



**TIMBERLAKE**  
BAPTIST CHURCH

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE .....3  
PREAMBLE .....3  
ARTICLE I—NAME, LOCATION AND PURPOSE.....4  
ARTICLE II—DEFINITION .....4  
ARTICLE III—MODE OF GOVERNMENT.....4  
ARTICLE IV—CONFESSION OF FAITH AND COVENANT .....5  
ARTICLE V—PRACTICES OF FAITH .....11  
ARTICLE VI—CHURCH OFFICERS .....17  
ARTICLE VII—MEMBERSHIP .....25  
ARTICLE VIII—MEETINGS.....27  
ARTICLE IX—ORDINANCES.....28  
ARTICLE X—COMMITTEES.....29  
ARTICLE XI—TAX-EXEMPT PROVISIONS AND PROPERTY .....29  
ARTICLE XII—ASSOCIATIONS .....31  
ARTICLE XIII—ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS .....32

## THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF TIMBERLAKE BAPTIST CHURCH

Adopted by the membership on October 21, 1943. Revised by the membership on June 16, 1957, July 16, 2003, and on November 15, 2020.

### PREFACE

There are many good reasons why a New Testament church should have a Constitution. It can greatly assist us in the efforts of biblically organizing and conducting the ministries, which have been entrusted to us by our Head, Jesus Christ. It must be readily acknowledged, however, that this document, despite its usefulness and precision, will avail nothing apart from the presence and power of the Spirit of God operating through the Scriptures in our church. It is with this keen awareness of our absolute dependence upon our great God that this constitution is set forth.

### PREAMBLE

We, the membership of this church, desiring under God's blessing to prosper and sustain spiritual growth in our church; to establish ourselves in Christ and faithfulness to the Scriptures; and to enjoy the maximum harmony in all local church endeavors and business procedures, do hereby adopt and set in operation this Constitution and Bylaws.

## ARTICLE I—NAME, LOCATION AND PURPOSE

- A. NAME: This congregation of believers is named and shall be known as: **TIMBERLAKE BAPTIST CHURCH**
- B. LOCATION: Timberlake Baptist Church is located in the County of Campbell, Commonwealth of Virginia, at 21395 Timberlake Road, Lynchburg, Virginia 24502.
- C. PURPOSE
1. This congregation is organized as a church, defined in ARTICLE II, 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 Code or Law), including, but not limited to, the establishment and maintaining of religious worship, the building, maintaining, and operating of churches, parsonages, schools, chapels, radio stations, rescue missions, print shops, day-care centers, camps and nursing homes.
  2. This church exists to glorify God by being a church that adheres to the directives given to it in Scripture (Eph. 4:12), by making disciples through Gospel proclamation and teaching the whole counsel of God, by training future leaders of the church, and by sending those who have been trained to reproduce healthy churches in all nations for the sake of His name. This church shall also ordain and license men to the Gospel ministry.

## ARTICLE II—DEFINITION

For purpose of clarification in principle and operation, our church shall adhere to the view that “a church is a company of believers in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross and His bodily resurrection from the dead, baptized by immersion on a credible confession of faith; having New Testament officers of Elders and deacons; perpetuating the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper; self-governing in polity; voluntarily banding together for worship, teaching, fellowship, church discipline, and the world-wide proclamation of the Gospel.” Its purpose is further expressed in the Church Covenant and ARTICLE I. C. “PURPOSE.”

## ARTICLE III—MODE OF GOVERNMENT

The government of this church is vested in the body of active believers who compose it and is executed by the Elders as provided in this Constitution. This church shall not be subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical body. This church shall be in respect to its affairs self-governing.

## ARTICLE IV—CONFESSION OF FAITH AND COVENANT

The doctrines of this church shall be in conformity with those generally accepted by historic Baptist churches and expressed in the Confession of Faith and Covenant.

### A. CONFESSION OF FAITH

#### 1. The Scriptures

We believe in the verbal, plenary (full, entire, complete) inspiration of the Bible, which is the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16). We believe that it was composed by human authors who were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:19-21) and without any error in the original documents (Matt. 5:18; John 10:35). The Scriptures are sufficient and without lack of anything needed for salvation, faith, life, and godliness (Deut. 29:29; Ps. 119:1; Prov. 30:6; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). In its truthfulness and completeness, the Bible is the only criterion and infallible standard and authority of both church and individual for faith and practice (Ps. 18:30; 19:7; Matt. 24:35; Rom. 9:6).

