

CONSTITUTION OF HOPE COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

Preamble

We, the members of the Hope Community Bible Church, in order to carry out more efficiently the commission given by Jesus Christ to His Church, do ordain and establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

Article I - Name

The name of this organization shall be **Hope Community Bible Church**, located in Rogers, Arkansas.

Article II – Authority

- **Authority:** The Lordship of Christ and His Holy Scriptures shall be accepted as the final authority on all matters relating to faith and practice (*Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21*).

Article III - Purpose

The purpose of Hope Community Bible Church is to bring glory and honor to God through:

- The worship and exaltation of God (*Romans 15:5-9; Ephesians 3:21; 2 Thessalonians 1:12*);
- The teaching of God's Word in order that the body of Christ may be built up and mature in its faith and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Matthew 28:20; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 3:18*);
- The equipping and training of God's people for works of service both within this fellowship as well as within the communities and spheres of influence each believer finds himself in to communicate and advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ (*Ephesians 4:12-13; Matthew 28:19; 2 Timothy 2:2*);
- Advancing and communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world (*Matthew 28:19; Luke 24:27; Acts 1:8; 5:42; 8:4*).
- The assembling of ourselves together for fellowship, encouragement and the observance of the ordinances (*Luke 22:19; Acts 2:41-42; Hebrews 10:25*).

Article IV – Statement of Faith

1. We believe that “*all Scripture is given by inspiration of God*” such that God superintended human authors with their own experience, personality, methods, and style to produce the very words of Scripture - the Word of God - without error in the original writings. We believe that all the Scriptures center around the Lord Jesus Christ and when properly understood lead to Him. We believe the Bible to be the revelation of God and His will for the salvation and practical instruction of man. (*Mark 12:26, 36; 13:11; Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Acts 1:16; 17:2-3; 18:28; 26:22-23; 28:23; Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 2:13; 10:11; II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21*)
2. We believe in one God, the living and true God, existing eternally in three Persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - each having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections. (*Matthew 28:18-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:14; Acts 5:3-4; II Corinthians 13:14; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6*)
3. We believe that God the Father, unlimited in holiness, power and majesty, especially showed His exceedingly great love in giving His only beloved Son to redeem man from sin for eternal fellowship with Him. This act of grace was carried out according to His eternal, sovereign plan. The nature of the Father is completely and perfectly revealed in the Son. (*Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 53:1-10; John 3:16; 14:6-9; Romans 16:20; Colossians 1:15, 18-20*)

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God and became man without ceasing to be God and continues to be the God-Man forever. We believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit, entered into human flesh in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful man. We believe that the death of Jesus Christ on the cross was a substitutionary sacrifice in perfect obedience to His Father's will and in fulfillment of Holy Scripture. The purpose of His death was to fully satisfy the justice of God and, thereby, accomplished propitiation, reconciliation, redemption, and atonement for the sins of God's elect people. We believe that God the Father bore testimony to His acceptance of the Son's completed work by raising Him bodily from the dead, thus guaranteeing redemption and salvation to those the Father had given to Christ to redeem. We also believe that Jesus later ascended into heaven exalted at the right hand of God where He is our High Priest and Advocate. (*John 1:1, 14; Matthew 1:18-21; Galatians 4:4-5; 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 5:8-9; Psalm 40:7-8; Romans 3:24-25, 5:1; 1 John 2:2; Colossians 1:21-22; 1 Peter 3:18; Romans 1:4; Hebrews 7:25; Acts 1:9-11; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 3:1; 4:15-16; 1 John 2:1*)
5. We believe that the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead, eternal in being, took up His abode in the world to reveal and glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to men. Beginning on the day of Pentecost, according to the divine promise, the Holy Spirit never departs from the church, nor from the feeblest of believers, but indwells and seals the believer unto the day of redemption. We believe that His abode in the world in this special sense will cease when Christ comes to receive His own at the completion of the church. (*John 14:16-17; 16:7-15; I Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 1:13; 2:22; II Thessalonians 2:7*)

We believe that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to the church for the common good of all believers. Since each gift is given according to God's sovereign will and discretion, the possession of any gift is of grace and does not constitute spiritual maturity. The proper use of the gifts are for the edification of the body, to promote united worship of God in the congregation, giving pre-eminence and glory to Jesus Christ, and to continually facilitate the growth of each member of the body into maturity in Christ. (*Isaiah 28:11; John 16:14; Acts 4:8, 31; Romans 8:23; 12:1-21; I Corinthians 12:11-13; 13:8; 14:21; Ephesians 1:13; 4:7-16*)

