



# CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

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## **PURPOSE**

To the glory of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, the Chelsea Bible Church is established to carry out the God-ordained responsibilities of the local church, namely:

### **Teaching**

...to stand for the historic, fundamental Christian truths and to equip the saints for the work of the ministry for the building up of the Body of Christ, with the goals of attaining spiritual unity, the knowledge of the Son of God, and the spiritual maturity of each believer.

### **Fellowship**

...to provide an atmosphere for the development of meaningful fellowship among believers, i.e., the expression of caring and loving one another, warning, exhorting, stimulating maturity of each believer.

### **Worship and Prayer**

...to provide for meaningful worship and prayer, both individually and corporately, as well as to administer the biblical ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

### **Outreach**

...to participate in world evangelism, both locally and worldwide, as well as to encourage God's people to have an effective testimony and influence as well as personal ministry in their everyday relationships.

## **ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this fellowship of believers shall be Chelsea Bible Church, hereafter referred to in this constitution as the church.

## **ARTICLE II – DOCTRINAL STATEMENT**

### **Section A – The Importance Of Doctrine**

This church shall function as an independent, evangelical church committed to the fundamental and historic truths recorded in the inerrant, inspired Holy Scriptures, the Bible.

All church leaders, pastoral staff and regular teachers must wholeheartedly agree with the Articles Of Faith as well as the Statement Of Doctrine. All members shall be in full agreement with the Articles of Faith and have no fundamental disagreement with the Statement of Doctrine.

### **Section B – Articles Of Faith**

1. The Triune God: God exists in three eternal, coequal persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
2. The Person of Christ: Undiminished deity and complete humanity are united and embodied forever in one sinless, virgin-born Person, the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. The Work of Christ: The death of Christ served as the perfect, God-satisfying substitutionary payment of the penalty for the sins of the world. His bodily resurrection from the dead guarantees the hope of eternal life for all who believe on Him.
4. Personal Salvation: One can be assured of God's forgiveness and deliverance from eternal separation from God as well as the sure hope of eternal life, only through personal trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and acceptance of God's free gift of eternal life.
5. Revelation: God revealed Himself and His will for mankind through the divinely inspired writings known as the Holy Scriptures.
6. Authority: The Holy Scriptures shall be the sole and sufficient authority in all matters of faith and practice. Futhermore, a literal understanding of the author's words, in their historical and grammatical context, shall be the basis of interpretation to determine the meaning of any and all passages.

## **Section C – Statement of Doctrine**

### **The Holy Scriptures**

We believe every word of both Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original texts, infallible and God-breathed. (Isa. 40:8, Matt. 5:18, Mark 13:31, John 16:12-13)

We believe in a literal understanding of the author's intended message, correctly interpreted by historical, grammatical and contextual principles of sound interpretation. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter :20-21)

### **The Godhead**

We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three distinct Persons--Father, Son and Holy Spirit, co-eternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections. (Gen 1:1, Deut. 6:4, Matt. 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14, Peter 1:2)

### **The Person and Work of Christ**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order to reveal God and redeem mankind. (Luke 1:35, John 1:1-2, 14)

We further believe that the Lord Jesus Christ provided redemption through His death on the cross, as a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the whole world; and that our salvation is assured by His literal and physical resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 3:24-25, Eph. 1:7, Peter 1:3-5, 2:24, 1 John 2:2, Rom 4:25)

### **The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the person of God who convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and of judgment, and that He is the supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, the Church, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption. (John 14:16, 16:8-11, 1 Cor. 12:12-14, Rom. 8:9, Eph. 1:13-14)

We further believe that He intercedes for all the saints, and is the divine teacher who guides believers into all truth, and that it is the duty and privilege of every believer to be filled (controlled) by the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 8:26, John 16:13, John 2:20, 27, Eph. 5:18)

### **The Spiritual Depravity of Man**

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's disobedience, the entire race fell, incurring spiritual death (separation from God), inheriting a sinful nature and becoming alienated from God. Man therefore is spiritually dead from his birth and of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition. (Gen. 1:26-27, Rom. 3:22-23, 5:12, Eph. 2:1-21, 1 Cor. 2:14-15)

