

Berean Baptist Church of Livonia

Statement of Faith and By-Laws



The Affirmation of Faith

Ratified by the congregation: November 2007

The Elders and People of Berean Baptist Church adopted our particular Affirmation of Faith with two truths in mind. First, true Christianity is simultaneously broad and narrow. It is broad in the sense that peoples from diverse denominational organizations are the Church. A faith statement, in our opinion should honor that truth rather than deny it. In other words, no true Christian should be denied membership in a church because he/she holds to a doctrine of secondary importance. Second, true Christianity is narrow and is certainly definable. True Christian doctrine can be articulated and we drafted a faith statement that would accurately outline what an individual must believe to be truly in the faith.

The Scriptures

The Holy Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the infallible Word of God, verbally inspired by God, and without error in the original manuscripts. It is God's revelation of Himself to man and is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

God the Father

God the Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 5:43-48; 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.

God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. By His perfect obedience to God and by His suffering and death as the immaculate Lamb of God, He obtained forgiveness of sins and the gift of perfect righteousness for all who trusted in God prior to the cross and all who would trust in Christ thereafter. Through living a perfect life and dying in the place of all who believe, the just for the unjust, Christ absorbed their punishment, appeased the wrath of God against them, vindicated the righteousness of God in their justification, and removed the condemnation of the law against them. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6- 21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Savior, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 33:4; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13;

12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16,17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.

Satan

Satan is a real, personal being, also known as the Devil. He was created by God as an angel but through pride and rebellion became the enemy of his Creator. He became the unholy god of this age and the ruler of all the powers of darkness and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in the lake of fire.

Matthew 4:1-11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 20:10.

Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. God directly created Adam from the dust of the ground and Eve from his side, and these two were the historical parents of the entire human race. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherits a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they evidence themselves transgressors under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.

The Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life.

Psalms 139

Gender and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. In addition, we believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. Therefore, we believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Berean Baptist Church of Livonia as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church's members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Berean Baptist Church of Livonia in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to abide by the Faith Statement.

We believe God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sins, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Berean Baptist Church of Livonia.

(Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 5:16; Matthew 15:18-20; Mark 12:28-31; Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 18, 7:2-5; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Hebrews 13:4)

Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

The statement of faith does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For the purposes of Berean Baptist Church of Livonia's faith, doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, our Elder Council is the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate

companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. Salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior.

Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification, which is by faith alone, brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.

Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the

presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace will occur in some measure and should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30,31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.

God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-23; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.

The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19,28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.

The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full realization of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ personally and visibly in glory to the earth and the end of this age.

Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark

1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.

Last Things

God, in His own time and in accordance with His word, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will conquer every enemy, including death itself; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in the new heaven and the new earth with the Lord.

Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.

Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.

The Governmental By-Laws

Ratified: May 2004

Preamble

Resting our faith wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation and believing in the teaching of the Holy Bible as the plenary, inerrant, and verbally inspired Word of the Living God, we have affiliated ourselves with one another as a body of immersed believers, and we adopt these Affirmations of Faith as a declaration of our convictions based on God's Word so that we may carry on the Lord's work decently and in order (1 Cor 14:40).

Article I: Name

This church, incorporated under the laws of the State of Michigan, shall be known as Berean Baptist Church of Livonia, Michigan.

Article II: Purpose

Section 1.

This congregation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law), including, but not limited to, for such purposes, the establishing and maintaining and operating of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, television stations, rescue missions, print shops, day care centers, camps, nursing homes, and cemeteries, and any other ministries that the Church may be led of God to establish.

Section 2.

The Church shall also ordain and license men to the Gospel ministry; evangelize the unsaved by the proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; educate believers in a manner consistent with the requirements of Holy Scripture, both in Sunday and weekday schools of Christian education; maintain missionary activities in the United States and any foreign country; and engage in any other ministry that the Church may decide, from time to time, to pursue in obedience to the will of God.

Matt 28:19-20; Acts 2:41; Rom 10:14-15; Eph 4:11-13

Article III: Associations

Section 1.

