; John 6:39; 10:28-29; 17:12; Phil. 1:6).

13. The Church

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, which is His body composed of all His true disciples. We believe that a local church consists of a company of baptized believers

who have obediently associated themselves for worship, for instruction, for service, for the evangelization of the lost, and for encouraging and building up one another (Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:8; 2:41; Eph. 4:11-16; Heb. 10:24-25). Therefore the local church is God's agency in the world transacting God's business, and is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim. 3:15). Furthermore the great commission has been given by God solely to the local church as its mandate (Matt. 28:19-20).

14. Worship

Corporate fellowship of Christians gives first priority to the worship of God according to the pattern of the New Testament church. Such worship focuses on the glorious person and works of the only true God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Acts 2:42).

Our Priority. Above all we seek the presence of God in our meetings. Thus we desire to glorify Him by means of dignified worship and the preaching of the Word of God to all. We desire to make all of our services interesting and meaningful, but at the same time we make no effort to entertain.

Music Emphasis. In our music, which mainly focuses upon congregational singing, attention is given to both the biblical content and musical quality of the hymns and spiritual songs we sing (Eph. 5:19). Christians have a "new song" (Psalm 40:3) to sing, and its expression should include praise, adoration, and sincere soul reflection.

Preaching. The central part of each service is the expository preaching of the Word of God. In fact, the Bible, inseparably joined to the Holy Spirit, is central to the teaching and administration of the whole church. This emphasis leads to the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer and Fellowship. The reading of the Word of God, prayer, and the offering are all integral elements of each worship service; they direct our hearts toward God. Periodic meeting around the Lord's Table reminds us of our only hope being the gospel of the sovereign grace of God.

15. The Ordinances

There are only two ordinances instituted by Jesus Christ.

a. Baptism.

Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water by a faithful local church in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as a confession, but not as a regenerating rite. Baptism signifies the essential facts of redemption, the death, burial, resurrection and cleansing of Christ that obtain eternal life (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 8:34-39; Rom. 6:3-11).

b. The Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is the frequent remembrance of the same essential truth of redemption by means of bread and the cup. These emblems, while not in any way conveying grace, yet stimulate remembrance of that grace that is sourced only in Christ (Matt. 26:26-29; I Cor. 11:20-34).

16. Christian Liberty

a. Gospel Liberty.

Being a disciple of Christ and subject to the new covenant made through His blood, the Christian has liberty from the old covenant administration of Moses while being under the law of Christ (Gal. 5:1; I Cor. 9:20-21; Heb. 12:22-24). Such submission involves obedience to that fullness of righteousness which the Son of God embodied (John 15:14; Rom. 13:10; II Cor. 5:14; I John 3:23-24).

b. Soul Liberty.

Every disciple of Christ has liberty of conscience which is not to be coerced by any body or person except God Himself. Each believer is a royal priest offering spiritual sacrifices. Each believer shall conduct himself with a clear conscience before God and man (John 6:45; I Pet. 2:9). Such belief necessitate the separation of church and state (Matt. 22:21).

17. The Roles of Men and Women.

a. Men and Women.

Both the man and the woman are one before God, being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and thus are equal co-heirs of the grace of life (I Pet. 3:7), royal priests before God (I Pet. 2:9). God has ordained that, "Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ" (I Cor. 11:3). By creating man first, God established his headship over the woman who was given to him as a fulfilling mate (Gen. 2:18; I Cor. 11:8-12). Thus man's loving headship is to be responded to by the woman's submission even as the church responds to Christ's headship (I Tim. 2:9-14).

b. Marriage and Sexuality.

The term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-24; Matt. 19:4-6; I Cor. 6:9-10). God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other (Prov. 5; I Cor. 7:1-5). God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman (I Cor. 6:13-20; I Thess. 4:3-8; Heb. 13:4).

Any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex,

or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God (Deut. 22:5; Matt. 5:27-28; Mark 7:21-23; Gal. 5:19-21; I Tim. 1:9-10).

God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (I Cor. 6:11). Every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of the church (Mark 12:31; Gal. 6:10).

c. The Family.

