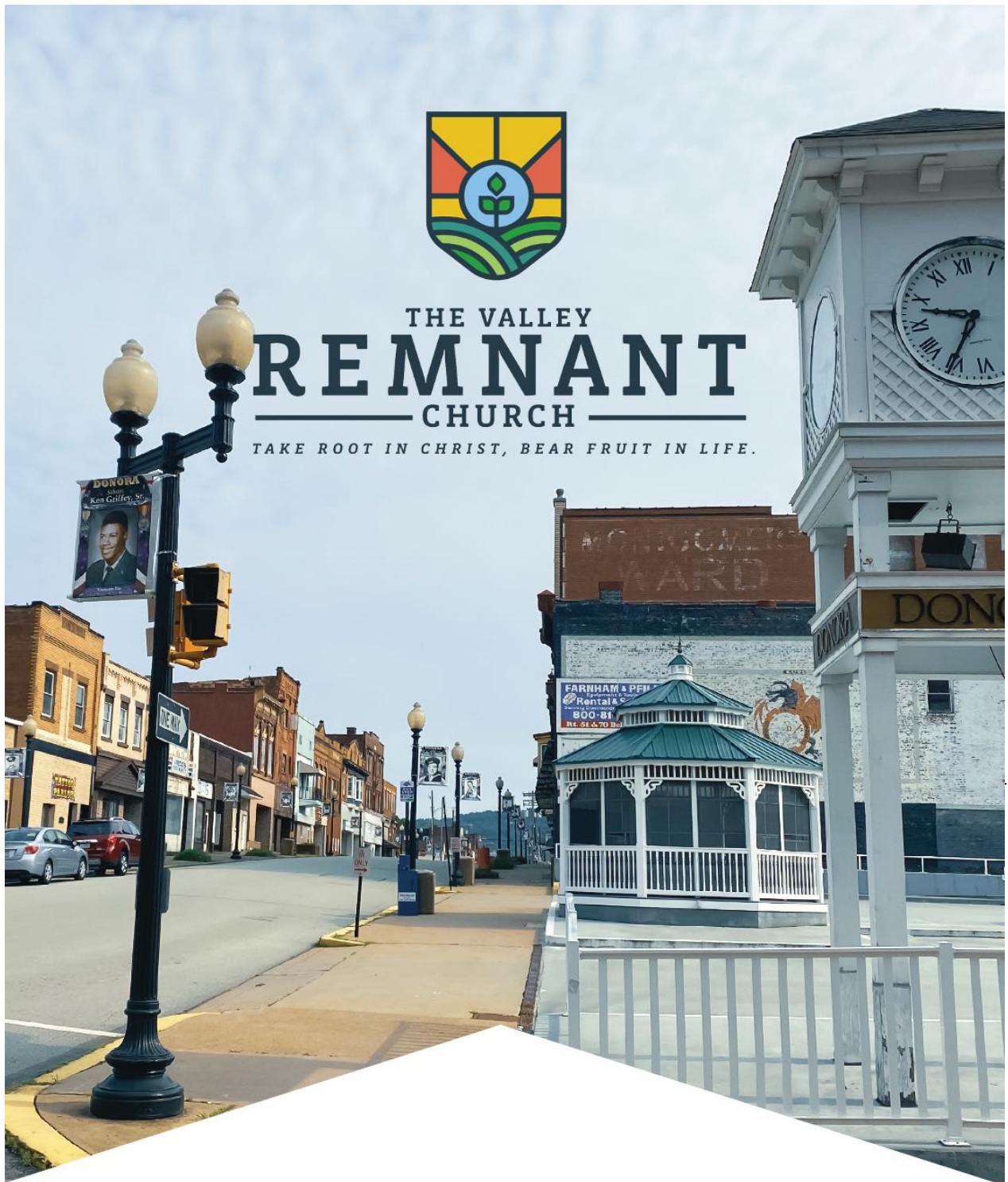




THE VALLEY  
**REMNANT**  
CHURCH

TAKE ROOT IN CHRIST, BEAR FRUIT IN LIFE.



**church**  
**constitution**

THE VALLEY REMNANT CHURCH CONSTITUTION ADOPTED JANUARY 14, 2024



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## **PREAMBLE**

We, the members of The Valley Remnant Church, establish this constitution for the preservation, security, order, and scriptural integrity of the principles of our faith and how this church is governed. This constitution preserves the liberties and states the responsibilities of each member and officer of this church. Together, we establish and voluntarily submit ourselves to the following articles:

## **ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of this church is The Valley Remnant Church.

## **ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

### **A. THE PURPOSE**

This church exists by the grace of God and for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose of all its activities. We will seek to glorify the Triune God of Scripture<sup>1</sup> by enjoying and promoting His worship;<sup>2</sup> edifying and equipping the saints;<sup>3</sup> engaging the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ both locally and worldwide;<sup>4</sup> seeking whenever possible to both plant and strengthen other churches, promoting biblical faithfulness and purity in all the assemblies of Christ;<sup>5</sup> and seeking to minister relief to the needy, especially among the saints.<sup>6</sup>

### **B. THE MEANS**

Our main tools to achieve our goals are prayer and sharing the Word of God in both public and private settings. Additionally, as a church, we might explore other valid ministries deemed appropriate by our Elder(s). These could include activities like sharing books and recordings, organizing community events, gathering resources for those in need, and supporting the training of individuals for ministry and missionary work. While these activities can change or be added to over time, our focus will always remain on prayer and the Word of God as our primary methods.

## **ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The Holy Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God and is the basis for any Statement of Faith. However, since most churches – even some heretical ones – ascribe to the above statement, it is prudent to adhere to certain Biblical statements and confessions so that the doctrinal beliefs of this church are clearly known. Due to its quality expression of the teaching of the Word of God, we choose the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 (LBCF) as our Statement of Faith. The LBCF is a confirmation of faith, a means of edification and instruction, an aid in controversy, and a basis for church unity. Nevertheless, we acknowledge, without hesitation or reservation, that the Scriptures alone are God-inspired, and thus are, alone, the supreme authority in all matters of belief and practice.