This church shall be an independent, autonomous church, subject only to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. It has the right to cooperate and associate with other biblical groups on a voluntary basis. There shall be no cooperation with any group that permits the membership or ministry of apostates or apostasy. This church will not have fellowship with any organization associated with the denial or compromise of the doctrines embodied in the Affirmation of Faith as set forth in this document.

Rom 16:17; 2 Cor 6:17; Col 1:18

Article IV: Members' Agreement of Fellowship and Affirmation of Faith

MEMBERS' AGREEMENT OF FELLOWSHIP

Having been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the public profession of our faith, having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, solemnly and joyfully enter into this agreement with one another as one body in Christ.

We purpose, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; and to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of this ministry.

We also purpose to maintain family and private devotions; to train our children according to the Word of God; to seek the salvation of our relatives and others with whom we have contact; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be honest in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct; to avoid gossip; to keep our bodies the temple of God; to refrain from all substances and practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith; to be free from defilement; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of Christ, our Savior; and to give Him preeminence in all things.

We further purpose to encourage one another, to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress, to be courteous in speech, to be slow to take offense and quick to reconcile according to the principles of God's Word.

We moreover purpose that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with another church whose doctrine, purpose, and standards are consistent with God's Word.

Article V: Membership

Section I. Reception of Members

- A. The membership of this church shall consist of persons who confess faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord; who give evidence of regeneration by living consistently with their profession; who submit to the views of faith, doctrine and practice of this church; who have been baptized by immersion; and who have been received into its membership according to the Bylaws of this church.
- B. Each candidate for membership shall be expected to read the Constitution of this church. Afterward he/she will meet with members of the Council of Elders to be interviewed as to his/her profession of faith and walk with Christ.
- C. Upon recommendation of the Council of Elders, candidates may be admitted to membership by majority vote of the congregation present at a business meeting called for that purpose (cf. Art. VII; Sec. 2; B, E).

- D. Vocational elders (cf. Art. VI; Sec I; B; I) and vocational ministers (cf. Art. VI; Sec. I; C), along with their believing, baptized nuclear family members, become members of the Church upon accepting the call.
- E. The Council of Elders (or those appointed by the Council) will be responsible for the preparation and instruction of incoming members, including those being baptized.

Section 2. Responsibilities of Members

- A. In areas of specific conduct the following questions are offered as guidelines to help us to maintain a biblical lifestyle.

1. Is this activity profitable for the cause of Christ? (1 Cor 6:12)
2. Could this activity tend to control my life or interfere with God's control of my life? (1 Cor 6:12)
3. Will the body of believers be helped and built up by this action? (1 Cor 10:23)
4. Can I glorify God in this action? (1 Cor 10:31-33)
5. Could someone stumble into sin or become entangled with legalism on account of my action or attitude? (1 Cor 8:9-13)
6. Can this action be done in faith? (Rom 14:22-23; Heb 11:6)

Let each member diligently search his/her own heart and put aside any sin or activity that might be an offense to someone else or is in any way a hindrance to the progress of the Church. We urge all that are in doubt as to their conduct to consider Colossians 3:17: "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." All members of the congregation are expected to:

- Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (1 Pet 3:18; 2 Pet 1:1-10)
- Conduct their lives according to the principles set forth by Scripture, such as moral purity (1 Thes 4:3-7), personal honesty (Eph 4:25), and biblical fidelity (2 Tim 3:14-17)
- Support the mission of the Church and encourage and uphold Church leadership (Heb 13:17; 1 Thes 5:12,13)
- Promote harmony within the body by properly handling disagreements and conflicts (Matt 5:23; 18:17-18; Titus 3:10-11)

The elders, other teachers, and parents bear the responsibility to regularly teach these principles.

- B. All members are expected to support the Church financially as stewards of the wealth God has granted. Every believer should participate in sacrificial giving as God has prospered through free-will offerings, tithes, acts of benevolence, and special gifts. All giving is an act of worship, and once contributions are given, the individual Christian

relinquishes all personal control of those monies and entrusts them to the Church to disperse according to biblical guidelines and Church Bylaws.