The wedded union of one man and one woman, along with the children given them by the Lord, constitutes the only family unit ordained by God (Gen. 2:24; Mark 10:6-9). The family roles are derived from this joining of a man and a woman. Thus, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25). "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Then, "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (Eph. 5:22). Then, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Eph. 6:1). The rending of this relationship, that is by means of covenant breaking or adultery, is grievous sin that yet is best dealt with by means of reconciliation (Mal. 2:14-16). Divorce is, according to Jesus Christ, a course taken only by those who are hard of heart (Matt. 19:3-9).

18. The World to Come

The end of this age will be climaxed with the glorious, personal, visible, bodily return of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:11). At that time the rapture and resurrection of the saints will be accomplished bringing about the completion of His church, the judgment of the nations, and the consummation of His kingdom (John 6:37-40; I Cor. 15:51-54; I Thess. 4:16-17; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20:11-15).

The wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, will be cast into eternal, conscious punishment; but the saints will be ushered into eternal life, receiving fullness of joy and glory with everlasting reward, in the presence of the Lord (Matt. 13:41-43; 25:21, 34, 41, 46; Mark 9:47-48; Rom. 9:22-23; II Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 14:9-11).

19. Charismatic Signs and Wonders

To avoid division, there are certain religious beliefs and practices to which we do not subscribe. These are commonly termed as speaking in tongues, slaying with the Spirit, signs and wonders, miraculous healings, word of faith, etc. We believe that the inaugural supernatural events of the early church have ceased and at the same time they have been replaced by the completed canon of Scripture. Consequently, extra-biblical revelation is excluded (Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19).

ARTICLE FOUR

CHURCH COVENANT

Before the congregation I publicly confess my faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and heartily endorse the doctrines set forth in the Articles of Faith of the Constitution of this church. Furthermore I do promise, in dependence upon the Grace of God who strengthens us in weakness, to attend as diligently as possible upon the public service of worship of God in this church, to sanctify the Lord's Day, to be faithful in private devotion, and to strive in all things to honor my God and Savior by a walk and conversation in keeping with the Gospel of Christ.

I do hereby pledge sincerely and unreservedly to devote myself to the Lord to be His forever. I will serve diligently offering both service as the Lord has gifted me and financial support as the Lord has given to me. I will endeavor to support and sustain the honor of God in this church and to preserve the good name of this church by a consistent walk as the Lord shall give me grace, so that no reproach shall be brought upon the name of our God and Savior Jesus Christ or His Holy Word.

ARTICLE FIVE

MEMBERSHIP

1. Any person professing personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, giving satisfactory evidence through consistent Christian living, and adopting substantially these articles and by-laws, may be received into its membership after believer's baptism. After a period of attendance, applicants shall apply for church membership to the Board of Elders who shall prayerfully consider if the Lord is adding that person to our local assembly (I Cor. 12:18). Applicants shall be recommended to the church by the Board of Elders.
2. The membership of this church shall consist of those who are received by vote of the church upon recommendation of the Board of Elders in one of the following ways:
 - a. Profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ followed by baptism, if never having been baptized; or,
 - b. Letter of transfer from other churches holding the same faith and practice; or,
 - c. Experience; if having been baptized and holding membership elsewhere, but unable due to peculiar circumstances to obtain a letter of dismissal from his respective church group; or,

- d. Restoration; if having been excluded from membership of this church, and upon confession of his errors giving satisfactory evidence of repentance.
3. Membership in the church shall be terminated in the following manner:
- a. By death.
 - b. By resignation in writing from a member in good standing.
 - c. By letter of transfer to any other church holding the same faith and practice upon the request of the member in good standing.
 - d. By cancellation of membership by the Board of Elders when the member cannot be traced or has been habitually absent from the services of the church without good cause.
 - e. By excommunication for cause by the Board of Elders. No member shall, however, be excommunicated until after charges have been preferred against him, and he has had opportunity to defend himself before the Board. Such a course shall follow the biblical principles established in Matthew 18:15-20; I Corinthians 5:13; Galatians 6:1-2; II Thessalonians 3:6-14; I Timothy 5:19-20.
4. The Board shall regularly review the Membership Register. If a member has been found to be inactive, not participating in the observance of the Lord's Supper, and/or generally indifferent to the church, he shall be counseled with concerning his relationship to the Lord and the church. If there does not appear to be any attempt or desire on the part of the member to rectify such indifference toward the life and work of the church it shall be within the power of the Board to drop the member from the roll of the church after due notice has been given the person in question.
5. A minimum of 18 years of age shall be required before a person may be admitted into membership.
6. Members are expected to be faithful in all duties essential to the Christian life; faithful in church attendance on the Lord's Day and other special services; supporting the program of the church; giving regularly to the support of the work.
7. A member habitually absent from the regular services of the church for a continuous period without good cause will be denied the privilege of voting on Congregational matters unless satisfactory explanation of such absence has been given to and accepted by the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE SIX