## **ARTICLE IV: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

The Valley Remnant Church is an autonomous, congregational, Elder-ruled Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The congregational members reserve the exclusive authority for self-governance in all aspects of both the spiritual and practical life within this church. The congregation reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

### **A. REASON FOR MEMBERSHIP**

A genuine Christian's commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ is inseparable from their commitment to His truth and His people. Ordinarily, this commitment requires a formal, open, voluntary, solemn, and enduring commitment to membership in a local church. Christ ordained the church for His own glory, worship, and the spiritual benefit of the people. The following list is some proof of the existence of the local church and reasons that every true Christian should seek membership therein:

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 3:21

<sup>2</sup> John 4:23,24; 1 Corinthians 3:16,17; 1 Peter 2:5

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:27,28; 14:12,18,19,26; Ephesians 4:11-16

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; Acts 13 & 14

<sup>5</sup> Acts 15:36,41; Acts 16:5; Jude 3

<sup>6</sup> Romans. 15:26,27; Gal. 2:10; Gal. 6:10

### **1. THE GATHERING**

The New Testament presents the local church as a distinct and defined group of individuals covenanted together to worship God and carry out the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ. The local church is made up of individuals who may be counted,<sup>7</sup> added to,<sup>8</sup> and even subtracted from.<sup>9</sup>

### **2. THE ORGANIZING**

Each local church of Christ is called upon to select leaders and representatives from among itself,<sup>10</sup> thus making it a formal organization with recognized officers.<sup>11</sup>

### **3. THE OPERATING**

The fulfillment of the Great Commission requires church membership.<sup>12</sup> In this Commission, there is an inseparable connection between making disciples, baptizing them, and teaching them all things that Christ has commanded. Scripture makes clear that the Apostles implemented this Commission by gathering baptized disciples into local churches where they were taught all the things that Christ commanded.<sup>13</sup>

## **B. APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

Those wishing to become members of our church are encouraged to apply! Upholding the integrity of our beliefs and practices is of utmost importance to us. Therefore, we kindly ask potential members to understand and meet specific biblical criteria. Approval for membership is subject to the recommendation of our Elder(s) and the consent of the church.

### **THE METHOD OF RECEIVING MEMBERS INTO THE CHURCH WILL BE ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING STEPS:**

**STEP 1:** An initial interview with an Elder in the church for the following reasons:

- I. Because we believe that church membership is for true believers only, by listening to the applicant's testimony, the Elder will glean, with as much certainty as possible, that the proposed member knows the way of salvation, has a personal saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>14</sup> and has evidence of a life transformed by the power of Christ.<sup>15</sup>
- II. To make sure that the proposed member understands and is in general and substantial agreement with the doctrinal beliefs of our church.<sup>16</sup> To gain this purpose, the prospective member will need to become generally familiar with the confession/Statement of Faith of this church – which is the LBCF. It is not expected that every new member understands all the doctrines we believe, but there must be a general soundness in faith, and a humble willingness to learn God's truth. Additionally, the prospective member must have a determination not to sow any discord in the church about any doctrinal matters in which he/she might disagree with the church.
- III. To make sure that the proposed member understands what is expected of members of the church.<sup>17</sup>

**STEP 2:** When the interview process is satisfactorily completed, the membership candidate will be presented before the church for formal membership. This process will include the following:

- I. A formal announcement to the church of the desire of the candidate to become a member.

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<sup>7</sup> Acts 2:41,42; Acts 4:4

<sup>8</sup> Acts 2:47; 5:14

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians. 5:12,13; 2 Corinthians. 2:6

<sup>10</sup> Acts 6:1-6; Acts 15:22; 2 Corinthians. 8:19,23

<sup>11</sup> Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 28:18-20

<sup>13</sup> Acts 2:38-42; 1 Corinthians. 4:1-7; Titus 1:7

<sup>14</sup> Acts 2:37-42, 5:14, 8:12, 16:30-34, 20:21

<sup>15</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:1-2, 6:11; Galatians 1:1-2, 4:8-9; 1 Thessalonian 1:1-9

<sup>16</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:10, 14:40; Ephesians 4:3

<sup>17</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:40; 2 Corinthians 8:5; 1 Thessalonian 5:12-14; Act 15:39 Matthew 18:15-18; Acts 5:13-14

- II. The prospective member will give his/her testimony before the church, and a written copy, of the member's testimony may be made available to the members of the church, if requested.
- III. Allowance of a period of not less than two weeks for the members to review the testimony and voice any concerns to the Elder(s) concerning the church receiving the candidate into membership.

**STEP 3:** After time has been allotted for the accomplishment of Step 2, the members will vote on the reception of the candidate into membership. A three-fourths vote (75%) of those members present and voting shall be required for acceptance into church membership.

**STEP 4:** If the candidate is accepted by the church as a member, the candidate will be officially received into membership in a public worship service. If the candidate has not yet been baptized, baptism will be administered,<sup>18</sup> then the candidate will be accepted into membership. During the public worship service, an elder will lead the candidate and the congregation with an oath of commitment and covenanting.<sup>19</sup>

### C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

First and foremost, all members need to have a good confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; to have obeyed the Lord Jesus in the ordinance of believer's baptism; to be faithful in all the duties essential to the Christian life; to regularly attend the stated services of the church, unless providentially hindered; to submit cheerfully to the Eldership of the church;<sup>20</sup> to give cheerfully to its support and its causes as God has prospered them; to participate in its organized work; and to make available to the church such talents and abilities with which God has endowed him/her.

### D. REGULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE MEANS OF GRACE

Members are to strive to honor God by their walk in Biblical holiness of heart and life. Because we recognize the seriousness of taking upon the name of the One True God in our baptism and our church membership, we agree not to take His glorious name lightly. We will adorn our profession with honor by seeking a closer walk with God through His ordinary means of grace. These means include prayer, self-examination, fellowship, baptism, hearing the Gospel preached, the study of Scripture, the Lord's Supper, faithful attendance at public worship, and private devotions through Bible study, prayer, and family worship. We will also pursue the salvation and sanctification of our children and other loved ones, by instructing them in God's truth, while also seeking to exemplify that truth in our Godly walk before them.

### E. BIBLICAL WITNESSING IN THE HOME

Members are to strive to honor God by their witness in the order and administration of their homes. The home holds a central place in God's Word and is the subject of frequent encouragements in the New Testament. We know we won't be perfect, but we're committed to maintaining our homes prayerfully because we want to honor God and Christ in our church and community, and make sure that the cause of Christ keeps growing for the future.

Both the husband and the wife are of equal value and importance, and both hold different roles in the home. Men are to govern their homes in love, with gentleness and grace.<sup>21</sup> Women are helpmates and are to follow the lead of the husband, as he follows Christ.<sup>22</sup> This will function differently in each home, but, out of love to God and each other, must be done with mutual respect and dignity. By holy example, parents should raise their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord<sup>23</sup>, teaching them the truths of God's Word, consistent education in all necessary matters, and discipline free of and far from physical, verbal, and mental abuse. Children must reverently obey their parents.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Matthew 28:18-20; John 4:1-2; Acts 2:41, 8:18, 16:31-34, 18:8

<sup>19</sup> See: *The Valley Remnant Church Procedural Manual Section 1*

<sup>20</sup> Hebrews 13:17

<sup>21</sup> Ephesians 5:28, 33; Colossians 3:19

<sup>22</sup> Ephesians 5:22, 24; Titus 2:5

<sup>23</sup> Ephesians 6:4

<sup>24</sup> Ephesians 6:1

## **F. MISSIONS AND WITNESSING**

To the best of our ability, we commit to honor God by our witness in this world. We will make every effort to resist the sins of this present evil age, while zealously endeavoring, both by holy lives and faithful words, to advance the Kingdom of Christ. We are to proclaim the Gospel to the ends of the earth.<sup>25</sup> Together, we are committed to common efforts to send the Gospel to the ends of the earth by training and supporting missionaries and supporting other like-minded institutions that do the same.