- C. Members are expected to support the Church with their service, employing their Spirit-given gift(s) to the benefit of the body.
- D. Members are expected to heed the admonition of Hebrews 10:25 to see that we do not “neglect to meet together.” Faithful attendance at the corporate worship of the Church is expected of all its members.
- E. In some instances members may be providentially prevented from regular attendance (ill health, Military, temporary relocations, etc.). In such instances, at the discretion of the elders, a special “Inactive” status may be granted to them. Only active members are to be considered in quorum calculations (Art. VII, Sec 2, Par. F).

Gen 14:20; Pro 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 9:6-7; Gal 6:6; Eph 4:28; 1 Tim 5:17-18; Heb 10:25; 1 John 3:17

Section 3. Discipline of Members

In all matters of discipline this church will adhere faithfully to the teachings of Scripture.

The Council of Elders shall be responsible for the oversight of all disciplinary procedures and shall be the authority under the Scriptures for determining anyone involved in heretical doctrine or unbiblical practices worthy of church discipline. If an elder is the subject of a disciplinary matter, he will not act as part of the disciplinary council.

- A. Members are expected to demonstrate special loyalty to and concern for one another. When a member becomes aware of a sin of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he/she is to go only to the sinning party and seek to restore his/her brother/sister. He/she must go in the spirit of humility and meekness.
- B. If repentance and reconciliation is not reached, one or two more members of the Church should be taken to confront the brother/sister for the same purpose of restoration.
- C. If the matter is still unresolved after the above steps have been taken, the matter will then be brought to the Council of Elders. If the matter is still unresolved before the Council, they shall recommend to the members of the Church that the membership, after self-examination, go to the sinning member and urge repentance and restoration.

- D. If the matter is still unresolved after the above steps have been taken, such members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the membership of the Church upon a majority vote of the membership present at a meeting called for the purpose of considering disciplinary action (cf. Art. VII; Sec.2; C).
- E. No matter of discipline will be heard by the Council of Elders or the Church unless the steps outlined in subsections A and B have been taken, except in the case of public offense.
- F. In the case of a sinning elder, both precautions against frivolous accusations and the greater liability to public censure as outlined in I Timothy 5:19-20 shall be followed.

Matt 18:15-17; I Cor 5:1-13; 2 Cor 2:5-11; 7:8-13; Gal 6:1; 2 Thes 3:6-15; I Timothy 5:19-20.

Section 4. Deletions from Membership Roles

Deletions from the membership roles can be effected in the following ways:

- A. The death of a member.
- B. Transfer. Letters of transfer to other churches of like faith and practice indicating the good standing of the member shall, when requested, be granted by the Church upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders and a majority vote of the congregation present at a business meeting. The letter shall be sent directly to the church named in the request.
- C. By exclusion. Members may be excluded from membership by:
 - 1. Delinquency. Members (excluding military, college students, those providentially hindered from attending, or members living part of the year out of state) absent from the services of the Church for a period of three (3) months will be considered delinquent. Similarly, members whose attendance is infrequent over a period of six (6) months will also be considered delinquent. If after being notified of their absence and/or infrequent attendance and being encouraged to return to worship and fellowship they fail to return, they may be removed from membership upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders and majority vote of the congregation present at a business meeting.
 - 2. Request. Members may request removal of their name from the membership role at any time, excepting those involved in a disciplinary matter.

3. Relocation. Members who relocate their residence and cannot or do not maintain a vital relationship with the Church through regular attendance and involvement may be removed from membership upon the recommendation of the Council of Elders and majority vote of the congregation present at a business meeting.

D. By church discipline. (cf. Art. V; Sec. 3)

Article VI: Church Government

The form of church government shall be congregational, coupling the congregation's involvement in Church decisions (as can be determined from the Scriptures) with a plurality of elders fulfilling the roles and responsibilities outlined in Scripture for them.