### **Salvation**

We believe that salvation is the free and gracious gift of God, brought to mankind in loving grace and that this gift of eternal life is received by personal trust in Christ as one's savior and sin-bearer, whose precious blood was shed at Calvary for the forgiveness and remission of our sins. (Eph. 2:8-9, John 1:12, Eph. 1:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19)

We further believe that the Scriptures emphasize that the evidence of genuine faith in Christ is a fruitful life and the outward manifestation of good works. (2 Cor. 5:17, Eph. 2:10, James 2:14-26, Rom. 6:4; 1 John 2:6)

### **The Security and Assurance of Believers**

We believe that all of the redeemed, once genuinely saved by the transformation of the new birth, are kept by God's grace and power, and thus are secure in Christ forever.

We further believe that such assurance and grace does not give license to careless sinful behavior and the abuse of Christian liberty but rather provides spiritual motivation unto purity and godly living. (John 6:37-40, 10:27-30, Rom. 8:1, 38-39, 1 Cor. 1:4-8, 1 Pet. 1:5, Phil. 1:6, Rom. 13:13-14, Gal. 5:13, Titus 2:11-15, 1 John 2:1-2)

#### **The Believer's Two Natures**

We believe that every saved person possesses two separate and distinct natures, referred to as the flesh and the spirit, with provision made for spiritual victory over the fleshly nature by means of the indwelling power of God, the Spirit.

We further believe that any claim to the eradication of this sinful nature (flesh) in this life is spurious and unscriptural. (Rom. 6:13, 8:12-13, Gal. 5:16-25, Eph. 4:22-24, Col. 3:10, 1 Pet. 1:14-16, 1 John 3:5-9)

#### **The Believer and Separation**

We believe that every Christian is accountable not only to God, but also to those around us and therefore we should live in such a manner as to not bring reproach upon our Savior. We further believe that separation from religious apostasy and alliances as well as sinful practices is commanded of all believers. Such separation is not to be misconstrued as isolation from non-believing persons. (2 Tim. 3:1-5, Rom. 12:1-2, 1 John 2:15-17, 2 John 9-11, 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1)

#### **The Believer and Missions**

We believe that it is the obligation of every Christian to witness both by life and word to the message of salvation and other scriptural truths, seeking the salvation of mankind both at home and abroad. (Mark 16:15, Matt. 28:19, Acts 1:8, 2 Cor. 5:19-20)

#### **The Church**

We believe that the Church is the body of Christ, His espoused Bride, and is therefore a spiritual organism consisting of all born again believers of this present age of grace.

We further believe that the Church is visibly manifested in local congregations (churches) clearly defined and identified in the Scriptures as having pastors and elders for spiritual instruction and oversight as well as deacons for the temporal ministries and needs of the assembly.

We also believe in the autonomy and independence of all local churches, free of any and all external control or ecclesiastical authority. (Matt. 16:18, Eph. 1:22-23, 5:25-27, 1 Cor. 12:12-14, 2 Cor 11:2, Acts 14:27, 15:19-31, 20:17, 1 Tim. 3:1-13, Titus 1:5, Rom. 16:1-4, 1 Cor. 3:9, 1 Pet. 5:1-4)

#### **Ordinances of The Church**

We believe the ordinances of believer's baptism (water) and the Lord's Supper are to be observed by the church. Regarding the Lord's Supper, we believe that participation is open to all believers who are walking in fellowship and obedience to Christ, and that self-examination should always precede one's observance, which is to commemorate Christ's death. (1 Cor. 11:23-26, 1 John 1:7)

We further believe that water baptism for believers is a scriptural testimony of the believer's inseparable union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection to life. We also believe that baptism is separate from, and subsequent to one's experience of salvation, and is therefore enjoined upon all who are saved as an act of obedience and public confession of the believer's faith in Christ and desire to live in newness of life.

We further believe that the true meaning of baptism is best portrayed by immersion and is therefore the mode practiced in the church. (John 3:23, Acts 8:26-38, 16:33-34, Rom. 6:3-10, Col. 2:12)

#### **Spiritual Gifts and The Ministry**

We believe that the biblical pattern and definition of the ministry of the church is clearly outlined in Ephesians 4:7-12, declaring that God is sovereign in the bestowal of all His gifts.