## **G. PRAYERFUL GIVING**

Christians are expected to support the Lord's work through offerings to the local church. Scripture distinctly and positively requires giving in proportion to our financial means.<sup>26</sup> As a body, we commit to systematic and cheerful contributions for the support of our church above all other available ministries.<sup>27</sup>

## **H. JUDGMENT AND DISCRETION IN EXERCISING CHRISTIAN LIBERTY**

We are all required to be loyal in our daily walks and lifestyles<sup>28</sup> in obeying the moral commandments established in God's Word.<sup>29</sup> Even so, Christians are permitted liberty to participate in certain practices that God has not prohibited in His Word. Members are cautioned, however, not to use this liberty as a cover for malicious self-indulgence, which is sin.<sup>30</sup>

## **I. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

Membership must be governed by Biblical principles. Accordingly, membership will be terminated in one of the following four ways:

### **1. BY PHYSICAL DEATH**

The names of members who have been removed from us by death are automatically removed from the membership roll.

### **2. BY TRANSFER**

The Elder(s) will, upon request, provide letters of transfer to members in good standing (not under church discipline) who apply for them; however, letters will be given only to Gospel-centered churches.

### **3. BY VOLUNTARY SEPARATION**

If a member not under church discipline asks that his or her name be removed from the membership roll, the Elder(s) will give instruction on the importance of membership in a Bible-believing local church before removing his or her name from the membership roll. If a member moves outside our community and fails to join another church in a reasonable time, the Elder(s) may remove his or her name from the membership roll and inform the Church of the reason for this action.

### **4. BY DISCIPLINARY EXCLUSION**

According to Holy Scripture, a church must exclude from its membership any person who persists in holding or teaching serious doctrinal heresies, or who persists in conduct which is either publicly scandalous, or blatantly inconsistent with his or her Christian profession, or who persists in disturbing the unity and peace of the church.<sup>31</sup>

## **ARTICLE V: CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

### **A. FORMATIVE DISCIPLINE**

Every disciple of Christ must be under Christ's discipline (His instruction and correction), which is administered to each disciple both directly through the Holy Spirit (self-discipline) and through the church.<sup>32</sup> As a church, we aim to uplift our members, both young and old, by acknowledging and responding to their spiritual gifts. Our collective pursuit is to promote holiness.<sup>33</sup> We are molded and

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<sup>25</sup> *Matthew 28:18-20*

<sup>26</sup> *Malachi 3:8-11*

<sup>27</sup> *1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7*

<sup>28</sup> *Ephesians 4:1*

<sup>29</sup> *Hebrews 10:24-25*

<sup>30</sup> *1 Peter 2:15-16*

<sup>31</sup> *Matthew 18:15ff; 1 Corinthians. 5:1ff; Romans. 16:17; Titus 3:10,11*

<sup>32</sup> *1 Corinthians 12:12-27; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15; Hebrews 3:12,13; 10:24-25, Proverbs 3:12*

<sup>33</sup> *2 Peter 3:18; Hebrews 3:12,13; 10:24*

shaped by the ordinary means of grace which are preaching, singing, hearing, praying, and seeing the Word of God in action within the Church. Regrettably, for some at some times, formative discipline is not enough, and corrective discipline is needed.

## **B. CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE**

Corrective discipline's aim is for the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the church, and the restoration and spiritual growth of the offender. Corrective discipline becomes necessary when heretical doctrine, disorderly behavior, and/or scandalous conduct appears among a member of the church. In all such cases, reasonable efforts must be made to resolve difficulty, correct error, and remove offense through counsel and admonition.<sup>34</sup>

In the case of private sin and personal offenses, the instructions in Matthew 18:15-20 give us a general framework for resolving the matter. That framework is expressed here, in chronological order. However, as specific cases warrant, the practical implementation of these steps may call for flexibility and variation.

**STEP 1:** A member of The Valley Remnant Church who is in sin or thought to be in sin should be confronted privately by a fellow member (who is not necessarily an Elder) and urged to repent. If the member repents, then you have gained your brother or sister, and the process ends.

**STEP 2:** If sin is present, but the confronted member refuses to repent, then the person who went to him should go to him again with two or three other brothers or sisters to determine (1) if there is, indeed, sin present, and (2) if the erring brother or sister is, indeed, refusing to repent.

These initial two steps involve only a few members of the church and occur in private settings. If the confronted member persists in his refusal to repent, the matter progresses from informal private corrective discipline to formal public corrective discipline. This is discipline that is led by the elders, involves every voting member of the church, and occurs in a public setting. The following two steps characterize formal *public* corrective discipline.

**STEP 3:** If the matter is not resolved in private, it should be brought to the Elder(s) who will investigate the issue. If the member is, indeed, in unrepentant sin, the Elder(s) will admonish the erring member to repent and bring the matter before the church. Excommunication should be a last resort of the church and often should not be exercised until milder forms of biblical discipline have been meekly, lovingly, and prayerfully utilized in a sincere effort to restore the offending member. Such restorative efforts may include public verbal reproof<sup>35</sup> and temporary suspension of certain privileges of church membership – such as the right to vote or participate in the Lord's Supper.<sup>36</sup> The whole church should prayerfully admonish, confront, correct, and urge the erring member to repent.

**STEP 4:** When other scriptural means of restoring an offender have failed, the church must be willing to excommunicate an offending member.<sup>37</sup> Persons may be excommunicated only by a majority vote (75%) of the church.

While excommunication should be a last resort, in the case of heinous, broadly reported, and known public sin, discipline should not be delayed. Such sins (either moral or doctrinal) are so scandalous, gross, and heinous in their nature, the church has a Scriptural right and mandate to immediately publicly censure and excommunicate those guilty of such sins, if the honor of Christ and His church necessitate this.

All acts of church discipline, including excommunication, must be lovingly carried out for the glory of Christ and the welfare and purity of the church. The goal of eventual restoration of the offender to good standing in the church is of top priority.