6. We believe in the existence of Satan as a personal being and a fallen angelic creature of God, who is the open and declared enemy of God and man. (*Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; II Corinthians 4:3-4; 11:3, 14-15*)
7. We believe that man was created in the image of God, but fell through sin against God which brought mankind into a state of sin, separation from God, and subject to the power of Satan. We also believe that every child of Adam is born into the world with a nature which possesses no spark of divine life and therefore and can do nothing to save himself apart from divine grace. Man can only obtain spiritual life and salvation through the Redeemer, Jesus Christ. (*Genesis 1:26; 2:17; 5:3; 6:5; Psalms 14:1-3; 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; John 3:6; 5:40; 6:53; Romans 3:10-18; 8:6-7; Ephesians 2:1-3; I Timothy 5:6; I John 3:8*)
8. We believe that salvation is the gift of God in grace and is received by man only through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. We believe that regeneration [born-again] is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given. It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the work and power of the Word of God, when a sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds to the divine provision of salvation in faith and repentance. He passes immediately out of spiritual death into spiritual life, and from the old creation into the new; being justified, accepted before the Father, even as Christ, His Son, is accepted, loved as Christ is loved, having his place and portion as linked to Him, and one with Him forever. (*John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-9; John 3:3-7; Titus 3:5; John 5:24; Ephesians 2:4-5*)

We also believe that the greatest degree of reformation, the highest attainment of morality, the most attractive culture, baptism or another ordinance, cannot help the sinner to take even one step toward heaven. Only by a new nature imparted from above, a new life implanted by the Holy Spirit through the Word, may one obtain salvation and thus become a child of God. (*Leviticus 17:11; Isaiah 64:6; Matthew 26:28; John 3:5, 18; Romans 5:6-9; II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; Philippians 3:4-9; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; I Peter 1:18-19, 23*)

9. We believe that the church, which began on the day of Pentecost, the Body and Bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons irrespective of their affiliation with Christian organizations (I Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:25-27). We further believe that by the Holy Spirit all believers in this age are baptized into, and thus become, one body that is Christ's and having become members one of another, are under solemn duty to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, rising above all sectarian differences, and loving one another with a pure heart fervently. *(Matthew 16:16-18; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:5; I Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:1-16; Colossians 3:14-15)*
10. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ instituted the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Table to be observed by all believers until His

Baptism - We believe baptism was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ to symbolize the work of the Holy Spirit identifying the believer with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. Baptism is commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ and was practiced by the New Testament Church. We practice the ordinance of baptism by immersion after conversion and believe that it is the solemn responsibility of every believer to bear this testimony of trust in Jesus Christ by being baptized. *(Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38-44; 10:33, 43, 47, 48; Romans 6:3-7; Colossians 2:12)*

The Lord's Supper - We believe the Lord's Supper was instituted as a memorial remembrance which instructs the body of believers by focusing the believer's worship upon Christ and His work on the cross. The Lord's Supper is the only act of worship where Jesus Christ gives us special directions and thus is the highlight of corporate worship. The Lord's Supper reminds us of the basis of our fellowship with Him, promotes an atmosphere of thankfulness in the church, and motivates our anticipation of His second coming through a common hope of future deliverance. We believe that the Christian has the responsibility to partake of the bread (signifying His body broken for us) and the cup (signifying His blood shed for us) in a manner worthy and consistent with life and teachings of Jesus Christ (Luke 22:7-38; I Corinthians 11:20-34). We are commanded to observe the Lord's Supper continually in order to focus on our Lord Jesus Christ *(Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26)*.

11. We believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing in the personal life and service of the believer *(Daniel 7:13-14; Matt. 24:30, 42-44; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Cor. 15:50-58; 1 Thess. 4:16-18; Titus 2:11-14; Rev. 1:7, 3:10-11)*.
12. God has appointed a day, wherein He will judge the world by Jesus Christ, when every one shall receive according to his deeds; the wicked shall go into everlasting and conscious punishment; the righteous, into everlasting life. *(Matthew 25:46; John 5:22, 27-29; Acts 17:31; Romans 2:6-11; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 7:13-17; 14:9-11)*
13. We believe that all believers should walk by the Spirit in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Lord and Savior. We believe that is the obligation of every believer to witness by life and by word to the truths of the Holy Scriptures and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to all the world. We believe that it is the responsibility of all believers to remember the work of the Lord in prayer and to support it with their means as the Lord has prospered them. We believe that every believer has a spiritual gift which should be used to edify the body of Christ. *(Acts 1:8; Romans 12:1-2; 14:13; I Corinthians 12:14; 16:2; II Corinthians 6:14; 7:1; 9:7; Ephesians 4:11-16)*

14. We believe in the Biblical account of the creation of the universe in six literal, solar days; that God created by His Word the heavens, the earth, and all their hosts, without pre-existing materials; that man was created by a direct act of God; that all humans were present in Adam when he was created; that new individuals (in all their parts) come into existence today, not by a continuing creation, but through the laws of propagation established by God; that each individual is a living person from the moment of conception; that all forms of evolutionary hypotheses are serious errors which strike at the very person and glory of God. (*Genesis 1:1-31; 2:7; 5:3; Exodus 20:11; Hebrews 11:13; Psalm 139:13-16; Luke 1:41,44; John. 1:3; Romans 5:12-24; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Colossians 1:15-19; Hebrews 11:3*)

Article V - Membership

The membership of this Church shall be composed of individuals who confess the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and who give evidence by their confession and their conduct that they are living in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Article VI - Powers

The powers of this church are vested in the elder board and not subject to any outside ecclesiastical authority.