DISCIPLINE

Should any member, even an Elder, become an offense to the church and its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his Covenant vows, or by gross impropriety, or misdemeanor in office, or by willfully promoting schism or discord in the church, the member may be privately admonished, publicly censured, or excluded from membership. A member shall not be excluded, however, until every reasonable Christian means of reconciliation has been exhausted. While acknowledging the distinction between private and public offenses, we believe that the following steps according to Matthew 18:15-20 should be pursued with the primary concern being the restoration of the offending member:

1. Meeting with the individual.
2. Meeting with additional witnesses.
3. Meeting with the Board of Elders (action would require a 75% vote).
4. Communication by the Board of Elders to the congregation of the individual's offense, asking the congregation to exhort the individual to repent.
5. Exclusion from membership.

Any person thus excluded may afterwards be restored to membership on confession of his fault and after having given satisfactory evidence of true repentance.

ARTICLE SEVEN

THE BOARD OF ELDERS

Jesus Christ alone is the Head of His Church. However, as Head He has ordained that individual churches should be blessed with the spiritual rule and ministry of special officers. Christ has ordained that the administration of the local churches is to be by a plurality of elders and deacons. However, both offices may be incorporated into one board should circumstances so require (Acts 6:1-6; 20:17; Eph. 4:11-12; Phil. 1:6; I Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9; I Pet. 5:1-5).

1. Responsibilities.

It shall be the duty of the elders to watch over the spiritual interests of the church, to preach the Word of God, to administer the Ordinances, to attend to the biblical instruction

of the flock, and to lead them in practical church work (Acts 20:28; I Cor. 11:23; II Tim. 2:2; 4:2).

2. Qualifications.

No person shall be qualified to fill the office of elder unless he has been a member of the church in good standing for at least one year and is over 21 years of age. An elder, being male, must evidence the personal, domestic and ministerial qualifications for this office as set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and in Titus 1:5-9. Due time must be allowed for the church to observe these qualifications in the life of one who aspires to the office.

Anyone called to this office must be able to conscientiously affirm his agreement with the Articles of Faith and the Constitution of the church. Should he at any time move from this position, he is under spiritual and moral obligation to make this known to the church.

3. Duties.

The elders are responsible for the spiritual ministrations of the church, the implementation of church discipline, and watching over the souls of the members as those who must give account to God for this responsibility. They shall exercise the oversight of the church in all its ministries and functions (Acts 20:17, 28ff.; I Pet. 5:1-4; Heb. 13:17).

While every elder bears spiritual rule (and must be “apt to teach”), some will be more engaged in formal and public teaching, which role is addressed as Pastor, while others will be more exclusively engaged in the details of ruling, which role is addressed as Elder. Those who are more engaged in formal public teaching and preaching should, as far as is possible, be adequately maintained in material necessities, so as to be disentangled from the cares of a secular calling (I Tim. 5:17-18). The elders shall maintain the purity and peace of the congregation both in doctrine and practice. They are to take the oversight for all that the congregation is taught, whether by speech or printed page (Acts 20:28).

4. Election.

a. The elder or elders given to ruling, titled Elder.

Nominations, when considered necessary, shall be made by the unanimous vote of the Board of Elders. The name shall be proposed to the membership four weeks in advance of an announced congregational meeting. A reasonable attempt will be made in notifying all members. A quorum shall be 75% of all members in good standing. Election shall require 75% of the members present. Recognition shall be by the laying on of hands by the current Board of Elders at an appropriate meeting. Elders shall remain in office as long as they are physically, mentally and spiritually qualified to perform the duties of this office.

If at any time the elder’s preaching, teaching, or manner of life is not in full accord with the doctrinal standards or moral practices of this church, as charged by witnesses and upheld by the Board of Elders, his services as an elder shall be terminated immediately following a congregational meeting at which his dismissal

has been requested by a 75% vote of those members present and voting. A 75% quorum of the membership shall be required.

b. The elder or elders given to employment, titled Pastor.