#### 2. God

We believe that there is only one (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:5, 18-22; Gal. 3:20) true and living God (1 Thess. 1:9) who is spirit (John 4:24), self-existent (Ex. 3:14), self-sufficient (Acts 17:24-25), the creator of the universe (Isa. 45:18), sovereign over all creation (1 Tim. 6:15), and infinite and unchanging in His perfections and all His attributes (Jas. 1:17).

We believe that God exists eternally in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each person of the Godhead being of the same substance, fully equal in perfection, attributes, and deity (Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14), yet they are distinct from one another and unique as to role and office (Ezek. 36:27; John 7:39; 14:16-27; 15:26; 1 Cor. 8:6; 15:28; Phil. 2:6; Heb. 1:2; 1 John 4:14).

We believe that God created the universe in six literal, twenty-four-hour periods (Gen. 1:31; Ex. 20:11). He created all things from nothing and continues to sustain His creation by the power of His word (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 33:6; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:2-3; 11:3).

#### 3. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

We believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. He exists eternally as the Son of God, being in perfect fellowship with (John 1:1-2; 3:35) and coequal to God the Father (John 10:30; Phil. 2:6). As the Son, He perfectly reveals the person of the Father (John 1:18; 14:9; Phil. 2:6; Heb. 1:3), and He perfectly submits to the Father as the agent who would accomplish the Father's plans of creation (1 Cor.

8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2) and redemption (John 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:28; Phil. 2:8-11; 1 John 4:14).

We believe in His virgin birth through the Holy Spirit (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35), by which the Son of God became the God-man (1 Tim. 2:5). In the incarnation (John 1:14), God the Son became truly man and like mankind in every way (Rom. 8:3; Phil. 2:7-8), with the exception of sin (Heb. 2:14, 17; 4:15). He put off the exercise of His divine attributes for His own advantage (Phil. 2:6-7), yet neither putting off nor ceasing to be just as truly God as before His incarnation (John 20:28; Phil. 2:7). As the God-man, He is the clearest and fullest revelation of God to mankind (John 1:18; Heb. 1:1-3) and the only mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5).

We believe that Jesus Christ accomplished redemption through His sinless life, His death on the cross, and His bodily resurrection from the dead (Rom. 3:25; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil. 2:8; 1 John 4:14). Through His death, He acted as a perfect substitute for sinners (Isa. 53:4-5; Matt. 20:28; Rom. 5:6-8; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21), of His own volition (Isa. 53:7; John 10:18; Phil. 2:8), fully satisfying the wrath of His Father (Isa. 53:10-12; Rom. 3:25) and securing God's favor and all the blessings of the New Covenant for His people (Ezek. 36:25-27; Luke 22:20; John 10:15).

We believe in Christ's bodily resurrection from the grave on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3), through which He was vindicated as the Son of God (Rom. 1:4), accepted as a sufficient sacrifice (Rom. 4:25), and thereby secured the future resurrection of all believers (Rom. 6:5; 1 Pet. 1:3).

We believe in Jesus' ascension to the right hand of God where He "always lives to make intercession" for believers (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1).

We believe in the personal, visible, imminent, and premillennial return of Jesus Christ to the earth at the end of this age (Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16-17).

#### 4. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person (Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:10-11), existing eternally (Heb. 9:14) and co-equal with God the Father and God the Son in all of His perfections and attributes (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14).

We believe that in this age all that He does is unto the glory of Jesus Christ (John 7:39; 16:14). He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11); He is the sovereign agent in regeneration (John 3:8; 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 3:6; Titus 3:5), and He baptizes all believers into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-14). He indwells believers (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 5:18) in order to progressively transform them into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Thess. 4:7-8); He assists believers to understand and appropriate the Scriptures (1 Cor. 2:14-

16; 1 John 2:20, 27); He equips believers with all the gifts necessary for the building up of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:4-6, 11; 14:12; Eph. 4:7-12), and He seals believers unto the day of redemption (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:13-14).