Section I. Definition of Terms

- A. Congregation. While the generic term "congregation" means everyone in the Church body, for purposes of church government "congregation" shall mean the voting membership of the Church which includes all members who are above eighteen (18) years of age.
- B. Elders. These are men called of God and appointed by the congregation who fulfill the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. The leadership of the Church shall be vested in the Council of Elders which is responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this church. The elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. Among the elders, some may be vocational and others non-vocational.
 1. Vocational elders. These elders, beyond being identified by biblical qualifications, are men who have laid aside secular employment to be engaged fulltime in the gospel ministry and are supported financially by the Church (1 Tim 5:17-18; 1 Cor 9:13-14). These are the men who by virtue of their fulltime status have oversight of the ongoing day to day workings of the Church and her ministries.
 2. Non-vocational elders. These men meet the biblical qualifications of the eldership, are equal in authority with the vocational elders, go through the same process of candidacy for the office, and must be approved by the congregation. However, their function is not in fulltime ministry in the Church. Rather, they give of themselves employing their leadership skills and spiritual gifts in order to lend oversight, wisdom, and direction to the ministry. (1 Tim 5:17,18)

- C. Vocational ministers. From time to time the Church may deem it profitable to call someone to minister in the Church who is not an elder but would be considered paid staff (Acts 13:5; 16:1-3).

- D. Deacons. These are men qualified according to 1 Timothy 3:8-13 to be the Church's ministers of mercy to those with physical, financial, emotional, or spiritual needs in the Church. They also carry out special assignments from the Council of Elders to the end that the elders can give themselves more to the ministry of the Word and prayer. Any such delegated tasks would still remain under the authority of the Council of Elders. Deacons shall assist the Council through advice, service, compassionate ministry, and implementation of elder directives (Acts 6:1-7).

Section 2. Organization

- A. Structural authority. Under the authority of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, the congregation is the final authority within this local church. This authority is exercised through the election of elders to govern the Church who, once appointed, carry out all their New Testament responsibilities without the need of subsequent congregational authorization. However, the vote of the membership of this church at a properly called meeting, as provided in the Bylaws, shall be required to effect the following actions:
 - 1. Accept members into the Church, give letters of transfer, or drop members from the Church Roll;
 - 2. Call or dismiss elders, deacons, or vocational ministers;
 - 3. Discipline members by dismissing them;
 - 4. Approve annual budgets of the Church and unbudgeted capital expenditures or transactions of property whose value exceeds 1% of the annual general fund budget;
 - 5. Adopt, amend, or repeal the Constitution of this church;
 - 6. Rename the Church;
 - 7. Approve sabbaticals or leaves of absence for all vocational elders or ministers;
 - 8. Act on any other items the Council of Elders deems prudent.

- B. Offices of the Church. The offices of the Church shall be elder (also called "pastor" and "overseer" in Scripture) and deacon. The purpose of church officers is to carefully and lovingly attend to the needs of the flock with both offices fulfilling their respective biblical roles.
 - 1. No one (except vocational elders or ministers who are called from outside the Church) shall be elected to office who has not been a member of this church for at

- least one (1) year except that, upon special recommendation of the Council of Elders, a person may be considered by the Church for office after six (6) months.
2. All officers shall be biblically qualified and be faithful to attendance and participation in Church life including services, Church-wide activities, and business meetings.
 3. All officers shall normally begin their duties upon election. There shall be no term limits placed on officers of the Church once appointed. However, an officer may step down voluntarily, be granted a fixed sabbatical, or become disqualified for office. Any officer disqualified, unable, or unwilling to fulfill the duties of his office shall resign. If unwilling to resign, his resignation will be requested by the Council of Elders. If said resignation is not forthcoming, his office will be declared vacant pursuant to a Church vote. All vacancies will be filled according to Article VI, Sections 3, 4, 5, 6 of this Constitution.
- C. Legal relationships. As an accommodation to legal relationships outside the Church, the pastor-teacher will serve as president of the corporation; the chairman of the Council of Elders will serve as vice-president; the chairman of the deacons shall act as the secretary, and the Church treasurer shall act as treasurer. Also, the Council of Elders shall act as trustees.