The church is organized and shall be operated exclusively for Christian purposes, according to Article III of this constitution, and for no other purpose.

The powers of this church body include, but are not limited to the following:

- To own and maintain such buildings and equipment as may be required to carry out the stated purpose of the church.
- To receive and administer funds for the church and to that end to take and hold by bequest, devise, gift, purchase, or lease, either absolutely or in trust, any property, real, personal, or mixed, without limitation, except as may be imposed by law. All such property shall be held in the name of the Church.
- To sell, convey and dispose of any such property, and to reinvest the principal thereof and to deal with and expend the income thereof, only for Christian purposes.
- To receive any property, real, personal, or mixed, in trust under the terms of any will, deed of trust, or other trust instrument for Christian purposes only and in administering the same to carry out the directions and exercise the powers contained in the trust instrument under which the property is received, including the expenditure of the principal as well as the income.
- To receive, take title to, hold and use the proceeds and income of stocks, bonds, obligations, or other securities of any corporation or corporations, domestic or foreign, but only for Christian purposes.

In case of a division of the Church (from which we pray God by His mercy to preserve us), the property of the Church shall belong to those who abide by its Constitution and by-laws.

In case of dissolution of the Church organization, the property shall be assigned by the remaining members to an appropriate Christian organization(s) to enable said organization(s) to use the values thereof for further Gospel enterprises. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the organization, or when the Church has not held an annual meeting for three years, or when less than six members remain.

Article VII - Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution may only be adopted at an annual business meeting of the Church by a three-quarters (3/4) majority vote of the members present and voting. Amendments to this Constitution must be presented exactly as proposed in written form and discussed at a regular business meeting at least three months prior to the time of their adoption.

BYLAWS OF HOPE COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

SECTION 01 -- MEMBERSHIP

01.01 QUALIFICATIONS:

Individuals who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior, whose character, conduct and reputation are in accord with this confession, who have assurance of salvation, and will abide by the Constitution and by-laws of this congregation, shall be eligible for membership.

01.02 ADMISSION:

Those seeking membership in this congregation shall be required to proceed through the following steps:

- (A) Application for membership shall be made to a member of the Board of Elders. Applicants shall be given an application form and a copy of the Constitution and By-laws of this church.
- (B) Submit to one of the pastors or elders a signed, completed application indicating concurrence with and submission to the Constitution and by-laws of the church.
- (C) The names of such applicants shall be printed in the church bulletin for at least two Sundays preceding the Elder Board interview, so that any member who wishes, may have an opportunity to communicate specific objections, concerns or pertinent information in writing, to the Elder Board. This insures congregational participation in the membership process.
- (D) The Board of Elders shall review all applications and interview each applicant. Membership shall be approved if, upon review of an application for membership and after interviewing a prospective member, the Elder Board determines that the applicant confesses Jesus Christ as Savior, evidences a godly life-style and affirms that the Lordship of Christ and His Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as the final authority on all matters relating to faith and practice by the members of this church.
- (E) Applications submitted must be approved by unanimous vote of the Board of Elders. Any dissenting votes must be accompanied by Scriptural reason. Applicants shall be notified by the Board of Elders of the action taken and those approved shall be presented to the congregation for public welcome at a subsequent worship service.
- (F) Membership records shall be maintained at the church office and the membership list shall be reported to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting.

01.03 TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP:

There shall be two types of membership.

- (A) **Active Members** - Those who are regular in their worship, fellowship, and financial support of the congregation. Only active members, 16 years of age and older are eligible to vote at business meetings. Specific membership responsibilities are listed in the Church Operation Manual.
- (B) **Inactive Members** - Those who do not consistently demonstrate the characteristics of an active member as described above for a period of six months shall be placed on inactive status, without voting privileges, by action of the Board of Elders. During their time of inactivity, the Elder Board shall make efforts to contact them and reconcile their relationship to the congregation. If after six more months such inactivity continues, they may be dropped from membership at the discretion of the Elder Board, as described in Section 01.05.

01.04 DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION:

Any member found living contrary to the teachings of Scripture or the Constitution and by-laws of this congregation shall be admonished by the Board of Elders in brotherly love in accordance with the principles of Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1, and Hebrews 10:24-25. Offenses that may require such admonition and discipline include the following:

- (A) Sins of human character that obscure the holiness of God, such as moral impurity, perversion, covetousness and idolatry (I Corinthians 5:11).
- (B) Sins of divisiveness that bring confusion and schism to the work of the congregation (Romans 16:17).
- (C) Sins that violate the truth of God by promoting false doctrine (II Peter 2:1-3).