(1) Special qualifications.

In addition to elder qualifications, especially that of being “able to teach” (I Tim. 3:2), he shall have given himself to the concentrated study of the Word, doctrine, church history, pastoral care, and related areas of study according to II Timothy 2:15. Thus he will also be recognized as able to “preach the Word” (II Tim. 4:2). Such recognition will also consider the candidate’s ministry according to the estimate of leaders from other churches.

(2) Responsibilities.

His chief priority shall be that of expository ministry of the Word and prayer (Acts 6:4) which is both evangelistic and edifying. He will direct the administration of the ordinances as well as pulpit preaching appointments in consultation with the other elders. His supplementary concerns, in association with the participation of the other elders, shall be other means of evangelism, visitation of the sick, and the counseling of those in spiritual and material need.

(3) Employment.

As far as practical only one candidate shall be considered by the eldership and church members at a time. Nomination shall be by the unanimous recommendation of the elders, in consultation with the church membership. Ratification at an announced meeting, following two weeks notification of the church membership, shall be by a 75% vote of the members present. A 75% quorum of the membership shall be required. The term of office shall be for an indefinite period. The salary shall be determined by the Board of Elders and ratified by the church membership when voting on the appointment. Specific benefits shall be determined according to By-Law Five.

(4) Termination.

If at any time the pastor’s preaching, teaching, or manner of life is not in full accord with the doctrinal standards or moral practices of this church, as charged by witnesses and upheld by the Board of Elders, his services as a pastor shall be terminated immediately following a congregational meeting at which his dismissal has been requested by a 75% vote of those present and voting. A 75% quorum of the membership shall be required. In the case of resignation, a minimum of three months notice shall be given, except when the Board of Elders agrees to alternative terms. In the case of dismissal, the Board of Elders, by means of a unanimous vote excluding the pastor, shall make a

recommendation to the church membership that shall require a 75% vote for dismissal. Except where the terms for an emergency meeting are met, two weeks notice shall be given.

THE BOARD OF DEACONS

The office of deacon focuses on the more administrative, functional, and material concerns of the church which is to operate according to particular needs that the size of the church dictates (Acts 6:1-6). Recognition by the elders of the qualifications, according to I Timothy 3:8-13, shall lead to a candidate's nomination to the church membership for an indefinite appointment by a 75% vote. Installation shall be at an appropriate meeting with the laying on of hands. The elders shall determine the specific duties for each appointment. Dismissal for inappropriate behavior shall be according the standards for the dismissal of an elder.

ARTICLE EIGHT

FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF ELDERS

1. It shall be the duty of the elders to assist the Pastor in the general supervision of the spiritual life of the church, to assist in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and to counsel, comfort, and aid those members who shall be sick or afflicted, and to administer the benevolent funds.
2. A chairman shall be elected by the board among themselves and shall hold office for one year. He shall preside at all board and congregational meetings using Robert's Rules of Order. The elders shall agree among themselves in the proper fulfillment of their responsibilities that are incumbent upon the leadership of God's work on earth. This will include the maintenance and upgrading of the physical properties, the proper keeping of records and minutes, the proposal of an annual budget, along with the spiritual welfare of the church.
3. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive all monies belonging to the church; to keep an accurate account of the same, to pay all bills, and make available a report for the meeting of the Board. He shall present a yearly financial report for the Annual Church Meeting. His accounts shall be audited by the Auditing Committee at the close of each year. If a qualified person to act as Treasurer cannot be found on the Board, said Board shall have the authority to consider a qualified church member or a professional accountant.
4. In the event of the temporary absence or disability of the pastor, the remaining members of the Board of Elders shall have full charge of all religious meetings, choose guest speakers, and in general perform the administrative duties of the Pastor, along with all spiritual affairs.