Section 3. The Council of Elders

- A. Composition, Term, and Calling. The Council of Elders shall be composed of men, desirably both vocational and non-vocational. The number of elders at any time will be determined by the needs of the ministry and by the qualification and call of men in the Church. Once elected, there will be no term limits on service.
- B. Qualifications. Elders and nominees for elder shall be qualified for the office as specified in the Bible. Relevant texts include I Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and I Peter 5:1-4.
- C. Responsibilities. The fundamental responsibility of the elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the Word. The elders are responsible for governing the Church, teaching the Word and tending the flock of God in this church.
- D. The responsibilities of the elders shall also include these: examining prospective members and acquainting them with the Constitution; overseeing the process of church discipline; examining prospective candidates for office; hiring, remunerating, and dismissing Church employees; scheduling and providing a moderator for business meetings; providing for reporting and recording of official Church business; overseeing the work of the deacons and appointed Church agents and committees; conducting worship services; overseeing the administration of the ordinances of the Gospel; equipping the membership of the Church for the work of the ministry; teaching the

whole counsel of God both formally and informally; caring for the sheep; counseling; visiting the sick; correcting error; overseeing, coordinating and promoting the ministries of the Church; and mobilizing the Church for world mission.

- E. **Organization.** The Council of Elders shall organize itself however it determines best to achieve the mission of the Church, but shall appoint a chairman and vice-chairman for the sole purpose of legal relationships outside the church (cf. Art. VI, Sec. 2, C; Art. VIII). The elders shall be equal in authority but may be specialized in function. The Council of Elders will endeavor to meet at least once per month. Meetings of the Council may be held at any location and may be conducted by means of electronic communication through which the elders may simultaneously hear each other. Unless the Council provides otherwise, meetings of the Council may be held immediately upon notice. A quorum for meetings of the elders is defined as at least one-half of the Council.

- F. **Delegation of Authority.** The Council of Elders may delegate certain of their responsibilities to individuals, committees or other groups in the Church. This delegated responsibility remains under the oversight and authority of the Council. All elders shall have voting authority on all committees the Council of Elders appoint.

Acts 6:1-7; 11:30; 14:22-23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17, 28; 21:17-26; 1 Thes 5:12, 13; 1 Tim 3:1-7; 5:17-18; Titus 1:6-9; Heb 13:7, 17; 1 Pet 5:1-5; James 5:14

Section 4. Pastor-Teacher

The pastor-teacher (Eph 4:11) is a vocational elder who dedicates his life to the spiritual ministry of the Word, prayer, and watch-care of the flock.

- A. He shall have primary responsibility for the public ministry of the Word from the pulpit (Acts 14:12; 15:13).

- B. He shall give not less than sixty (60) days notice when resigning his work unless a shorter time is advisable and mutually agreeable with the Council of Elders. In the event the Church should terminate the services of the pastor-teacher, he shall be granted sixty days pay from the date of notification. A fifty-one percent (51%) vote of the congregation present at a business meeting is required to dismiss him.

- C. His remuneration and benefits shall be recommended to the congregation by the non-vocational elders.

- D. He shall be approved for office by a minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) of votes cast (not counting abstentions) at an appropriately called business meeting.
- E. When the position of pastor-teacher is vacant, the Council of Elders will be responsible to fill the pulpit and secure candidates for consideration by the Church.
- F. Only one candidate will be considered at a time.
- G. Each candidate shall be fully examined through resumes, references, and exchanges of information with those familiar with the candidate.
- H. All potential elder candidates must meet at least twice with the Council of Elders. A vocational elder candidate must spend one Sunday in pulpit ministry at the Church before he may become a candidate. A vocational elder candidate must preach in all the services of another Sunday as a candidate before a vote can be taken.
- I. The Sunday morning following his candidacy, or as soon thereafter as practicable, the Church will vote on extending a call. Any call shall be extended by one of the elders on the Council.
- J. Exceptions to H and I above may be allowed in the event that the candidate being considered is currently an elder at this church.

Section 5. Vocational Elders (Pastoral Staff) and Vocational Ministers

Vocational elders are those men whose call to and qualifications for the ministry are clear. They are shepherds who are called to lead the flock in a variety of different areas in which God has gifted them. While each is apt to teach, as is required of an elder, vocational elders other than the pastor-teacher are not focused primarily on the pulpit ministry of the Church as much as on other areas of teaching, leading, and equipping.