If the member persists in misconduct, the Elder Board may suspend the individual's membership and call as special business meeting in a timely manner where the congregation, upon recommendation of the Elder Board, may dismiss or further suspend that member by a two-thirds (67%) vote taken by secret ballot. In all cases, restoration and reconciliation shall be desired and prayerfully sought.

A member who has been removed from membership, under this Section, and desires re-admittance, may be restored to membership by giving satisfactory evidence to the Elder Board of repentance and reformation. The applicant shall then follow the regular procedure for membership (Galatians 6:1-3).

01.05 TERMINATION:

Termination of membership shall occur under the following guidelines:

- (A) Any member may have his/her name withdrawn from the membership by stating his/her desire in a written request to the Elder Board.
- (B) Any member who is no longer willing to abide by this congregation's Constitution and by-laws has a duty to withdraw from membership.
- (C) A member may be removed from the membership under the conditions set forth in Section 01.04 regarding discipline.
- (D) A member who does not communicate with the congregation for one year shall be dropped from the membership, unless the Elder Board, for good cause, determines that such a member should be retained as an Inactive Member.

Any member who withdraws from membership, for whatever reason, has a duty to communicate the reasons for withdrawal to the Elder Board, having regard for the unity and peace of the congregation.

All names dropped from the membership shall be reported to the congregation at the next regular business meeting.

01.06 MEMBERSHIP OF PASTORS:

All pastors and their spouses shall be members of the congregation upon acceptance of the call of the Church and shall assume all duties and responsibilities of such membership.

SECTION 02 – CHURCH GOVERNMENT

02.01 ORGANIZATION:

This church humbly acknowledges and submits to the Lord Jesus Christ as its only Sovereign and Head and accepts the Bible as fully inspired by God and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, church activity, creed and opinion shall be tried.

Leadership shall be vested in the Board of Elders, who are chosen and affirmed by the congregation according to Scriptural prescription and are to be honored as such (Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17 and 1 Peter 5:2-5), Matters such as adding staff, and significant financial expenditures shall be brought before the membership for their approval through the process of affirmation.

SECTION 03 – CHURCH OFFICERS

The primary officers needed for the functioning of Hope Community Bible Church shall consist of the Elders. As available, other officers of this church will also include the Senior Pastor, the Deacons, and any such other officers as deemed necessary.

All officers of Hope Community Bible Church, except for pastors, shall be individuals who have been active members for at least one year prior to their affirmation (Affirmation procedures are outlined in Section 06 – Affirmations). All officers shall be persons who have demonstrated a cooperative spirit, who bear testimony of confidence in God's Word and faith in Christ, who are in agreement with the Statement of Faith and the Constitution and By-laws, and who are willing to faithfully perform the duties of the office. Officers shall possess moral and spiritual standards that are well recognized as fitting the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The Senior Pastor and the Elders must be men at least 25 years of age. All other officers must be persons at least 21 years of age.

Other responsibilities for officers are found in the Church Operation Manual.

03.01 PASTORAL AND MINISTRY STAFF

The pastoral and ministry staff shall carry out specific areas of ministry under the direction of the Senior Pastor. The pastoral staff shall strive "to equip the saints for the work of the ministry."

Job descriptions for all pastoral and ministry staff shall be maintained and approved by the Elder Board and will include qualifications, responsibilities and relationships.

(A) SENIOR PASTOR:

(1) Qualifications

The Senior Pastor shall be a man of true and established Christian character and qualified to preach and teach the Word of God (I Timothy 3:1-7, II Timothy 2:15, Titus 1:5-9). He shall meet all qualifications for an Elder as set forth in Section 03.02. He shall know his spiritual gift or gifts and shall diligently exercise the same (Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4). He must be in full accord with the congregation's Statement of Faith and must be willing to work within the organizational structure set forth in the Constitution and by-laws of the congregation.

(2) Duties

The Pastor shall give himself to prayer and Bible study in preparation to preach and teach the Word of God, to prepare and train God's people for the work of ministry, and to lead people to a knowledge of Christ as Savior. He shall lead the public services of the church, watch over the spiritual welfare of the church, lead the members in living a practical Christian life, and discharge all functions of the ministry.

The Senior Pastor shall provide spiritual vision and challenge to the Elders and the congregation. He shall establish goals and objectives for ministry. He shall lead the congregation in accomplishing its goals and manage the staff in support of these goals. He shall be a member of the Elder Board, and an ex-officio member of all other Boards and Committees, with full voting rights, except where matters of his employment are concerned. He shall not hold office on any of these boards.

The Senior Pastor shall represent the staff to the Elder Board. All pastoral and ministry staff members are responsible to the Senior Pastor either directly or through another staff member as delegated. Other specific duties and responsibilities may be found in the church's Job Description Manual.

The Senior Pastor shall report to the Elders at their meetings and submit a report to the congregation at the Annual Business Meeting and any other business meetings as necessary. He is accountable to the Elder Board and to the congregation.

(3) Calling a Pastor.