### **THE FOLLOWING STEPS FORMAL CORRECTIVE STEPS MAY BE TAKEN:**

#### **1. DISCIPLINARY EXCLUSION**

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<sup>34</sup> Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20

<sup>35</sup> Matthew 18:17; 1 Timothy 5:20

<sup>36</sup> Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,14

<sup>37</sup> 1 Corinthians 5:9-11; Matthew 18:17

A member who is habitually absent from the fellowship of the church without good reason or is unwilling to settle differences with others on Scriptural grounds may be excluded from membership by the Elder(s), who will report the action to the Church.

## **2. EXCOMMUNICATION**

When all other attempts to exhort the member to repentance and restoration have failed, the Elder(s) may vote to present the matter to the church for the excommunication of the accused. The Elder(s) will call the accused for examination, which may include witnesses called by the church and the accused. If at least two thirds of the Elder(s) judge the accused guilty of serious unrepentant sin, they shall recommend excommunication for approval by a majority of the members of the church at a properly called church meeting. Such a meeting will include only the accused, if willing to attend, and the members of the church who are not under discipline themselves.

## **3. RESTORATION**

Since full restoration is the goal of all church discipline, all members of the church should unite in its exercise when necessary, praying earnestly for God's gracious, restorative blessing upon those who have been disciplined. It is also both the duty and the privilege of the church to forgive and restore to membership those who demonstrate true repentance.<sup>38</sup> The Elder(s) restore a person who has been suspended or excluded from membership privileges when they judge that the aims of discipline have been accomplished. In the same way, the Elder(s) will recommend that the church restore an excommunicated person to fellowship by majority vote of the members present at a church meeting.

# **ARTICLE VI. CHURCH OFFICERS**

## **A. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES**

Jesus Christ, alone, is the Head of the church.<sup>39</sup> He governs His church through officers whom He appoints<sup>40</sup> and who are endowed by His Spirit with the gifts and graces needed to accomplish their work.<sup>41</sup> These officers govern with due respect to the rights and liberties of the whole church set forth in the Scriptures.<sup>42</sup> Because Christ appoints church officers, they have authority<sup>43</sup> but their authority is limited by Him in the Scriptures.<sup>44</sup> There are two kinds of church officers: Elders and Deacons.<sup>45</sup> Elders are called "bishops" (meaning "overseers") because they are charged with the oversight of the assembly, "pastors" because they shepherd the flock of God,<sup>46</sup> and "rulers" because they govern and care for the house of God.<sup>47</sup> Deacons are a gift from Christ to the church, exercising their giftedness through service. Their primary responsibility lies in administering the ministries of mercy and benevolence within the church. Christ has ordained local churches to be ruled by Elders and served by Deacons. Beside the offices of Elder and Deacon, the Scriptures acknowledge no other offices that continue in the church today.<sup>48</sup>

## **B. GENERAL PREREQUISITES**

All officers of The Valley Remnant Church must be members of this church. It is the duty of the church to seek to discover among its members those to whom Christ the Lord has imparted the graces and gifts necessary for office,<sup>49</sup> and after formally recognizing them by a majority vote of the members present at a Church meeting, to set them apart by united prayer, and then to submit to their authority.<sup>50</sup> While we acknowledge the valuable gifts which God has given to women and the wonderful assistance they render to the church,<sup>51</sup> the Bible prohibits them from holding either the office of Deacon or Elder. Women, therefore, shall not be

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<sup>38</sup> 2 Corinthians 2: 6-8

<sup>39</sup> Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18

<sup>40</sup> Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11)

<sup>41</sup> 1 Timothy 3:1-13

<sup>42</sup> Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Acts 6:1-7; 2 Corinthians 2:6

<sup>43</sup> 2 Corinthians 13:10

<sup>44</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:36- 38; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

<sup>45</sup> Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13

<sup>46</sup> Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2

<sup>47</sup> 1 Timothy 3:5; Hebrews 13:17,24

<sup>48</sup> Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-13

<sup>49</sup> Acts 6:3

<sup>50</sup> Acts 6:5-6, Luke 10:16; John 13:20; Hebrews 13:17

<sup>51</sup> Romans 16:1-6; Philippians. 4:3; 1 Timothy 3:11



nominated, elected, or ordained to either of these offices in the church.<sup>52</sup> Church officers are not exempt from church discipline, but on the contrary, their office obliges them to adhere to a more rigorous standard of conduct than other members.<sup>53</sup>

## **C. ELDERS**

Those who have been called and equipped by God to rule and teach in the church are identified as elders, pastors, bishops, or overseers. These four names designate one and the same office in a New Testament Church.

### **1. QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS**

The general qualifications for an Elder are clearly set forth in Scripture. Anyone desiring the office of an elder must evidence to God's people the personal, domestic, and ministerial qualifications set forth in the Scriptures – particularly 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Any man called to this office must be able to conscientiously affirm his agreement with our Statement/Confession of Faith and his submit to the Constitution of this church. Should he, at any time, change his convictions respecting these standards, he is under moral obligation to make this fact known to the Elder(s) privately.<sup>54</sup>

### **2. AUTHORITY OF ELDERS**

Because the authority of the Elders of the church is human authority exercised in the House of God, it has both high prerogatives and important limitations. It is divinely delegated authority. Thus, Elders are answerable to God for the exercise of this authority. They are, therefore, obligated to discharge all the duties specified in the Scriptures.<sup>55</sup> The Head of the church<sup>56</sup> has given the Scriptures to His church as an infallible and unchanging rule of practice,<sup>57</sup> to which the Elders are always bound in fulfilling the duties of their office.<sup>58</sup> Insofar as the instruction of the Elder is in accord with the Scriptures, that instruction carries with it the authority of Christ Himself.<sup>59</sup> When Elders exercise this authority by requiring obedience to their leadership, they must seek to gain the consciences of God's people through the ministry of the Word.<sup>60</sup> Where no regulative word from Christ is given, the Elders must exercise the authority given to them in subjection to the general principles of Scripture and to the light of nature and Christian prudence.<sup>61</sup>

The authority of the Elders is limited to the sphere of the local church. The authority of the Elders is defined by the Word of God. Collectively, Elders are entrusted and accountable for providing Scriptural guidance to the church.<sup>62</sup> This encompasses preaching and teaching the entirety of God's counsel,<sup>63</sup> safeguarding the spiritual well-being of every church member,<sup>64</sup> and steering the church in all its endeavors.<sup>65</sup>

This authority, however, must be exercised with sensitivity to the congregation,<sup>66</sup> assuming a servant-leader posture and setting an example.<sup>67</sup> Hence, Elders should seek the church's support for significant undertakings and carefully consider its input when such considerations align with the church's welfare, without relinquishing their God-given responsibilities or authority.<sup>68</sup>