Vocational ministers are those who give themselves to the spiritual ministry of the Church but are not elders or deacons. Both vocational elders and ministers are remunerated by the Church in return for their vocational labors.

- A. The need to call a vocational elder will be determined by the Council of Elders. They will be responsible to investigate, interview and secure a candidate for the approval of the congregation.
- B. Calling, remunerating, or vacating the office of a vocational elder will follow the same procedure as calling the pastor-teacher (cf. Art. V; Sec. 4).

- C. A description of the candidate's proposed area(s) of concentrated ministry will be supplied to the congregation.
- D. In the case of an existing vocational elder who was called by the Church for a specific job description, a majority vote of the congregation present at a Church business meeting will be required to substantially change that job description.
- E. Vocational ministers will be examined by the Council of Elders and approved by the congregation.

Section 6. Non-Vocational Elders

Non-vocational elders are men God raises up from within the body of the Church to minister in the capacity of elder while maintaining their secular employment.

- A. Non-vocational elders must be examined for and have all the biblical qualifications presented in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
- B. Their nomination shall come from the Council of Elders (Acts 13:1-2).
- C. Their candidacy and subsequent election must follow the same procedures as that of the pastor-teacher and vocational elders except as provided in Article VI, Section 4, Paragraph H.

Section 7. Deacons

- 1. The congregation shall submit nominations for the office of deacon to the Council of Elders who will interview the candidates as to their qualifications (I Tim 3:10).
 - 1. Nominations may be requested by the Council of Elders at any time with subsequent elections to be held at a quarterly business meeting (Acts 6:3).
 - 2. Forms will be provided for nominations which can be procured in the Church Office.
 - 3. The person making the nomination must first seek the permission of the individual he/she wishes to nominate.
- 2. Only nominees approved by the Council of Elders will be presented to the congregation for a Church vote to elect them as deacons (Acts 6:2).

3. The number of deacons will be determined by the size and needs of the congregation.
4. The Deacon Body shall appoint a chairman, vice-chairman, and a secretary who will record minutes and transmit all official communication of the deacons. All minutes shall be submitted to the Council of Elders for their review.
5. Deacons will be selected by a 75% approval of the congregation present at a business meeting, and their length of service shall be indefinite.

Section 8. Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Clerk, and Committees

- A. The Council of Elders will be responsible to oversee all the financial operations and record-keeping of the Church (Acts 4:35, 37; 5:1; 11:30). They shall appoint from the congregation (excluding elders) a treasurer, financial secretary, and clerk who shall function under the oversight of the Council of Elders.
- B. The functions of treasurer and financial secretary shall not be performed by the same member. The treasurer and financial secretary shall be bonded by the Church in a suitable amount. The Council of Elders shall provide a written description of duties to the clerk, treasurer, and financial secretary.
- C. Committees and Appointments. The Council of Elders has the authority to create and dissolve committees and positions to which it may delegate any specified aspect of its responsibility (for example, missions, properties, finances, Christian education). The Council of Elders also has the authority to appoint (or remove) elders, deacons or other members of the Church to serve as members of such committees and to act as its agents in such positions. The deacons may nominate candidates for any committee or position, with appointment by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate to the deacons the authority to appoint deacons or other members of the Church to serve as members of such committees and as agents of the Council of Elders in such positions. Every committee shall have a chairperson responsible for the overall operation of the committee, who shall be appointed by the Council of Elders. The Council of Elders may delegate the responsibility for selecting the chairperson to the deacons or to the committee themselves. All committee personnel and other appointees shall be faithful members of the Church and approved for the position by the Council of Elders or their agents.

Article VII: Meetings and Procedures

A meeting is the assembly of members to carry out Article II: Purpose.

Section 1. Services

The Church shall meet every Sunday (unless providentially hindered) for worship, instruction, fellowship, prayer, and mutual encouragement. The Lord's Table will be observed on a monthly basis unless otherwise scheduled by the Council of Elders. Baptisms shall occur as required.