We further believe that the miraculous "sign" gifts, promised only to unbelieving Israel and performed by the Apostles as confirmation of the Messiah and the Word, subsequently ceased with the national rejection of the Messiah by Israel. Thus, with the completion of the Word, God's full and complete revelation, the temporary need for and function of "sign" gifts no longer existed.

We believe that the gifted offices of evangelists and pastor-teachers are specifically given for the equipping of the saints and that every believer is, at salvation, endowed with such spiritual gifts as will provide edification throughout the body. Spiritual gifts are therefore never for self-edification.

We further believe that the cessation of miraculous "sign" gifts in no way limits or diminishes the power of God to perform miracles and/or healing in answer to the prayer of faith and in accord with God's sovereign will. (Eph. 4:7-16, 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 13:8-10, 14:20-23, Isa. 28:11-13, 1 Cor. 1:22, Heb. 2:3-4, 2 Cor. 12:12, James 5:14-16)

### **The Personality Of Satan**

We believe that Satan is a created being and person, angelic in nature, the author of sin and the cause of the Fall of the human race. He is the open and declared enemy of God, and thus the avowed enemy of believers.

We also believe that Christ Jesus triumphed over Satan and his purpose by means of His death and bodily resurrection, thus making provision for the believer's spiritual triumph over temptation and the power of sin.

We further believe that when God's purpose with Satan is accomplished, he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire. (Job 1:6-7, Isa. 14:12-17, Matt. 4:2-11, Ezek. 28:11-12, Rev. 20:10, 2 Cor. 4:4, 11:14-15, 1 Peter 5:8-9)

### **The Return Of Christ**

We believe in that "blessed hope", the personal, imminent pre-tribulation return of Christ for the taking out (rapture) of His true body of saints making complete our redemption.

We believe that this event of the disappearance of all true believers and the subsequent appearance of the "Man of Sin" (antichrist) will signal the start of a seven year period of "Great Tribulation" on the earth.

This unparalleled time of judgment, especially upon Israel, shall conclude with the glorious return of Jesus Christ with His saints, to establish His long-awaited Kingdom on earth and millennial reign over the nations from the Throne of David in Jerusalem. (1 Thes. 4:13-18, Titus 2:13, 2 Thes. 2:1-2, Acts 1:11, John 14:1-3, Zech. 14:4-11, Rev. 3:10, 19:11-16, 20:1-6, 1 Thes. 1:10, 5:9)

### **The Eternal State**

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all mankind, the saved to eternal life, the unsaved to judgment before God followed by everlasting punishment, forever separated from light, life and God.

We further believe that the souls of unbelievers, following death, remain in conscious misery until the second resurrection which shall unite soul and body for appointed judgment before God at the Great White Throne following a judgment "according to their works", the unsaved shall be consigned to the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer eternal punishment and separation from the presence of God. (Luke 16:19-26, Matt. 25:41-46, 2 Thes. 1:7-9, Matt. 25:41-46, John 5:28-29, 11:26, Jude 6-7, Mark 9:43-45, Rev. 20:5-6, 11-15)

We further believe that at death, the souls of the redeemed are "absent from the body and present with the Lord" where, in conscious bliss, they await the First Resurrection when the soul, spirit and transformed body are gloriously reunited to be forever in the presence of God. (Luke 23:36-43, Rev. 20:4-6, 2 Cor. 5:8, Phil. 1:23, 3:21, 1 Thes. 4:16-17)

## ARTICLE III – GOVERNMENT

### Section A – Authority and Responsibility

The ultimate authority for the operation of the church resides in the true Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Elder Board shall have the responsibility for the oversight and direction of all the ministries of the church, including the pulpit ministry, the finances and the facilities, and shall consist of at least three qualified elders, the Pastor-Teacher and Associate Pastors. The Board will also appoint Deacons to conduct certain temporal ministries of the church.

As a non-profit corporation and for the purpose of legal standing with the State, there shall be a Board of Directors, whose officers shall consist of at least a President, the Pastor-Teacher, a Secretary and a Treasurer. These offices shall be filled by members of the Elder Board. If, due to attrition, it becomes necessary to replace one of the officers of the Board of Directors, the Elder Board shall fill the vacancy.