According to Scripture, Elders cannot appoint officers or excommunicate members unilaterally; such actions require a majority vote of members present at a Church meeting.<sup>69</sup> The Elder(s) may not require consequences for sin beyond those of church discipline, invade the spheres of other ordained human authorities (husbands, fathers, civil rulers, and employers), or command God's people regarding matters not specified in Scripture. Additionally, any amendment to this Constitution or decisions regarding

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<sup>52</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:1-7

<sup>53</sup> James. 3:1

<sup>54</sup> Psalm 34:13; Ephesians 4:25; Matthew 5:37

<sup>55</sup> Acts 20:17-35, 1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17

<sup>56</sup> Colossians 1:18

<sup>57</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Matthew 28:20; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 1 Timothy 3:14-15; 4:11

<sup>58</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:36-38

<sup>59</sup> Luke 10:16

<sup>60</sup> Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Hebrews 13:17 John 14:21

<sup>61</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:13-14; 14:40; LBCF 1:6b

<sup>62</sup> Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-3

<sup>63</sup> Acts 20:20-21, 27; Titus 1:9

<sup>64</sup> Ephesians 4:11-13; Colossians 1:28; 1 Thessalonians 2:11; Hebrews 13:17

<sup>65</sup> 1 Timothy 3:4-5

<sup>66</sup> Ezekiel 34:4; Acts 6:5

<sup>67</sup> Matthew 20:25-28; 1 Peter 5:3

<sup>68</sup> 1 Timothy 3:5; Acts 19:30, 21:11-14

<sup>69</sup> Acts 6:3-6; Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:14

the reception, suspension, or exclusion of church members requires approval by a majority vote of members present at a Church meeting.

Elder(s) authority is conditioned by the fact that they are members of the local church as well. Each individual Elder is both under the oversight of his fellow Elders and accountable to the church.<sup>70</sup> While elders are shepherds over the flock, they are also members of the flock. Therefore, each individual Elder is entitled to the same privileges, is obligated by the same responsibilities, and is subject to the same discipline as are all other members of the church.

#### **5. PLURALITY OF ELDERS**

The Scriptures teach that normally there should be a plurality of Elders in each local church.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, the church should endeavour to discover and then formally recognize all the men whom the Holy Spirit has endowed with the requisite graces and gifts, but only such men.<sup>72</sup> In addition, the men of the church should seek to cultivate the graces and gifts required of Elders, since Godly desire for this office is highly commended.<sup>73</sup> The authority of every Elder is the same. Thus, every Elder has equal rule in the church. Though gifts possessed and functions performed will vary from Elder to Elder, this diversity must never undermine real parity among the elders.

If, in the providence of God, our Church were to have only one Elder, the Church should pray fervently that God would raise up others.<sup>74</sup> The sole Elder, with the consent of the Church, is urged to seek spiritual oversight for himself and his family from the Eldership of a sister church with which we have intimate fellowship. He should seek counsel from these spiritual overseers and from the church's approved Church Affiliations<sup>75</sup> in matters of importance in the life of the church. However, his use of such counsel deprives him of none of the authority, and relieves him of none of the responsibility, of his office as Elder in this Church.

#### **6. PARITY AND DIVERSITY OF ELDERS**

The Elders have parity, which means that they are all equal in office and authority,<sup>76</sup> but they are also diverse in gifts and function. Each Elder must be "apt to teach"<sup>77</sup> and must be engaged in private instruction and admonition and in the administration and government of the Church.<sup>78</sup> However, Elders will be gifted by God in different ways, some may be more experienced, more involved, and more proficient than others in executing various dimensions of the pastoral office.<sup>79</sup> For example, some should be more engaged in public preaching and teaching than others.<sup>80</sup> In view of their diversity of gifts as well as the numerous and serious responsibilities of the office, it is highly desirable that at least one Elder should devote himself full-time to the work of preaching and teaching and the oversight of the church as his calling in life.<sup>81</sup>

#### **7. COMPENSATION OF ELDERS**

Elders who dedicate themselves to the work of prayer, preaching, teaching, and overseeing the church as their life's calling should receive appropriate financial support based on the church's capacity and the demonstration of an individual's abilities. Adequate compensation should not be limited solely to full-time Elders engaged in Word ministry,<sup>82</sup> but also extended to other fellow Elders and pastoral interns.

If the church cannot provide sufficient financial compensation for Elders, the Elders are permitted to seek additional employment to meet the needs of his household.

#### **8. NUMBER OF ELDERS AND LENGTH OF TERM**

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<sup>70</sup> *Matthew. 18:17; 23:9; 26:31; Galatians. 2:11; 3 John 1,9-10*

<sup>71</sup> *Acts 14:23; 20:17; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5*

<sup>72</sup> *1 Timothy 5:22*

<sup>73</sup> *1 Timothy 3:1*

<sup>74</sup> *Matthew 9:37-38*

<sup>75</sup> *see Article VIII*

<sup>76</sup> *Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17*

<sup>77</sup> *1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9*

<sup>78</sup> *Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 5:17*

<sup>79</sup> *Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7*

<sup>80</sup> *1 Timothy 5:17*

<sup>81</sup> *1 Corinthians 9:14*

<sup>82</sup> *Proverbs 3:27; 1 Timothy 5:17-18*

Since the church should strive to recognize all the men whom the Holy Spirit has endowed with the requisite graces, gifts, and sanctified desire, the number of Elders is not fixed. The Elders may all continue in office as long as they remain qualified, able, and willing to serve,<sup>83</sup> and as long as they hold the confidence of the Church.

### **9. CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE ELDERS**

To help the Eldership function in an efficient and orderly manner, where a plurality of Elders is present, they will choose a chairman and, if possible, a vice-chairman.<sup>84</sup> The chairman shall be responsible to organize and lead the regular Elders' meetings and, ordinarily, all Church business meetings. In his absence, these functions will be performed by the vice-chairman. Under ordinary circumstances, the chairman shall be a man who has been set apart to labor full-time in the work of the ministry.

## **C. DEACONS**

Christ, the Head of the church, has instituted the office of Deacon as a general aid to the people of God and to the Elder(s), in particular.<sup>85</sup> While the office of Deacon is to serve rather than to rule, God has promised a special blessing to those who serve well as Deacons.<sup>86</sup>

Deacons are primarily responsible for administering the ministries of mercy and benevolence in the church, along with other practical matters in the church. Such other practical matters may include the management of various business affairs, the facilitation of ministries within the church, and the maintenance and improvement of the church's facilities or property. In this way, the Deacons assist the Elder(s) in those practical aspects of ministry, which would otherwise distract them from their priorities of prayer, the ministry of the Word, and shepherding.<sup>87</sup> Deacons must fulfil the duties of their office in cooperation with and under the oversight of the Elder(s).<sup>88</sup>

### **1. NUMBER OF DEACONS AND LENGTH OF TERM**

There will be no set number of Deacons. The church shall choose as many biblically qualified men as are needed for the work to be done.<sup>89</sup> Deacons may all continue in office as long as they remain qualified, able, and willing to serve,<sup>90</sup> and as long as they hold the confidence of the Elders and the Church.

