

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

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CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

Ratified

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Where this document cites a Scripture passage of five verses or less, the full passage is given in a footnote.

All Scripture quotations are from the The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV).

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.....	7
	4. Creation.....	7
	5. Providence.....	7
	6. The Fall of Man.....	8
	7. Sovereign Grace.....	8
	8. The Saving Work of Christ.....	9
	9. Justification Through Faith Alone.....	9
	10. Regeneration.....	10
	11. Sanctification.....	10
	12. Perseverance.....	11
	13. The Church.....	11
	14. Worship.....	12
	15. Ordinances.....	12
	16. Christian Liberty.....	13
	17. The Roles of Men and Women.....	14
	18. The World to Come.....	17
	19. Charismatic Signs and Wonders.....	18
ARTICLE FOUR	Covenant.....	19
ARTICLE FIVE	Membership.....	19
ARTICLE SIX	Discipline.....	21
ARTICLE SEVEN	The Board of Elders.....	22
	The Board of Deacons.....	25
ARTICLE EIGHT	Functions of the Board of Elders.....	25
ARTICLE NINE	The Priority and Purpose of Supplemental Educational Ministries..	27
ARTICLE TEN	The Priority and Purpose of Auxiliary Societies.....	30
ARTICLE ELEVEN	Meetings.....	30
ARTICLE TWELVE	Support.....	31
ARTICLE THIRTEEN	Church Government.....	31
ARTICLE FOURTEEN	Profits and Dissolution.....	32
ARTICLE FIFTEEN	Ratification.....	32
ARTICLE SIXTEEN	Amendments.....	32
ARTICLE SEVENTEEN	Beliefs and Behavior of Employees and Volunteers.....	32

THE BY-LAWS

ARTICLE ONE	Establishment of By-laws.....	34
ARTICLE TWO	Absenteeism.....	34
ARTICLE THREE	Audit of Church Books.....	34
ARTICLE FOUR	Church Government.....	35
ARTICLE FIVE	Compensation.....	35
ARTICLE SIX	Annual Congregational Meeting.....	35
ARTICLE SEVEN	Power of Purchase.....	36
ARTICLE EIGHT	Facility Use.....	36
ARTICLE NINE	Recognition of Marriages, Weddings.....	37
ARTICLE TEN	Evangelistic Ministry Volunteers.....	38

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.¹

¹ **Acts 20:32** "And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." **Matt. 28:19-20** "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." **Jude 3** "Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints."

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

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).³

² **Isa. 8:20** “To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.” **Isa. 40:7-8** “The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.” **II Tim. 3:16-17** “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” **II Pet. 1:19-21** “And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

³ **Deut. 6:4** “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” **Matt. 3:16-17** “And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’” **Matt. 28:19** “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” **I Cor. 8:4** “Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that ‘an idol has no real existence,’ and that ‘there is no God but one.’”

- 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).⁴
- 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).⁵

⁴ **John 1:14** "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." **John 15:26** "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me." **John 16:15** "All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you." **John 17:5** "And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." **Gal. 4:6** "And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" **Ps. 2:7-9** "I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.'" **Isa. 5:10** "For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah." **John 16:23-27** "In that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God."

⁵ **Isa. 7:14** "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." **Rom. 9:5** "To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen." **Gal. 4:4** "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law." **I Tim. 2:5** "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." **Tit. 2:13** "Waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." **Matt 6:9** "Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.'" **John 14:13-14** "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."

- 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).⁶

⁶ **Acts 5:3-4** "But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.'" **I Cor. 2:11** "For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God." **I Cor. 12:9-13** "To another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit." **John 16:13** "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." **John 16:8-11** "And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged." **John 3:5** "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'" **John 14:26** "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." **Rom. 8:14** "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." **I Cor. 6:11** "And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." **I Cor. 6:19** "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own." **Eph. 3:16** "That according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being." **Romans 8:26** "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." **Jude 20** "But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit."

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).⁷

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).⁸

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).⁹

⁷ **Isa. 46:9-10** “Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.’” **Eph. 1:11** “In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.” **Jas. 1:13-15** “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.” **I John 1:5** “This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” **Acts 4:27-28** “For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.” **John 19:11** “Jesus answered him, ‘You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.’” **Eph. 1:3-5** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.”