### Section B - Congregation

#### 1. Responsibility

When assembling as a body in a properly called business session, and in accord with the procedures outlined in this Constitution, the congregation shall be responsible to prayerfully determine the mind of Christ with regard to the following:

- The approval of new Pastoral staff
- The approval of new Elders
- The discipline of members
- The purchase of property and facilities
- The adoption of an annual budget

All other business shall be administered by the Elder Board.

#### 2. Business Meetings

##### A. Business Meetings

The congregation shall normally convene at least once annually.

##### 1. Order:

In all business meetings, the Scriptural admonition of 1 Cor. 14:40 shall be the basis for order and procedure. A quorum for any official business meeting of the church shall be one half ( 50%) of the eligible voting membership, plus one.

##### 2. Approval:

Any item voted on in any duly held business meeting shall be considered passed if the vote tally is at least two thirds (66%) of the voting membership in attendance, with the exception of voting to call or dismiss a Pastor-Teacher, where the vote must be at least three quarters (75%) in favor to be passed.

##### B. Annual Church Family Meeting

The annual business meeting shall be held in January.

##### 1. Chairman:

The Elder Board shall decide who will chair the business meeting.

##### 2. Approval of Church Leadership:

The congregation shall vote to approve any new Pastoral staff or Elders recommended by the Elder Board.

##### 3. Annual Reports

The annual reports shall be given from the Pastoral staff, church Treasurer and other staff, department or committee heads as deemed necessary.

## Section C - Church Leadership

### 1. Pastoral Staff

#### A. Pastor-Teacher

The Pastor-Teacher, as called and gifted of God, shall be recognized as the God-appointed shepherd of the flock and, as an elder, shall function in the spiritual oversight of the total church ministry.

#### B. Other Staff Positions

The Elder Board shall determine and recommend to the congregation any additional staff the church should need, such as associate pastor, youth pastor, minister of music, education, etc. All such staff shall be approved by the congregation at a duly called business meeting.

### 2. The Search for a Pastor-Teacher

#### A. Pastoral Search Committee

The Elder Board shall either serve as, or otherwise appoint from the elders, a Pastoral Search Committee of not less than three and not more than five men who shall investigate and locate prospective candidates for the vacancy. For informational purposes, the Committee may ask additional members of the church to assist in this process.

#### B. Pastoral Candidates

Any candidate considered must be a godly man of good report with satisfactory theological training and experience. He must also be a person of high moral reputation with evident spiritual discernment, possessing the spiritual gifts of teaching and shepherding. All candidates must be in total agreement with the doctrine, purpose and philosophy of ministry of the church as outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws.

#### C. Procedure for calling a Pastor-Teacher

1. The procedure shall be for the congregation to hear and observe at least two men before voting on any actual candidate.
2. The Elder Board shall be authorized to recommend a man for candidacy and a three quarters (75%) approval of the Elder Board shall be sufficient to proceed with an invitation to candidate.
3. A pastoral candidate shall receive a call to become pastor of the church upon receiving at least a three quarters (75%) majority vote of congregational approval by the eligible membership present and voting at a duly called business meeting.
4. Voting on a candidate shall be by secret ballot.
5. Upon acceptance of the call, the church shall enter into written agreement with the new pastor as to job-description, responsibilities in general, salary, vacation and any other benefits provided. Such an agreement shall be drawn up by the Elder Board and approved by the congregation.

#### D. Procedure for Pastoral Termination

The pastoral relationship may be dissolved for the following reasons:

##### 1. Resignation

Upon the resignation of a pastor, he shall have the responsibility of giving to the congregation one month's notice of such intent, unless otherwise agreed upon mutually with the Elder Board.

##### 2. Dismissal

- a. The pastor shall be given clear, written and scriptural grounds for dismissal, relative to his moral and spiritual qualifications and/or quality of ministry to the church body by the Elder Board.
- b. Dismissal may be initiated either by a unanimous vote of the elders or by a special duly called congregational meeting by written petition, submitted to the Elder Board and signed by at least one half (50%) of the voting membership.