5. In the event that the church be without a Pastor, the Board of Elders shall appoint an acting pastor.
6. The Board of Elders shall have the power to secure, hold, approve, encumber, mortgage, sell, convey, and dispose of property, both real and personal, in fee simple or otherwise, provided that the church property may be mortgaged, or sold, or conveyed by the Board, but only upon express approval of the church; said express approval shall be by a majority of those voting at a duly called meeting of the church. A duly called meeting of the church, for the purposes set forth in this paragraph shall be upon fifteen (15) days written notice, with the reason for such meeting being set forth therein; said written notice being given by regular mail to the members who are listed on the membership roll of the church, as the same was constituted at the last preceding Annual Meeting. (Certificate of Incorporation, Section 2-B).
7. No activities for the purpose of raising monies shall be conducted among or by the members of the church without prior approval of the Board, except solicitation of voluntary contributions among their own members, by Auxiliary Societies.
8. All Elders who shall resign as such or who shall cease to be a member of the church for any of the reasons set forth in Article Five, Section Four, above, shall thereby cease to be an Elder.
9. The Board shall control the engagement, dismissal, and welfare of all employees of the church.
10. The Board shall prepare annually a budget for the coming church year. Such budget shall be presented by the Board for approval at the Annual Congregational Meeting of the church.

ARTICLE NINE

THE PRIORITY AND PURPOSE OF SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

1. Priority.

The primary role of the eldership is to watch over the flock and feed the sheep (I Pet. 5:1-4; Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:27-32; John 21:15-17). Without question the spiritual nourishment of the flock is accomplished primarily through the public preaching of the Word to the corporate assembly at the worship services (Neh. 8:1-12; Col. 1:25-28; I Tim. 4:1-2; Heb. 13:7), and secondarily through family worship and instruction and private devotions (Deut 6:6-7; Eph. 6:4).

However, we believe the establishment of additional meetings designed to *supplement* the biblical instruction received through these primary and secondary means is perfectly consistent with the Bible's great emphasis upon Christian education (Deut. 6:6-7; 4:10;

31:9-13; Joel 1:1-3; Psa. 78:1-7; Prov. 22:6; Col. 1:28; I Cor. 14:20) and the exercising of the mind (Mt. 22:37; I Pet. 1:13; Heb. 5:11-14).

We therefore believe that Bible Studies, Sunday Schools, or other regularly held supplemental educational meetings, which keep the aforementioned priorities in view can be established to the glory of God and as an aid to his people and their families.

2. Purpose.

Any such meetings should never be confused with, be equated to, or take precedence over the Worship Services and the preaching of the Word to the corporate body. And, in the case of classes or studies for children, they should never be thought to replace instruction received at home from the parents or guardians.

3. Appointment.

The Board of Elders shall determine both the types of supplemental educational ministries that would be deemed beneficial for the congregation and the time, place, and frequency of their respective meetings.

4. Teachers.

The responsibility of a teacher of the Word of God is an awesome one, not to be taken lightly (James 3:1). While most teaching positions would be filled by elders, other teachers may be needed and will be selected and governed by the following:

a. Qualifications.

- (1) All teachers shall be subject to the same requirements as to personal beliefs as are the members of the Board of Elders as outlined in Articles Three and Four of this Constitution.
- (2) Only those recognized by the Board of Elders as being mature in the Christian Faith and in sound doctrine and having been gifted by God with an ability to teach others shall be considered for a teaching post.
- (3) All those appointed to teach, with the exception of substitutes and guest speakers, must be a member in good standing of Christian Fellowship Church.

b. Appointment.

- (1) The Board of Elders has sole discretion to appoint or dismiss all teachers of all supplemental educational ministries.
- (2) The terms of the appointments shall be determined by the Board.

- (3) In accordance with I Timothy 2:12-15, a woman is not permitted to teach at or be appointed as a teacher of any meeting where adult men (18 years and older) are permitted to attend. However, according to Titus 2:3-4, qualified women are encouraged to be teachers of other women.

c. Dismissal.

The Board has sole discretion to dismiss any teacher. Such action may also necessitate church discipline. Grounds for dismissal may consist of, but are not limited to, any or all of the following:

- (1) When that teacher admits to or is found guilty of any conduct unbecoming of a Christian. In such a case, discipline may also be required
- (2) When that teacher is known to be teaching doctrine which is inconsistent with the doctrinal statement of this church. Under this condition if the Board determines that the doctrinal difference is not such that would require the teacher to be deemed a heretic and the teacher agrees to cease and desist from teaching the differing doctrine then the Board may allow that person to continue in his teaching post.
- (3) When the teacher becomes disruptive in any way to the overall peace, unity, and good instruction of the body of Christ.
- (4) When after having been duly appointed, the Board determines that an error in judgment has been made and the teacher does not meet all the requirements set forth in section 4(a).