⁸ **Gen. 1:26-27** “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” **Gen. 2:7** “Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.” **Gen. 2:18** “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’”

⁹ **Matt. 10:29-31** “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.” **Heb. 1:3** “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

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).¹⁰

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).¹¹

¹⁰ **Rom. 5:12** “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.” **Rom. 5:15-19** “But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.”

¹¹ **Rom. 5:20-21** “Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” **Rom. 9:16** “So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.” **Eph. 1:3-6** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.” **II Thess. 2:13-14** “But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

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).¹²

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).¹³

¹² **John 3:14-16** "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." **Gal. 3:13** "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.'" **Heb. 4:14-16** "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." **Heb. 10:11-14** "And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified."

¹³ **Rom. 3:24** "And are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." **Gal. 2:16** "Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified." **Eph. 2:8-9** "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

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).¹⁴

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).¹⁵

¹⁴ **John 3:5-8** "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.'" **Rom. 6:11** "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." **Rom. 8:10-11** "But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you." **Tit. 3:3-7** "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

¹⁵ **I Pet. 1:1-2** "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you." **I Pet. 2:9** "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." **II Pet. 3:18** "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." **I John 3:2-3** "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." **II Cor. 12:7-10** "So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

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).¹⁶

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).¹⁷

¹⁶ **Luke 22:31-32** "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." **John 6:39** "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day." **John 10:28-29** "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." **John 17:12** "While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled." **Phil. 1:6** "And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

¹⁷ **Matt. 28:16-20** "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" **Acts 1:8** "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." **Acts 2:41** "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls." **Heb. 10:24-25** "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." **I Tim. 3:15** "If I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth."

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).¹⁸

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.¹⁹

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).²⁰

¹⁸ **Acts 2:42** “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

¹⁹ **Eph. 5:19** “Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart.” **Psalm 40:3** “He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.”

²⁰ **Matt 28:19-20** “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

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).²¹

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).²²

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 necessitates the separation of church and state (Matt. 22:21).²³

²¹ **Matt 26:26-29** "Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'"

²² **Gal. 5:1** "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." **I Cor. 9:20-21** "To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law." **Heb. 12:22-24** "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel." **John 15:14** "You are my friends if you do what I command you." **Rom. 13:10** "Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." **II Cor. 5:14** "For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died." **I John 3:23-24** "And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us."

²³ **John 6:45** "It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me." **I Pet. 2:9** "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." **Matt. 22:21** "They said, 'Caesar's.' Then he said to them, 'Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'"

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).²⁴

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).²⁵

²⁴ **I Pet. 3:7** “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.” **I Pet. 2:9** “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” **I Cor. 11:13** “Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered?” **Gen. 2:18** “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’” **I Cor. 11:8-12** “For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God.”

²⁵ **Matt. 19:4-6** “He answered, ‘Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” **I Cor. 6:9-10** “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.” **I Cor. 7:1-5** “Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: ‘It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.’ But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” **Heb. 13:4** “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”

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).²⁶

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).²⁷

²⁶ **Deut. 22:5** "A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God." **Matt. 5:27-28** "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart." **Mark 7:21-23** "For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." **Gal. 5:19-21** "Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." **I Tim. 1:9-10** "Understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine."

²⁷ **I Cor. 6:11** "And such 'were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.'" **Mark 12:31** "The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." **Gal. 6:10** "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

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).²⁸

²⁸ **Gen. 2:24** “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” **Mark 10:6-9** “But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” **Eph. 5:25** “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” **Eph. 6:4** “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” **Eph. 5:22** “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” **Eph. 6:1** “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” **Mal. 2:14-16** “But you say, ‘Why does he not?’ Because the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. “For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the Lord, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless.”

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).²⁹

²⁹ **Acts 1:11** “And said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’” **John 6:37-40** “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” **I Cor. 15:51-54** “Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’” **I Thess. 4:16-17** “For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.” **Heb. 9:27** “And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.” **Rev. 20:11-15** “Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

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).³⁰

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).³¹

³⁰ **Matt. 13:41-43** “The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.” **Matt. 25:21** “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’” **Matt. 25:34** “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’” **Matt. 25:41** “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’” **Matt. 25:46** “And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” **Mark 9:47-48** “And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, ‘where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’” **Rom. 9:22-23** “What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory.” **II Thess. 1:7-10** “And to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.” **Rev. 14:9-11** “And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, ‘If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.’”