### **2. QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS**

The qualifications for a man chosen to fulfil the office of Deacon are described in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Any man called to this office must conscientiously affirm his agreement with our Confession of Faith and submission to the Constitution of the Church. Should he at any time change his convictions respecting these standards, he is under moral obligation to make this fact known privately to the Elders.<sup>91</sup>

### **3. CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE DEACONS**

Provided there is more than one Deacon at any given time, to help the diaconate function in an efficient and orderly manner,<sup>92</sup> the Elder(s), in consultation with the Deacons, will choose one of the Deacons to serve as chairman and another as vice-chairman. The chairman shall be responsible to organize and lead the regular Deacons' meetings and to communicate regularly with the Elders concerning diaconal business and concerns. In his absence the vice-chairman shall undertake these responsibilities.

## **D. RECOGNITION AND INSTALLATION OF CHURCH OFFICERS**

The local church, guided by the Scriptures and depending on the Holy Spirit, appoints men to the offices of Elder and Deacon. Each potential officer must have a desire for the office, and the church should recognize the call of Christ as it observes in the man evidence of the graces and gifts which Scripture requires for the particular office. In no case may a man be nominated to either office

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<sup>83</sup> 1 Peter 5:2

<sup>84</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:40; LBCF 1.6b

<sup>85</sup> Acts 6:1-6

<sup>86</sup> 1 Timothy 3:13

<sup>87</sup> Acts 6:3-4

<sup>88</sup> 1 Timothy 3:10; Acts 20:17, 28, 11:30

<sup>89</sup> Acts 6:3

<sup>90</sup> 1 Peter 5:2

<sup>91</sup> Psalms 34:13; Ephesians 4:25; Matthew 5:37

<sup>92</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:40

without his prior consent.<sup>93</sup> This responsibility to recognize the gifts of Christ to His church is a matter of such importance that it should only be carried out by prayerful waiting on God for guidance, a careful consideration of the relevant passages of Scripture, and an objective evaluation of each man considered for office. These activities are the responsibility of each individual member of the Church.<sup>94</sup>

### **1. RECOGNITION PROCESS**

Recognition of officers occurs through nominations and Church approval.

### **2. NOMINATIONS**

The members of the church are encouraged to express to the Elder(s), privately, their views concerning those whom Christ may be gifting for office in the church. The Elder(s) will seriously consider the wisdom God gives to His church. However, since it is the Elder(s) responsibility to lead the church, nominations to office are to be made by the eldership.<sup>95</sup> The Elder(s) will seek the input of the church by various means, such as a yearly advisory survey, a temporary committee, or asking individual members for input during pastoral visits or meetings. Every member is urged seriously to consider whether they perceive any men to be qualified for office and to communicate the names of such men to the Elder(s) directly or through the means appointed by the Elder(s). The Elder(s) will prayerfully and with biblical objectivity consider the input from the church and determine whether any of the men recommended should be nominated. The Elder(s) may nominate men to either office at any time and call a special Church business meeting to consider them. Likewise, members are free at any time to communicate to the Elder(s) the names of men whom they consider to be potential officers.

### **3. CHURCH APPROVAL**

There must be a minimum period of one month from the time of a man's nomination until the meeting called for his public examination and church vote. During this period, the members have a solemn obligation to prayerfully consider the nominee in the light of relevant passages of Scripture. Any member who has reservations about the man's fitness for office should contact him or one of the Elder(s). Failure to resolve the reservation to the Elder(s)' satisfaction may require a delay of the church vote. When the time comes to consider a nomination during a business meeting of the church, the candidate for office and any members of his immediate family who are present shall be asked to leave the room while his qualifications are discussed by the church in the fear of God and the light of Scripture.<sup>96</sup> After that, a written ballot shall be taken. A unanimous vote of the church is desirable, but if not, no less than a three-fourths majority of the members present and voting are required for the election of an officer.

If at any time the church is without an Elder, a pulpit committee shall be elected by the church at any regular or specially called congregational meeting. The committee shall seek out a scripturally qualified man, and then nominate him to the church. The church should utilize the Advisory Council and Church Associations in the process (*see Article X*). However, the church has all authority on the matter and shall prayerfully consider the given man for the office of overseer. When possible, the church should look within its own membership to see if Christ is equipping someone for the office from within the church.

### **4. INSTALLATION**

Following the recognition of an officer by vote of the church, he shall be publicly installed in his office at a regular worship service by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the existing Elder(s) on behalf of the church.<sup>97</sup> If there is no Elder presently in office, Elders from the Advisory Council should be called upon to perform this function.<sup>98</sup>

## **E. DISCIPLINE OF CHURCH OFFICERS**

### **1. REASONS FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF OFFICERS**

While Elders are overseers of the flock, they are also members of the flock under the oversight of their fellow Elders and subject to the same discipline as all the members of the church. Elders must also adhere to a more rigorous standard of conduct than other members.<sup>99</sup> Deacons are likewise under the oversight of the Elder(s) and subject to the discipline of the church. In addition to the

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<sup>93</sup> 1 Timothy 3:1; 1 Peter 5:2

<sup>94</sup> Acts 6:1-6

<sup>95</sup> Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5

<sup>96</sup> 1 Timothy 3:1-3; Titus 1:5-9

<sup>97</sup> Acts 6:6; 14:23; 1 Timothy 4:14

<sup>98</sup> see Article VIII

<sup>99</sup> Galatians 2:14; 1 Timothy 5:20

ordinary measures of public reproof and censure, suspension of privileges, and excommunication, officers are subject to removal from office as part of the disciplinary action of the Church.<sup>100</sup>

## **2. PROCEDURE FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF OFFICERS**

The process of discipline may be initiated either by the Elder(s) or by members. Any member who is offended by the behavior of any church officer should first approach that officer privately and express their concerns. Should the offended person be a woman, the woman should take her husband, if applicable, or another woman with her while she approaches the overseer. If the concerns are not resolved, the member should inform the Elder(s) of the situation and wait upon them in the determination of the matter.<sup>101</sup>

In the case where a sole Elder is involved in such proceedings, the Advisory Council will be called upon to investigate the matter and to recommend church action if they judge it to be warranted.