ARTICLE TEN

THE PRIORITY AND PURPOSE OF AUXILIARY SOCIETIES

1. Christian Fellowship Church may form auxiliary societies that do not strictly fall under the heading of Supplemental Educational Ministries for the purpose of supplementing the spiritual enrichment of its members in accordance with the doctrinal positions set forth in this Constitution.
2. The Board of Elders shall have full control of all Societies and the conduct and duties of such Societies are subject to the approval of the Board of Elders. No society shall be formed or dissolved without prior approval of the Board of Elders.

3. All Auxiliary Societies shall render a written “Financial Report” to the Board, and in the yearly financial report to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting.
4. Only the members of Christian Fellowship Church may be eligible to be Officers of any Society and are subject to approval by the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE ELEVEN

MEETINGS

1. Worship.
 - a. Public services of Worship shall be held regularly on the Lord’s Day and shall be conducted in a manner consistent with that which is set forth in Article Three, section 14 of this Constitution.
 - b. The Lord’s Supper (Communion) shall be observed regularly (we suggest monthly) as determined by the Board of Elders.
 - c. Other meetings shall be held from time to time, as the interest of the Lord’s work shall necessitate.
 - d. Due to unusual circumstances the Board of Elders may temporarily alter any of the above meetings.
2. Prayer Meetings.
 - a. Public meetings open to the entire congregation may be held for the purpose of fellowship in prayer (Act 2:42; 12:12).
 - b. Any such meetings shall be lead by a member of the Board of Elders, or in their absence, another adult male member of the church designated by the Board.
 - c. The time, frequency and place of the Prayer Meeting(s) shall be determined by the Board.

ARTICLE TWELVE

SUPPORT

This Church shall be supported principally by the voluntary contributions of its members (I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:7). No assessment shall be made upon any member thereof by the church for any purpose whatsoever. Auxiliary Societies, however, may determine their dues.

ARTICLE THIRTEEN

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

All major issues affecting the church or its members must come before a Congregational Meeting and be voted upon. Major issues shall be determined by the Official Board in consultation with the church membership. Other than for an emergency as determined by the elders, four weeks notice shall be given to the congregation. A quorum shall be 75% of the membership. Approval shall require 75% of the voting members present.

ARTICLE FOURTEEN

PROFITS AND DISSOLUTION

1. No profit shall ever accrue to the benefit of any person or persons from the assets, holdings, or other transactions in which this Corporation may be involved.
2. In the event of dissolution of this Corporation, all of its tangible assets and holdings shall be distributed to such other existing non-profit Religious Corporations as would be in full agreement with the letter and spirit of this Constitution. All decisions in this event would be made by the majority vote of the remaining members of the church, after all outstanding debts and liabilities have been paid and satisfied.

ARTICLE FIFTEEN

RATIFICATION

This Constitution shall become effective immediately upon ratification by the Congregation.

ARTICLE SIXTEEN

AMENDMENTS

1. This Constitution may be added to or amended at the regular congregational meeting or special meeting called for the purpose, by the vote of 75% of the qualified voters present

provided the qualified voters shall represent 75% of the total congregation eligible to vote, and provided that notice of such action shall have been announced from the pulpit and the intended addition/s and/or amendments posted, and all members of the church shall be notified by regular mail one week prior to the meeting.

2. Article Three of this Constitution, giving the Doctrinal basis of the church and this particular section limiting its amendment, shall not be subject to amendment except upon ratification in writing by 75% of the entire church membership. Dissenters are to be counseled by the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE SEVENTEEN

BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOR OF EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

In order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to Article of Faith 17.b “Marriage and Sexuality” and conduct themselves accordingly.

THE BY-LAWS

ARTICLE ONE

ESTABLISHMENT OF BY-LAWS

The change of by-laws shall be made by a 75% vote of the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE TWO

ABSENTEEISM

1. If a member of the church is absent for a period of four weeks straight without good cause from the Morning Service he or she shall receive a visit from at least one member of the Board to determine the cause.
2. If the member is absent eight weeks in a row, without good cause, the name of that member may be placed on the "Inactive Roll" of the church.
3. If a member remains absent for four weeks after being placed on the Inactive Roll his name may be dropped from the Church Rolls entirely. This shall not be done without a reasonable attempt to notify the member that this is pending.
4. If a person's name be dropped from the church roll he may be reinstated by applying for membership under the terms of Article Five, 2d.