A Search Committee shall be established when it becomes necessary to call a member of the Pastoral and Ministry Staff. The Search Committee shall consist of two Elders (selected by the Elder board) and three members-at-large (selected by the congregation). The committee shall elect its own chairman. The Senior Pastor shall be a member of the Search Committee for any other pastoral staff position.

The search committee is to investigate the background and qualifications of potential candidates under consideration to determine their fitness for the position in regard to the following issues; personal character, education, ministerial record, experience and ability, and spiritual giftedness. The search committee shall present one candidate at a time to the congregation.

The proposed call of a Pastor shall come by way of vote by secret ballot from the congregation at a business meeting. A favorable vote of seventy-five percent (75%) of the active members present shall be necessary. A Pastor shall be called by the congregation for an indefinite period of time. Salaries, benefits, vacations and other terms of employment shall be set at the time of the call.

(B) OTHER PASTORAL AND MINISTRY STAFF

Other pastoral and ministry staff are those persons who are called to specific areas of the ministry.

(1) Qualifications

- (a) Pastoral Staff shall be men of mature Christian character and subject to the same scriptural requirements as the Senior Pastor in Section 03.01(A)(1) above.
- (b) Ministry Staff shall be persons of mature Christian character consistent with the scriptural character and principles as found in Section 03.01(A)(1).

(2) Duties

Their specific duties will be prescribed by their job descriptions as part of the call to the congregation. Adjustments in job descriptions may be recommended by the Senior Pastor and approved by the Elder Board. These persons shall be accountable to the Senior Pastor who is accountable to the Elder Board. Other responsibilities are listed in the Church Operation Manual.

(C) PASTORAL AND MINISTRY INTERNS

Pastoral and Ministry Interns are temporary (and generally unpaid) ministry positions provided to persons interested in hands-on training for ministry.

(1) Qualifications

- (a) Pastoral Interns shall be men of Christian character, subject to the scriptural requirements and principles as found in 1 Timothy 3.
- (b) Ministry Interns shall be persons of Christian character whose lives are consistent with the scriptural character and principles as found in 1 Timothy 3.

(2) Duties

Their specific duties will be prescribed by the Senior Pastor (or other designated Pastoral Staff) Other responsibilities are listed in the Church Operation Manual.

(D) TERMINATION OF PASTORAL OR MINISTRY STAFF

(1) Notice

Thirty (30) days notice shall precede a severance of relations between a Pastor or other ministry staff and the congregation unless waived by mutual consent, or unless subject to Section 03.01(D)(3). If a Pastor chooses to resign, he must give written notice to the Elder Board before it is presented to the congregation.

(2) Accusations/Grievances

A pastoral or ministry staff member may be dismissed as a result of grievances, but only after the Elder Board has made every scriptural effort to resolve the grievances.

- (a) Accusations against a Pastor or ministry staff shall be considered by the Elders only if supported by the written testimony of two (2) or more witnesses.
- (b) If the Elders determine that a Pastor or ministry staff has erred in doctrine or conduct, they shall pursue corrective counsel diligently.
- (c) If the Elder Board determines that an accusation is false or unwarranted, it shall so instruct the accusing parties and seek to restore fellowship and love in the body.
- (d) If confession and repentance result, the Elder Board shall endeavor to restore fellowship between the Pastor and the offended parties, after which the matter shall be dropped.
- (e) If the error continues, the Elders shall present the matter to the congregation (I Timothy 5:19-21). If the Pastor or ministry staff has erred in doctrine or conduct to the degree that the qualifications of the office are no longer met, this shall constitute cause for dismissal.

(3) Dismissal Action

(a) Of the Senior Pastor

- (1) Dismissal action may be initiated only by a seventy-five percent (75%) vote of the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders shall bring such a recommendation to the congregation at a meeting called for that purpose. Such action should be taken only if the process of Section 03.01 (D)(2) has been exhausted or if the Pastor fails to live up to the biblical standards and/or the expectations as outlined in his call.
- (2) The vote shall be by secret ballot of the members of the congregation.
- (3) A seventy-five percent (75%) vote shall be required to dismiss a pastoral staff member.
- (4) If dismissal is demanded by vote of the congregation, the pastoral tenure may be terminated immediately and up to 60 days additional salary paid.

(b) Of other Pastoral or Ministry Staff

- (1) Dismissal action may be initiated by the Senior Pastor and/or the Board of Elders if a pastoral or ministry staff member fails to live up to the biblical standards and/or expectations of his/her call. Such action should be taken only if the process of Section 03.01 (D)(2) has been exhausted or if the Pastor/Ministry Staff fails to live up to the biblical standards and/or the expectations as outlined in his/her call.
- (2) The dismissal of pastoral or ministry staff requires a seventy-five percent (75%) vote of the Board of Elders.
- (3) The Board of Elders is to inform the congregation immediately after such action has taken place.
- (4) If dismissal is demanded by the Board of Elders, the pastoral or ministry tenure may be terminated immediately and up to 60 days additional salary paid. Any exceptions to this severance process must be approved by a seventy-five percent (75%) vote of active members present at a special business meeting called for this purpose.