Since this is such a delicate and serious matter, the Elder(s) shall proceed with due caution and earnest prayer<sup>102</sup>. If the Elder(s) judge public discipline or removal from office to be necessary, they shall inform the church of the basis for the proposed action. If the church votes to impose corrective discipline upon the officer under any of the terms of Article VI, he shall be removed immediately and automatically from office.

## **F. REASONS FOR TERMINATION OF OFFICE**

### **1. VOLUNTARY RESIGNATION**

An officer may resign his office without prejudice if, for good and valid reasons, he finds he is no longer able to discharge the duties of it with a good conscience<sup>103</sup>.

### **2. BY REMOVAL FOR NON-CULPABLE INCOMPETENCE**

In cases where the Elder(s) determine that an officer is no longer capable of fulfilling all the duties of his office, by reason of infirmities or physical limitations beyond his own control<sup>104</sup>, they will explain their concerns to him and ask for his resignation. If he does not resign, they will present their concerns to the church and call for a vote of confidence in him. To retain his office in such circumstances, the officer must receive a vote of the membership, no less than a three-fourths majority of the members present and voting.

### **3. BY REMOVAL THROUGH DISCIPLINARY ACTION OF THE CHURCH**

An officer may be removed from office by church vote according to Section F of this Article.

## **I. POSITION AFTER TERMINATION OF OFFICE**

### **1. HE GIVES UP AUTHORITY**

When a man leaves office, he no longer retains the authority of that office and may no longer continue to perform its duties, enjoy its privileges, or retain the title of his office in relation to this church, other churches, and society at large.

### **2. HE MAINTAINS CONFIDENTIALITY**

All former officers must respect the sanctity of the trust previously given to them and maintain the confidentiality of all church matters as required by Scripture, this Constitution, and the judgment of the Elder(s)<sup>105</sup>.

### **3. ELIGIBILITY TO SERVE AGAIN**

A former officer may be considered again for office, but only in the manner prescribed in Article VII Section A.

## **G. GIFTED BROTHERS**

The church shall have the authority to formally “approve and call” men not presently recognized as Elders, yet who show a giftedness to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in accordance with the London Confession: Chapter 26, Paragraph 11. This shall take the official form of a “License to Preach” and shall serve as a commendation to both this church and other congregations. After a significant trial period in which a brother exercises his gift to preach before the congregation, the conferral of this “License to Preach” shall be

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<sup>100</sup> 1 Timothy 3:2

<sup>101</sup> Matthew 18:15-18

<sup>102</sup> 1 Timothy 5:19; Proverbs 19:2

<sup>103</sup> Acts 24:16

<sup>104</sup> 2 Samuel 21:15-17

<sup>105</sup> Proverbs 11:13

recommended by the Elder(s) and a three-fourths vote of the members present and voting at a properly called congregational meeting.

## **H. GIFTED SISTERS**

Women render wonderful assistance to the church. However,<sup>106</sup> the Bible prohibits them from holding either the office of Deacon or Elder. Women, therefore, shall not be nominated, elected, or ordained to either of these offices in the church. A woman, if appointed by the Elder(s) or selected by the congregation, may hold the positions of: Trustee, (See Article VIII; B) Treasurer, (See Article IX; B) and/or Clerk, (See Article XI; G.). Women may also teach children in Sunday School Classes and other women. Also, if a woman is especially skilled or gifted in a specific topic of interest outside of teaching direct Biblical exposition and is called on by the Elder(s) to teach about said topic to the entire body of the church, the woman may teach about that specific topic of interest. This is all under the Biblical authority given to the Elder(s) so that we do not violate Scripture.<sup>107</sup>

## **ARTICLE VII: CHURCH PROPERTY**

### **A. GENERAL STATEMENT**

All property of this church is to be held for the use and benefit of those who are members thereof. This property is set apart to be used for the worship of God, the edification of His people, and any other use which is deemed necessary for the propagation of the Gospel of Christ by this church and its leadership. Should any disagreements arise regarding the use of said property, such disputes shall be settled by majority vote of the members of this church. We believe that each local church of Christ is autonomous under the headship of Jesus Christ and shall choose for itself what shall be done with its own property. We agree together to seek divine wisdom in the usage of this property for the glory of God, the good of His church, and the promotion of His truth, according to the Holy Scriptures.

### **B. TRUSTEES**

The Elder(s) will select two people from the church to serve as the trustees of this church and to represent the church in all legal transactions. The Trustees should be one Elder or Deacon, and the second trustee will be selected from among the people who are voting members of the church. If there are no church officers, the congregation will select two people from among the voting members to serve as trustees.

## **ARTICLE VIII: CHURCH FINANCES**

### **A. GENERAL STATEMENT**

The work of this church is financially dependent upon the voluntary gifts of God's people. Before the annual congregational business meeting, the Elder(s) and Deacon(s) will obtain an estimate of the needs of the several divisions of the work and a prepared budget, detailing the proposed expenditures for the coming year. Upon the approval by a majority vote of the congregation, the budget shall be considered the basis for the current liabilities. No one is authorized to make changes in the budget or to make unauthorized disbursements without the consent of the church. The fiscal year of the church shall begin January first and end December thirty-first.

### **B. TREASURER**

The Elder(s) shall appoint a treasurer from among the voting members of the church. The responsibility of the treasurer will be to keep the financial books accurate and up to date, as well as provide financial reports to the church and its Elder(s). The Elder(s) may also appoint an assistant treasurer to help in these duties. The Elder(s) shall have the authority to replace the treasurer and/or assistant treasurer whenever it seems wise or deemed necessary from the members.

## **ARTICLE IX: AFFILIATION WITH OTHER CHURCHES**

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<sup>106</sup> Romans 16:1-6; Philippians. 4:3; 1 Timothy 3:11

<sup>107</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:33b-35; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:1-7

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body but recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches, and will seek, insofar as is practical and Scriptural, to maintain cooperation with other churches of Jesus Christ. When it is thought desirable and upon the recommendation of the Elder(s), this church may join itself to an association(s) of churches. Such affiliations may be entered with the expressed consent and approval of the congregation by a majority vote.<sup>108</sup> Withdrawal from associations may be rendered by the same procedure.

The purposes in joining an association of churches are mutual edification, cooperative efforts in spreading the Gospel, accountability, providing an avenue whereby grievances may be addressed, and reciprocal counsel. No association shall have any authority or power over this church.

Delegates to such associations shall be chosen by the Elder(s) of the church, with the Elder(s) taking the general oversight of all delegates and business matters.