- c. A three quarters (75%) majority of the voting membership shall be required for the termination of the pastor at said meeting, and in such a case, at the discretion of the congregation, the pastor shall be entitled to one month's salary and any other current benefits after the date established for his termination.

E. Pastoral Responsibility

1. Oversight

As the shepherd and an elder, the Pastor-Teacher shall have the general oversight of the total ministry of the church. Such oversight shall be in cooperation with the elders who also are God-appointed.

2. Spiritual Instruction

As Pastor-Teacher, he is responsible for the spiritual feeding of the flock and nurturing in general by means of his spiritual gifts of teaching and preaching along with oversight of the teaching ministry of the church educational program.

3. Congregational Watchcare

Along with the elders, the Pastor-Teacher is responsible for the protection of the congregation, both from internal and external sources that would be disruptive, detrimental or doctrinally unsound. He shall regularly administer the ordinances, be generally responsible for conducting the regular services of the church and shall represent the congregation in extending the right hand of fellowship to new members.

4. Ministry Development And Outreach

The Pastor-Teacher shall recommend to the Elder Board the appointment of such ministries and committees as deemed important to the growth and effectiveness of the total church ministry. The pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all such ministries and committees, serving in the capacity of advisor and consultant.

### 3. Elders

A. General Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the elders to assist the Pastor-Teacher in the general oversight and spiritual care of the congregation, to guard the purity of doctrine and life of the church and to lead by example in the spiritual walk and witness of the believers.

B. Specific Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities above, the elders shall assist the overall ministry in the following areas:

1. Hearing the testimony of those applying for membership
2. Administering the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper
3. The reception and dismissal of members
4. Counseling and giving instruction to those in need
5. Comforting those who are afflicted
6. Calling on the sick and those delinquent in attendance
7. Reviewing the church attendance rolls at least annually
8. Providing for pulpit supply in the absence of the pastor
9. Discipline of members in accordance with the Scriptures
10. General supervision of all church organizations such as missions, youth ministries, Sunday School, etc.
11. The distribution of benevolent funds

C. Qualifications of Elders

The Pastor and Elder Board, with the approval of the membership, shall select as elders, only active male members. These men must be in total agreement with the Statement Of Doctrine, Articles of Faith, purpose and philosophy of ministry, as well as demonstrate the qualities listed in 1 Timothy 3:2-7. The number of elders actively serving on the Elder Board shall be proportionate to the size of the active

membership, the recommended proportion being a minimum of three (3) elders for every 100 members, when such qualified men are available and willing to serve in the position of elder.

**D. Term of Office**

Those men recognized by the congregation as being qualified for eldership shall serve an active term of three years on the Elder Board. Each year, at least one elder shall rotate off the board and that person shall remain off the board for at least one year. Those men not actively serving on the Elder Board shall yet be recognized and respected as men with spiritual stature. If no more than 3 members are recognized as Elders, the Elder Board shall remain the same until such a time as new Elders are selected.

**E. Procedure Of Selection**

1. The Elder Board, in considering the leadership needs of the church, shall prepare a list of qualified members for the office of elder, following the procedures listed below:
  - A. Prayerful consideration by the Elder Board
  - B. Personal contact with each nominee as to his desire to serve. An answer is to be given only after at least two weeks for prayer and spiritual discernment as to God's leading.
  - C. A review of biblical passages with the nominee as to the ministry and qualifications of eldership
2. The list of candidates shall then be presented to the congregation for their approval. Upon approval, the new elders shall be publicly recognized and installed at a regular Sunday service.

**F. Removal Of Elders**

1. An elder may be removed from his eldership during the year by a vote of the congregation at a duly called business meeting. A two thirds (66%) majority vote shall be required for removal.
2. In the event of the discipline of an elder, he shall not have a vote in his own case but shall be allowed ample defense before the congregation.
3. Discipline of elders must be in accordance with the Biblical principles stated in Article IV, Section F of these By-Laws.