(c) Of Pastoral Interns

- (1) Resignation and/or termination of Pastoral Interns shall be acted upon by the Senior Pastor (or other so designated Pastoral Staff), in consultation with the Board of Elders, in accordance with the written policies of the church.

03.02 ELDERS

(A) Qualifications

Elders must be active male members of the congregation and shall have a lifestyle that demonstrates evidence of a growing relationship with Christ. An Elder shall meet the qualifications as described 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. These qualifications are expounded upon in the Church Operation Manual. Candidates for Elders will be selected by current Elders and then affirmed by the congregation to serve for a three-year term of office, being arranged, if possible, so that at least one will be affirmed each year. At the end of his three-year term, an Elder is considered eligible for re-nomination so long as he has maintained his spiritual qualifications and is invited to serve another term by the Elders.

(B) Duties

It shall be the duty and privilege of each Elder to:

- Oversee the affairs of the church (1 Timothy 5:17).
- Teach and give instruction, counsel and guidance (1 Timothy 5:17).
- Watch for the spiritual welfare of the believers (Hebrews 13:7).
- "Shepherd the flock of God" or lead (1 Peter 5:1-3)
- Guard right doctrine (Titus 1:9).
- Have a share in the ministry and burdens of the pastoral staff.
- Other responsibilities are listed in the Church Operation Manual.

(C) Termination

If at any time an Elder applies for release from office, or if the other Elders unanimously choose to dismiss him, the relationship between him and the Board may be terminated at the time agreed upon by the Elders. If any Elder shall fail to live up to the biblical standards as outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, he may be removed by the action of the Elder Board. Any Elder may be removed from office if he becomes physically incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or his inability to serve is established in the minds of the remainder of the Board of Elders.

03.05 DEACONS

(A) Qualifications

Deacons shall be active male members who are scripturally qualified as outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and expounded upon in the Church Operation Manual. Deacons are affirmed by the church to a two-year term and shall be eligible for re-affirmation to an unlimited number of terms so long as they have maintained their spiritual qualifications and are invited to serve another term by the Elders.

(B) Duties

It shall be the duty and privilege of each Deacon to:

- Serve the needs of the church as outlined under the Deacon Board (Section 04.02) and in the Church Operation Manual.
- Report and be accountable to the Board of Elders.

(C) Termination

If at any time a Deacon applies for release from office, or if the Elders unanimously choose to dismiss him, a Deacon may be released or terminated at the time agreed upon by the Elders. If any Deacon shall fail to live up to the biblical standards as outlined in 1 Timothy 3, he may be removed by the action of the Elder Board. Any Deacon may be removed from office if he becomes physically incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or his inability to serve is established in the minds of the remainder of the Board of Elders.

SECTION 04 – ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

Administrative positions are those that help with the proper functioning of the church for administrative, financial and legal purposes. The two primary positions are that of Recording Secretary and Church Treasurer. If needed, the Elders may add other administrative positions as deemed necessary.

04.01 RECORDING SECRETARY

(A) Qualifications

The Recording Secretary shall be an active member of good standing and affirmed from among the congregation to a two-year term. The Recording Secretary shall be eligible for re-affirmation to an unlimited number of terms so long as he/she maintains their qualifications, accomplishes the work assigned to them and are affirmed by the congregation.

(B) Duties

It shall be the duty and privilege of the Recording Secretary to:

- Keep a careful and complete set of minutes for all church business meetings and maintain a copy of such in the church office.
- Collect and file the minutes of all board and committee meetings.
- Keep and maintain a membership record containing the name and address of each member and the date of membership. Such a record is to be submitted to the church at the annual business meeting.
- Report and be accountable to the Board of Elders

04.02 CHURCH TREASURER

(A) Qualifications

The Treasurer shall be an active member of good standing, affirmed from among the congregation to a two-year term. The Treasurer shall be eligible for re-affirmation to an unlimited number of terms so long as he/she maintains their qualifications, accomplishes the work assigned to them and is affirmed by the congregation.

(B) Duties

It shall be the duty and privilege of the Treasurer to:

- Keep detailed records of all funds received by the church and provide a written report to the Elders and Deacons.
- Deposit and receipt monies given to the church following determined church policies and IRS guidelines
- Make disbursements and pay all bills by check as authorized by the Board of Deacons or the Board of Elders.
- Keep a ledger of all deposits and disbursements by account.
- Submit a written monthly report to the Board of Deacons and Elders.
- Submit annual written reports to the congregation.
- Submit financial records for audit as directed.
- Report and be accountable to the Board of Deacons.

SECTION 05 – CHURCH LEADERSHIP

05.01 BOARD OF ELDERS

(A) Purpose

The management and government of the Church between congregational business meetings shall be vested in the Elder Board, as representatives of the congregation, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The Board of Elders shall be accountable to the Lord and to the congregation for its actions and policies.