Meetings of the Church for worship, edification, and instruction shall be as follows:

- A. Assembly for worship. The Church is to meet corporately at least once on Sunday to fulfill God's prescription for regulative worship. This meeting will be at a time set by the Council of Elders. Other services for the purpose of corporate worship may be scheduled by the Council of Elders as deemed beneficial to the body.
- B. The Church may conduct other meetings such as Sunday School, Adult Bible Fellowships, Sunday evening meetings, and mid-week services. These are meetings and functions not commanded in Scripture but which may be deemed useful and beneficial in the implementation of the Church's purpose of fulfilling the Great Commission. These meetings will be maintained or implemented as needed under the supervision of the Council of Elders.

Section 2. Business Meetings and Quorum

- A. Regular business meetings. The fiscal year shall be January 1 to December 31. Regular quarterly business meetings will be held with at least one business meeting being scheduled within each quarter on dates specified by the Council of Elders. A business meeting within the first quarter of each year shall be designated by the Council of Elders to serve as the Annual Church Meeting at which all annual reports shall be given.
- B. All business requiring a congregational vote must be posted in motion form fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting. Members wishing to place an item of business on the agenda must submit the item in motion form to the Council of Elders thirty (30) days before the meeting date.
- C. Business meetings to receive new members. The Council of Elders may call a business meeting at any Sunday service for the purpose of receiving new members as per Article V, Section I above.
- D. Specially called business meetings. The Council of Elders may call business meetings for special purposes at any time so long as the requirements for regular business meetings (A above) are fulfilled, except in cases the Council deems an emergency. If an emergency business meeting is called, a good faith effort shall be made to inform all voting members of the time and place of the meeting. All specially called business

meetings must have a stated item of business upon which to vote, and no other business may be transacted.

- E. The Council of Elders will decide all dates and times for regular and specially called business meetings and shall be responsible to preside over all business at said meetings. They shall appoint a moderator for business meetings.
- F. A quorum of thirty percent (30%) of the congregation shall be required to vote on any issue in any business meeting except for the reception of new members (B above). Members must be present in the meeting in order to vote. Quorums shall be determined quarterly. It shall be the responsibility of the Council of Elders to figure the quorum from the Church rolls.

Section 3. Policies and Procedures

The Council of Elders shall approve all policies and procedures from all committees and ministries of the Church.

Article VIII: Assets

Disposal and purchase of assets shall require the signature of the existing chairman and vice-chairman of the Council of Elders on any and all documents connected with such transactions. All such transactions whose value exceeds 1% of the annual general fund budget (cf. Art. VI, Sec. 2, Par. A, Num 4) shall require approval of the congregation by a majority vote of members present at any properly called Church business meeting.

Article IX: Exempt Provisions

Section 1. Private Inurement

No part of the net earnings of the Church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, officers, or other private persons, except that the Church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered or reimbursement for expenses incurred and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes of the Church as set forth in Article II, Section I hereof.

Section 2. Political Involvement

No substantial part of the activities of the Church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. The Church shall not participate or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Section 3. Dissolution

Should the Church ever vote to dissolve, the Council of Elders shall, during the process of dissolution and following the guidelines of this Constitution (cf. esp. Art. VIII), pay or make provisions for payment of all the liabilities of the Church and dispose of all of the assets of the Church to such organization(s) organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization(s) under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law). Assets may be distributed only to organizations which agree with the Church's Affirmation of Faith.

Section 4. Nondiscrimination

The Church shall have a racially nondiscriminatory policy and therefore shall not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin.

Article X: Designated Contributions

From time to time the Church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated for specific uses shall remain subject to the guidelines of this Constitution. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contributions made to the Church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article II, Section I.

Article XI: Amendments

Any proposed amendment to this constitution requires due process of review by the Council of Elders and shall, by a written proposal and public announcement, be submitted to the assembly at least sixty (60) days prior to the meeting called to consider said amendment. The proposed amendment requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the congregation present at the meeting for approval.

Article XII: Repealing Clause

Any Constitution or parts thereof heretofore passed but not included in this Constitution are hereby repealed.

Article XIII: Adoption of the Constitution

This Constitution was adopted on November 2, 2003, and became effective as of January 1, 2004.