**4. Elder Board**

**A. Membership**

The Elder Board shall consist of the Pastor-Teacher, Associate Pastors and the Elders. Other pastoral staff or ministry leaders may be asked to attend Elder Board meetings as deemed appropriate by the Board, but will not participate in voting at the meetings. A chairman shall be elected from among the elders. The Pastor-Teacher shall serve as the vice chairman, assuming the duties of the chairman should the chairman be unable to serve in that capacity at any elder meeting.

**B. Responsibilities.**

In addition to the oversight and direction of all ministries of the church, the Elder Board shall appoint a Secretary and a Treasurer for the church, as outlined in Section C, Paragraph 1. The Secretary shall compile and publish the minutes of both the Board and congregational meetings. The Treasurer shall have oversight of the church's finances and, along with one other elder selected by the Board, have the authority to sign contracts, real property transactions and other legal instruments for the church. The Board shall also appoint Deacons as stated in Article III, Section A of this Constitution.

**5. Communications and Reports**

In order to establish and maintain clear communication within the church body, the following guidelines shall apply:

- A. All minutes of the Elder Board meetings shall be posted on the church bulletin board as soon as possible after the meeting. The Board may, from time to time, decide to meet in Executive Session, consisting of the Elders only. The minutes of those meetings need not be published.
- B. Periodic reports shall be given orally in order to update and explain all major items of church business conducted.
- C. Regular financial reports shall be provided by the treasurer to the Elder Board on a monthly basis, and to the congregation at least once, at the annual Church Family Business Meeting in January.
- D. Other reports shall be given at the Annual Church Family Business Meeting by the Elder Board, pastoral staff, ministry leaders and department chairmen.

## 6. Church Policy Statement

A Church Policy Statement, containing operational procedures for the church and Board, shall be developed by the Elder Board. The Board shall update the policy as needed. Such policy must be in conformity with all other provisions that are contained within this constitution and by-laws. The following list indicates areas where policy is needed:

- A. Committees
- B. Staff positions
- C. Serving ministries
- D. Financial procedures
- E. Missions policy and support
- F. Church discipline
- G. Use of church facilities
- H. Weddings, receptions, showers, etc.

## 7. Deacons

- A. **Qualifications Of Deacons**  
All candidates for deacon must be considered for the office in the light of the biblical qualifications clearly outlined in I Timothy 3:8-13. Also, each candidate may qualify only after he has proven himself, by life and example, a man of good report as taught in 1 Timothy 3:10.
- B. **Selection and Number of Deacons**  
All deacons shall be appointed by the Elder Board. The number appointed shall be according to the quantity deemed necessary for the effective and efficient operation of the church ministries and responsibilities.
- C. **Responsibility of Deacons**  
The deacons shall be accountable to the Elder Board and therefore shall meet regularly with the Board for prayer, as well as continuity of purpose, goals and assignments. Generally, deacons shall be responsible for the upkeep of the church property and facilities. Other areas of ministry and responsibility shall be defined by the Board.
- D. **Tenure of Deacons**  
The term of service for deacons shall be three years. Rotation of the deacons shall be the same as for elders.
- E. **Organization**
  - 1. A Chairman and a Secretary of Deacons shall be selected annually at their first meeting of the year.
  - 2. The deacons shall convene regularly as a group for prayer and planning. All major projects shall be subject to the approval of the Elder Board.

3. Minutes shall be kept of all meetings by the Secretary and promptly posted on the Church bulletin board and given to the Elder Board.
4. A quorum for the transaction of business shall be 2/3 (66%) of the group.

F. Removal Of Deacons

A deacon may be removed from office by a unanimous vote of the Elder Board at an Elder Board meeting.

## **ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section A – The Purpose Of Membership**

1. Membership in the Body of Christ is the privilege and possession of every believer who has received Jesus Christ by faith as personal Savior.
2. Therefore, as the Body of Christ is localized into orderly fellowships or congregations, under the guidance and authoritative leadership of pastors and elders, it is essential for the sake of unity, spiritual edification and accountability, that we voluntarily and mutually submit ourselves one to another as well as to the doctrinal and governmental guidelines of Holy Scripture as adopted within this constitution.
3. We therefore acknowledge Jesus Christ as the true Head and Shepherd of the church, which is His Body, and further, we acknowledge the Holy Scriptures as the foundational basis for body life, fellowship, function and service.
4. We therefore welcome any and all born-again believers who desire to be added to the local body in the aforementioned spirit of loving cooperation, submission, devotion and service to the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Section B – Qualifications for Membership**

1. Statement of one's personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, given to at least two elders.
2. Be in complete agreement with the Articles Of Faith in this constitution, Article II. Section B.
3. Have no fundamental disagreement with the Statement Of Doctrine and a willingness not to propagate doctrines that are contrary to it.
4. Not be involved in any sin that would disgrace the name of Christ nor discredit the testimony of the church family.
5. Be at least 16 years of age.