ARTICLE THREE

AUDIT OF CHURCH BOOKS

1. All Financial Records of the church, including Auxiliary Societies, shall be audited at least once yearly.
2. The Books shall be audited independently according to the direction of the Board.
3. A full report of these audits shall be made at the Annual Congregational Meeting in the Annual Report of the Church.

ARTICLE FOUR

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

1. The vote on such items shall be accorded by 75% of all voting members present.
2. No voting by proxy shall be permissible.
3. All voting shall be by secret ballot.

ARTICLE FIVE

COMPENSATION

While employment, including salary details, is to be established by the Board of Elders in conjunction with the church membership, the details of related benefits shall be determined by the Board of Elders alone. This consideration shall include housing, automobile, retirement, medical, and dental provisions. An annual vacation for full employment shall be for three weeks or more that provides rest from regular ministry as planned in consultation with the elders.

ARTICLE SIX

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

1. The Annual Meeting of the Congregation shall be held during the month of January. The business of the meeting shall be to elect Members of the Board, approve the Annual Budget, and receive the reports of the Treasurer and Secretary of the Board, as well as the reports of the Auxiliary Societies of the church. They will also conduct such other business as may be properly considered. Only members who are in good standing may vote.

2. Two-thirds of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
3. Notices of all meetings shall be given from the pulpit on the three Lord's Days immediately preceding the meeting, or printed in the church bulletin on the three preceding Lord's Days.
4. The following Order of Business shall be observed at the Annual Meeting.
 - a. The Chairman of the Board of Elders, or in his absence, another member of the Board, shall preside over the meeting.
 - b. The Secretary of the meeting shall be the Official Secretary of the Board or an alternative previously elected by the Official Board from among its members.
 - c. The Opening Prayer.
 - d. The reading of the Minutes of the last Annual Meeting, including any special meetings.
 - e. Pastor's Annual Report.
 - f. Presentation of nominees for the Church Board.
 - g. Election of Church Board members.
 - h. Report of the Treasurer.
 - i. Reports of Auxiliary Societies.
 - j. Old Business.
 - k. New Business.
 - l. Adjournment with prayer.

ARTICLE SEVEN

POWER OF PURCHASE

1. The only persons who may purchase items for the Church or Sunday School on "charge" or for "rebate" shall be members of the Board or those authorized by special appointment.
2. Itemized receipts must be presented for payment, signed by the purchaser.

ARTICLE EIGHT

FACILITY USE

1. The church desires that its facilities be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and to bring God glory. Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, we make our facilities available to approved non-members as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in practice.
2. But facility use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with the church's faith or moral teachings, which are summarized in, among other places, the church's constitution and by-laws. Nor may church facilities be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed inconsistent with, the church's faith or moral teachings. The Board of Elders is the final decision-maker concerning use of church facilities.
3. This restricted facility use policy is necessary for two important reasons:
 - a. The church may not in good conscience materially cooperate in activities or beliefs that are contrary to its faith. Allowing its facilities to be used for purposes that contradict the church's beliefs would be material cooperation with that activity, and would be a grave violation of the church's faith and religious practice (II Cor. 6:14; I Thess. 5:22).
 - b. It is very important that the church present a consistent message to the community, and that the church staff and members conscientiously maintain that message as part of their witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Allowing facilities to be used by groups or persons who express beliefs or engage in practices contrary to the church's faith would have a severe, negative impact on the message that the church strives to promote. It could also cause confusion and scandal to church members and the community because they may reasonably perceive that by allowing use of our facilities, the church agrees with the beliefs or practices of the persons or groups using its facilities.
4. Therefore, in no event shall persons or groups who hold, advance, or advocate beliefs, or advance, advocate or engage in practices that contradict the church's faith use any church facility. Nor may church facilities be used in any way that contradicts the church's faith. This policy applies to all church facilities because the church sees all of its property as holy and set apart to worship God (Col. 3:17).

ARTICLE NINE

RECOGNITION OF MARRIAGES, WEDDINGS

1. Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself, the church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman.
2. The pastor(s) and staff of the church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman.
3. The facilities and property of the church shall only host weddings between one man and one woman.