#### **A. COOPERATION WITH LIKE-MINDED CHURCHES**

Our church will cooperate with other like-minded churches in matters of mutual interest and concern.<sup>109</sup> We may ask other churches for assistance<sup>110</sup> and should look to them for advice where needed<sup>111</sup> in matters of special importance and concern to us. However, the advice or opinion of another church, group of churches, or council will never be binding on this Church.<sup>112</sup>

#### **B. ADVISORY COUNCIL**

To readily consult with like-minded churches, we will form an Advisory Council for advice and assistance in matters of critical concern that threaten the integrity, unity, or biblical order of our church. The Advisory Council will consist of three to five Elders chosen by our Elder(s) from at least three sister churches with which we have close fellowship. Our Elder(s) will obtain the consent of the proposed Advisory Council members and announce them at the Annual Business Meeting for approval by the church. In the event an Advisory Council member wishes to or must step down, our Elder(s) may propose replacements for approval by the church at a properly called church meeting.

The Advisory Council will be consulted at the discretion of a majority of the Elder(s). If the Church is without Elder(s) at any time, the Council may be consulted at the discretion of a majority of the Deacon(s) then in office.

### **ARTICLE X. CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS**

#### **A. THE CALLING OF CHURCH MEETINGS**

Any Member in good standing may request a meeting. The meeting can be requested publicly at the stated services of the church or privately to the Elder(s). If the meeting is publicly requested, the church can decide if the meeting should take place.

#### **B. TYPES OF MEETINGS**

There are three categories of meetings under this Constitution including the annual business meeting, other business meetings requiring church votes, and meetings called for purposes not requiring a church vote.

##### **1. ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING & OTHER BUSINESS MEETINGS REQUIRING A CHURCH VOTE**

The Annual Business Meeting is for the purpose of receiving reports from the Elder(s), Deacons, and any church ministries from which the Elder(s) request a report, for the election of men to the Advisory Council, and for the transaction of other business, which may include the election of Elders and Deacons. Additionally, the annual business meeting or other business meetings requiring a church vote may include, but are not limited to, approval of applicants for church membership, matters involving the purchase, sale, or lease of church real estate, and certain matters of church discipline described in Article VI.

##### **2. MEETINGS CALLED FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN A CHURCH VOTE**

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<sup>108</sup> Acts 15:22; 2 Corinthians 8:19

<sup>109</sup> 1 Corinthians 8:18-24

<sup>110</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:1, 2

<sup>111</sup> Proverbs 11:14; 1 Thessalonians 2:14

<sup>112</sup> Acts 14:21-23; Philippians 4:15; and see LBCF 26.15

Any meeting called for purposes other than a church vote may include, but are not limited to, meetings for the hearing of special reports or seeking input from the church; meetings called to announce certain decisions of the Elder(s) that do not require church votes; meetings called on an emergency basis to advise the church of serious matters of concern; meetings to provide information to the church in advance of a meeting requiring a church vote; and meetings called for the purpose of instructing the church in rules of conduct so that everything is done decently and in order in our life together.

## **B. ADVANCE NOTICE OF MEETINGS**

### **1. FOR MEETINGS REQUIRING CHURCH VOTES**

No less than fourteen days' notice must be given of the Annual Business Meeting and other business meetings requiring church votes. Notice includes posting a written notice of the meeting and announcements made at the stated meetings of the church. Additional means such as email, text messages, and the like may be used in addition to these requirements.

### **2. FOR MEETINGS WITHOUT CHURCH VOTES**

Meetings called for purposes not including a church vote may be called upon shorter notice, but as much notice as possible should be given to the members.

### **3. CANCELING MEETINGS**

All meetings called may be canceled at the discretion of the members or the Elder(s) with the reason(s) communicated to the church.

## **C. QUORUM**

The members present at any properly convened church business meeting constitute a quorum for the transacting business. If membership deems the number of voting members in attendance is not sufficient, the vote must be postponed.

## **D. CHAIRMANSHIP**

As a rule, the chairman or vice-chairman of the Elder(s) shall preside at church business meetings. In the case of their absence or inability to serve, or due to the nature of the business being considered, the Elder(s) may appoint another officer to preside.

## **E. VOTING**

### **1. CHRISTLIKE VOTING**

In order that the conduct of church business may be an expression of the mind of Christ, and not merely of men, the members must keep their voting subject to the Word of God, through fasting with prayerful reliance upon the Spirit of God who indwells them<sup>113</sup>.

### **2. GOAL OF UNANIMITY**

In the light of nature and Christian prudence any member of the church, eighteen years of age or over, in good and regular standing, shall have the privilege and responsibility to vote on any question properly brought before the congregation.<sup>114</sup> All voting members should regard their presence at a duly called church meeting with the same seriousness and responsible churchmanship with which they would regard their attendance at any other stated gathering of the church. It shall be our goal to discern prayerfully the mind of God so that it may be said of us, as it was said of the church in Acts 6, that this "pleased the whole multitude." In situations where unanimity is not realized, except where the constitution requires a different proportionate vote, a simple majority (75%) of those voting will make a motion valid. If the outcome of the vote does not satisfy a three fourths majority or the members do not feel that they have had the time to be well informed to prayerfully decide, the vote can be rescheduled.

## **F. CLOSED MEETINGS**

Meetings involving the exercise of corrective discipline shall be open only to members of the Church in good standing and to those whose presence the Elder(s) invite for specific reasons to be given at the meeting. The Elder(s) may, at their sole discretion, similarly close other meetings.

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<sup>113</sup> Acts 15:22,25-28, 13:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:19; Acts 6:2-7; 1 John 2:27

<sup>114</sup> LBCF 1:6



### **G. CLERK**

The Elder(s) shall appoint a clerk from among the members of the church. The clerk can be a voting member of the church that is a man or a woman. The responsibility of the clerk will be to record all the business transacted by the church, collect all documents submitted to the church at its meetings, and provide for the church and its Elder(s) a careful record of the church's business. This record shall be available to the church and its Elder(s). The Elder(s) shall have the authority to replace the clerk whenever it seems wise.

## **ARTICLE XI. CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY**

### **A. NATURE**

This constitution, like all merely human documents, is fallible. It simply reflects an earnest and sincere attempt to apply the Scriptures in ordering the life of this local church. Furthermore, we as members of this church have solemnly committed ourselves to follow this constitution in ordering the life of this church.

### **B. DEFICIENCIES**

If at any time an Elder or member of the church believes that adherence to this constitution would require a violation of the Word of God, they should make this known to the Elder(s). If the Elder(s) conclude that Biblical principle requires an amendment of the constitution, they must communicate this matter in a timely way, submit relevant amendments to the church, and seek, by church vote, to amend the constitution.

### **C. AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this constitution must be adopted by three-fourths of the voting members at any regular church meeting or a special meeting called for this purpose. Such proposed amendments shall be distributed in written form to the membership at least two weeks prior to such a meeting.