(B) Structure

The Board of Elders shall be a plurality and consist of all duly affirmed Elders and the Senior Pastor and will meet as determined by the Elders and/or the Senior Pastor.. The number of Elders shall be according to the number who have been appointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28) and recognized by the church.

Elders shall be affirmed by the church at the Annual Business Meeting by a three-fourths vote of eligible membership present and voting. Terms shall be for three years, arranged so that approximately one-third of the members shall complete their terms each year. An Elder may serve as many terms as he is affirmed to serve so long as he maintains his spiritual qualifications, accomplishes the work assigned to him and is affirmed by the congregation. A one-year sabbatical may be recommended after two consecutive terms. After the completion of his term as Elder, he may serve on another board or committee.

(C) Duties

It shall be the duty of the Elders to exercise oversight over the church, shepherding the flock of God without lording it over them (1 Peter 5:2), to guard the purity of doctrine, and to establish policy consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws. The Elders shall act for the church in the reception, discipline and dismissal of members. They shall minister in teaching the Word of God, counseling the needy, comforting the afflicted, visiting the sick, and discipling believers. They shall appoint committees, either standing or ad hoc, to help them accomplish the work of the ministry. In addition, the ministries of all pastoral staff and all church-related ministries are all subject to the Elder Board. All decisions and actions of church officers, the Board of Deacons and committees may be subject to review, revision or rejection by the

Board of Elders. For it is the Elders who “*shall give an account*” as they watch over the souls of the congregations (Hebrews 13:17).

The Board of Elders shall be responsible to develop, maintain and approve the Church Operations Manual with aid of the Board of Deacons and/or the various committees. The Board of Elders shall inform the congregation of major decisions affecting the Body within thirty days. Other responsibilities are listed in the Church Operation Manual.

05.02 DIAKONATE

(A) Purpose

The Deacons shall be responsible for the general physical and administrative functions of the church being accountable to the Board of Elders and to the congregation.

(B) Structure

If spiritually available, there shall be three Deacons for the first fifty members and regular attendees. There should be, as a guideline, no more than one Deacon per each additional twenty-five members and regular attendees. Additional Deacons will be appointed as needed.

Deacons shall be appointed by the church at the Annual Business Meeting by a three-fourths vote of eligible membership present and voting. Deacons shall serve two-year terms and be allowed to be re-affirmed so long as each maintains his spiritual qualifications.

(C) Duties

The Deacons shall maintain the physical property of the church, oversee the compassion ministries of the church, establish guidelines for the Treasurer and Financial Secretary, and arrange to perform their duties in the case of temporary absence. Other responsibilities are listed in the Church Operation Manual.

SECTION 06 –AFFIRMATIONS

Regular affirmation of church officers, with the exception of the Pastoral and Ministry Staff (see Section 03.02), shall take place at the annual meeting of the congregation.

06.01 ELIGIBILITY:

All nominees for affirmed positions shall be active members in good standing of the congregation and meet specific qualifications and requirements pertaining to the position to which they have been nominated. They must also be willing, with God's help, to carry out the responsibilities of the position to which they have been nominated. (see also Section 03 – Church Officers)

No person shall be eligible for an affirmed officer position until he/she has been an active member of this congregation for at least one year. No person may hold two (2) or more affirmed office positions simultaneously.

06.02 AFFIRMED POSITIONS/TERM OF OFFICE:

(A) Terms of Service for Church Officers

Officers shall be affirmed by the membership of the church to terms of service determined by the position in which they serve. Any officer is eligible to re-affirmation so long as he/she maintains appropriate qualifications for office, is willing, has performed their duties well and is then affirmed by the congregation. Terms of service are as follows:

- (1) **Elders** – three-year terms being arranged so that terms will expire in alternate years.
- (2) **Deacons** – two-year terms.
- (3) **Recording Secretary** – two-year term.
- (4) **Treasurer** – two-year term.

06.03 VACANCIES OF OFFICE:

- (A) Vacancies occurring in the officer positions (as defined in Section 04) will be filled by vote of members at any regular or special business meeting of the congregation. The term of office shall be for the unexpired portion of the vacated term.
- (B) The person affirmed to fill the vacancy may succeed himself/herself to that affirmed position.

SECTION 07 – LIMITATION OF POWER

07.01 General Limitations:

- (A) No officer, board or committee of this Church shall have the power to do the following without congregational involvement:
- (1) Amend this Constitution and By-laws.
 - (2) To call a Pastor or a pastoral staff member.
 - (3) To purchase, sell or mortgage real property on behalf of the church.
- (B) No officer or committee shall authorize a non-routine expenditure of more than three-tenths percent (1%) of the annual expense budget without the approval of the Board of Elders, nor shall the Board of Elders authorize a non-routine expenditure of more than five percent (5%) of the annual expense budget without congregational involvement.

SECTION 08 – NON-PASTORAL STAFF

Non-pastoral staff includes business staff, secretarial staff, custodial staff, pastoral interns, musicians, temporary help and any salaried employee other than pastors.