### **Section C – Procedure for Membership**

1. The Elders are responsible for interviewing all those who request membership with the following objectives:
  - a. Hear the personal testimony of salvation.
  - b. Witness the consent of the candidate(s) to abide by those mutual responsibilities as outlined above as to the purpose of membership.
2. Those who give testimony and consent are accepted as members, to be received into fellowship in a subsequent worship service.
3. Although Believer's Baptism is not specifically required for membership, it is for the sake of one's public confession of faith and testimony, an act of important obedience to Christ and therefore urged upon all believers.

### **Section D – Removal from Membership**

1. A member shall be removed from membership for any of the following reasons:
  - A. Death
  - B. Joining another church
  - C. Requesting that their name be removed
  - D. Absence from the worship services for six months or longer without a valid reason (Please note Section E., 3)
  - E. Church Discipline (Please note Section F)

### **Section E – Review Of The Membership Roll**

1. The Elder Board shall be responsible for an annual review of the church membership roll.
2. Names considered for removal because of inactivity shall be removed only after effort has been made to restore individuals to active fellowship and participation.

### **Section F – Church Discipline**

1. Church discipline shall be administered only in cases where clear scriptural grounds are apparent.
2. The procedure shall follow the biblical principles for church discipline give in Galatians 6:1, Matthew 18:15-20 and 1 Corinthians 5 and shall require a unanimous vote of the Elder Board. EXCEPTION: When a member of the Elder Board or one of his immediate family is being considered.

### **Section G – Members in Absentia**

Regular members of this church who move from the area for reasons such as missionary service, military service, college, etc. may choose to retain their membership, but shall be considered as Members in Absentia during their absence. If they are present during a duly called business meeting, they may vote on any matters coming before the congregation.

### **Section H – Membership Responsibility and Commitment**

Because the local church is a living organism, and as redeemed saints, we are "members one of another" in the Body of Christ, certain responsibilities are incumbent upon all members in order that the body life and ministry be healthy, credible, enjoyable and functional. Among those responsibilities and commitments are:

- Faithfulness and diligence in attendance (Heb 10:25)
- Individual involvement in activities (Eph 4:15-16)
- Live out Christ's admonition to be salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16)
- Consistency in love and prayer for one another (1 Pet 1:22)
- Determination to preserve the unity (Eph 4:3)
- Avoid grumbling and an argumentative spirit (Phil 2:14)
- Speak only to the edification of the body (Eph 4:29-32)

### **ARTICLE V - ORDINATION AND LICENSING**

In the providence of God, men are called out of the congregation to devote themselves full-time to the ministry of preaching the gospel. In such cases, it will be the privilege and responsibility of the church to duly examine, approve and ordain candidates who qualify and who also meet the requirements as established by the Elder Board.

**ARTICLE VI – DISSOLUTION**

In the event of dissolution, the residual assets of the organization will be turned over to one or more organizations which themselves are exempt as organizations described in Sections 501 (c) (3) and 170 (c) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or corresponding sections of any prior or future law, or to the federal, state, or local government for exclusive public purpose. Such organizations shall be selected by the Elder Board and approved by the voting membership at a duly held church business meeting.

**ARTICLE VII – AMMENDMENTS**

- A. Amendments cannot be made to the preamble (Purpose), Article II ( Doctrinal Statement) or Article VII (Amendments) of this Constitution and By-Laws.
- B. All other portions may be revised and amended when deemed necessary or advisable by the Elder Board and approved by the voting membership at a duly called business meeting. Voting shall be by a show of hands, and recorded by the Church Secretary.