³¹ **Jude 3** “Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.” **Rev. 22:18-19** “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

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.³²
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.

³² I Cor. 12:18 "But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose."

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 5:19-20.³³
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.

³³ **I Cor. 5:13** "God judges those outside. 'Purge the evil person from among you.'" **Gal. 6:1-2** "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." **I Tim. 5:19-20** "Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear."

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:³⁴

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.

³⁴ **Matt. 18:15-20** "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

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).³⁵

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).³⁶

³⁵ **Acts 20:17** “Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him.” **Eph. 4:11-12** “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” **Phil. 1:6** “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” **Tit. 1:5-9** “This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.” **I Pet. 5:1-5** “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

³⁶ **Acts 20:28** “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” **I Cor. 11:23** “For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread.” **II Tim. 2:2** “And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” **II Tim. 4:2** “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”

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.³⁷

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).³⁸

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).³⁹

4. Election.

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

³⁷ **Tit. 1:5-9** “This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”

³⁸ **Acts 20:17** “Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him.” **Acts 20:28** “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” **I Pet. 5:1-4** “So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.” **Heb. 13:17** “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

³⁹ **I Tim. 5:17-18** “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer deserves his wages.’”

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.⁴⁰

(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.⁴¹

(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

⁴⁰ **I Tim. 3:2** "Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach." **II Tim. 2:15** "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." **II Tim. 4:2** "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching."

⁴¹ **Acts 6:4** "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

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.⁴²

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

⁴² **Acts 6:1-6** "Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.' And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them."

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 email or 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).⁴³

⁴³ **I Pet. 5:1-4** “So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.” **Heb. 13:17** “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.” **John 21:15-17** “When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ He said to him a second time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ and he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’” **Col. 1:25-28** “Of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.” **I Tim. 4:1-2** “Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared.” **Deut. 6:6-7** “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

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; Psalms 78:1-7; Prov. 22:6; Col. 1:28; I Cor. 14:20) and the exercising of the mind (Matt. 22:37; I Pet. 1:13; Heb. 5:11-14).⁴⁴

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.

⁴⁴ **Deut. 6:6-7** "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." **Deut. 4:10** "How on the day that you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, the Lord said to me, 'Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.'" **Deut. 31:9-13** "Then Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, 'At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess.'" **Joel 1:1-3** "The word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel: Hear this, you elders; give ear, all inhabitants of the land! Has such a thing happened in your days, or in the days of your fathers? Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation." **Prov. 22:6** "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." **Col. 1:28** "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ." **1 Cor. 14:20** "Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature." **Matt. 22:37** "And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'" **I Pet. 1:13** "Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." **Heb. 5:11-14** "About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil."

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:⁴⁵

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.⁴⁶

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

⁴⁵ **Jas. 3:1** “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.”

⁴⁶ **I Tim. 2:12-15** “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.” **Tit. 2:3-4** “Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children.”

- (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).⁴⁷
- b. Any such meetings shall be led 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.⁴⁸

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.

⁴⁷ **Acts 2:42** "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." **Acts 12:12** "When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying."

⁴⁸ **I Cor. 16:2** "On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come." **II Cor. 9:7** "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

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 email or 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.

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).⁴⁹
 - 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).⁵⁰

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.

⁴⁹ **II Cor. 6:14** "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?" **I Thess. 5:22** "Abstain from every form of evil."

⁵⁰ **Col. 3:17** "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

ARTICLE TEN

EVANGELISTIC MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS

We as a church are accountable to Christ for how we represent Him in our evangelistic ministries (Matt 12:36). Knowing this, we require a person to meet at least one of the following criteria in order to speak in our evangelistic ministries, such as door-to-door evangelism, street evangelism, nursing home ministry, and abortion clinic ministry:⁵¹

- a. Member of CFC
- b. Baptized by CFC
- c. Child of a CFC member
- d. Belong to a like-minded church and approved by CFC's Evangelism Coordinator
- e. Approved by the Evangelism Coordinator after careful screening and consultation with the Elders

⁵¹ **Matt. 12:36** "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak,"