Job descriptions shall be maintained for all non-pastoral staff positions by the Board of Elders in conjunction with the Senior Pastor and shall include qualifications, responsibilities and relationships.

08.01 EMPLOYMENT:

- (A) All non-pastoral staff shall be interviewed and recommended by the Senior Pastor, with the approval of the Elder Board.
- (B) A written description of duties and responsibilities shall be presented to each employee.
- (C) Salaries, benefits, and vacations shall be set at the time of employment by the Deacons and approved by the Elder Board. Any non-budgeted compensation is subject to the same authorization procedures as all other proposed expenditures not included in the annual budget.
- (D) Any change in non-pastoral staff shall be reported to the congregation at its next business meeting.

08.02 ACCOUNTABILITY:

- (A) All employees shall be under the general supervision of the Senior Pastor, unless designated otherwise.
- (B) Each employee's performance shall be evaluated at least annually by the Senior Pastor, or the Elder Board in his absence.

08.03 TERMINATION:

- (A) Resignations and termination shall be acted upon by the Senior Pastor, in consultation with the Elder Board, and in accordance with the written personnel policies of the church.
- (B) Any change in non-pastoral staff shall be reported to the congregation at its next business meeting.

SECTION 09 -- MEETINGS

09.01 BUSINESS MEETINGS:

- (A) **The Annual Business Meeting** of the Church shall be held during the month of October (preferably on the second week) each year at such time as may be decided by the Elders. At this meeting annual reports shall be received, the annual budget adopted, the affirmation of church officers and administrative positions held and other necessary business transacted. The fiscal year shall end October 31st of each year.
- (B) **Special Business Meetings** of the Church may be called by the Pastor, by any two members of the Board of Elders. Notice of such special meetings shall be given either by announcement at the regular Sunday services of the Church at least three days prior to the date of the meeting, or by written notice mailed in time to reach all resident members at least three days prior to the date of the meeting.

09.02 RULES OF ORDER:

- (A) The rules of order contained in **Robert's Rules of Order** (latest revision) shall govern this organization and be utilized when it is not inconsistent with its Constitution and By-laws. "Ex officio" in this document shall be defined as "non-voting."

09.03 VOTING:

- (A) Only active members, 16 years old and older are eligible to vote at business meetings.
- (B) All matters shall be determined by a majority vote of the active members present, including affirmation of officers, except when otherwise specified in these by-laws or by decision of the congregation.
- (C) Procedures:
 - (1) **Voice Vote:** For all Business Meetings of the Church with the exceptions noted below.
 - (2) **Show of Hands:** When unanimously requested by the Church
 - (3) **Secret Ballot:** For affirmation of Church officers, administrative positions; amendments to the Constitution and by-laws; the calling of pastoral staff, and disciplinary matters needing action by the Church.

09.04 QUORUM:

- (A) Thirty-three percent (33%) of the active members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
- (B) Fifty-one percent (51%) for the voting members of boards and committees shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business (excluding ex-officio members).

SECTION 10 – ORGANIZATIONS IN THE CHURCH

- (A) Any organization formed within or considered to be a part of the activities of the church, must first have its sponsors submit their plans to the Elders and have received church approval and sanction.
- (B) The various organizations are expected to confer with the Elders from time to time regarding their plans and activities. All matters of importance which affect the church shall be approved by the Board of Elders.
- (C) Any organization permitted to function under the name of the church must have as its chairman or supervisor a member of the church.
- (D) Organizations of the church shall submit all funds to the Treasurer of the church, unless otherwise decided by the church.
- (E) Methods of raising funds shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Elders.

SECTION 11 – LICENSE FOR MINISTERIAL DUTIES

11.01 Ministerial License:

A license to serve as a pastor or minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for a time period to be limited by the Board of Elders may be granted an applicant after the following requirements are met:

- (A) The applicant must be in agreement with the Church Statement of Faith.
- (B) The applicant shall have had at least one year of Bible training in some school approved by the Board of Elders or shall have had the acceptable equivalent of such training whether through the ministries of this church or through the ministries of another church recognized by the Board of Elders.
- (C) The applicant shall have made a written request to the Pastor, setting forth the intended use of such a license.
- (D) The applicant must be examined by the Board of Elders (and other members that may be asked by the Elders to participate in such an examination) in order to confirm that the applicant is qualified to hold such a license.
- (E) Upon approval by the Board of Elders, the license shall be good and valid for the time period granted by the Board of Elders or as long as the applicant remains under the authority and standards of the church.
- (F) The Board of Elders, after approving the request, shall advise the Church membership through written notice and at the next business meeting of the church.

SECTION 12 -- AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be added to or revised by seventy-five percent (75%) of the votes cast by active members present at any regular business meeting provided that the proposed by-laws have been presented in written form and discussed at a business meeting at least two months prior to the vote on the proposed amendment. Changes will be considered fully adopted at the meeting at which they are approved.