We believe that the gifts of apostleship, prophecy, speaking in tongues, and the interpretation of tongues all served a foundational role in the establishment of the church and are no longer needed today (Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 14:5; Acts 2:6-18). We also believe that gifts of healings and the working of miracles were for the purpose of authenticating the Apostles and the Gospel message; they have ceased and are not operating in the church today (Acts 5:12; 2 Cor. 2:12; Heb. 2:4). This does not mean, however, that God does not and cannot still work miracles and heal individuals as He wills in answer to prayer (Jas. 5:14-15).

#### 5. Satan

We believe in the reality and personality of Satan; that he is a created being; and that through pride he fell. He is a liar and murderer (John 8:44); he is the “god of this world who blinds the minds of unbelievers” (Matt. 13:19; 2 Cor. 4:4), and he is the “prince of the power of the air who is now at work in the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2). The judgment, which has already been passed on him (John 12:31), will be completely executed at the revelation of Jesus Christ, and he will ultimately be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10).

#### 6. Man

We believe that man was created by God in His own image (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7), not by evolution, but by a special act of creation, and that this creative act of God was separate and distinct from any other work of God. Mankind was created in order to enjoy the presence of God (Gen. 3:8; Ps. 16:11; Rev. 21:3), fellowship with God (1 John 1:3), and fulfill the purposes of God (Gen. 1:28-30), all for the glory of God (Num. 14:21; Isa. 43:7).

We believe that mankind fell from this condition of innocence and fellowship with God through the disobedience of Adam (Gen. 3:1-19). Although mankind still bears the image of God, that image has nevertheless been greatly marred as the image of Adam has also been passed on to his descendants (Gen. 5:1-32; Rom. 5:12-13; Eph. 2:1-3). The result of Adam’s sin was spiritual and physical death for himself and his offspring (Gen. 2:17; 3:22-24; 5:1-31; Rom. 5:12).

Mankind’s condition is now one of total depravity, such that (while a person does not commit all the sin one is capable of) each person is unceasingly and entirely—in mind, will, and emotions—corrupted by sin (Gen. 6:5), by nature a rebel against God (Ps. 51:5; Eph. 2:1-3), thoroughly unable and unwilling to submit to God (Rom. 8:7-8; 1 Cor. 2:14), and having not a single good work which is not stained by sin (Rom. 3:10-18, 23; 14:23). As such, mankind stands under the just wrath of God (John 3:36; Rom. 1:18), with no way to appease it or to alter his

own condition. Thus, apart from grace, mankind is hopelessly lost (Gal. 3:22; Eph. 2:1-3, 12).

## 7. Salvation

We believe that salvation is received on the basis of grace alone, through faith alone, in the finished work of Christ alone (John 3:18, 36; Rom. 3:22, 26) and apart from any human merit (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). This faith expresses itself in repentance from sin (Acts 2:38; 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10), dependence on the substitutionary work of Christ (Isa. 53:4-5; John 3:14-15; Gal. 3:13-14), submission to Christ as Lord (Rom. 10:9-10), and reliance wholly upon the mercy and grace of God (Ps. 51:1; Luke 18:13-14; Rom. 3:22; 4:5-6). All those who express such faith are justified— instantaneously declared righteous before God (Rom. 4:3-4; 5:1; 8:33). This declaration is based on the imputation of the righteous record of Christ to the sinner’s account (Phil. 3:9) and the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ in the sinner’s place (Isa. 53:11; Rom. 3:24-25; 2 Cor. 5:21). In this way, God “justifies the ungodly” (Rom. 4:5) and is both “just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:26).

We believe that true saving faith manifests itself in righteous fruit and a changed life. While a believer is instantaneously declared righteous through justification, he progressively becomes changed into the righteous image of Christ through sanctification (2 Cor. 3:18). Righteous fruit is not optional but is the essential evidence that one possesses genuine faith and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:37; Rom. 2:6-11, 25-29; Phil 1:10-11; 2 Pet. 1:11).

We believe that all “who name the name of Christ” as their Savior should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon His name. We believe that separation from all religious apostasy and sinful practices is commanded by God and the pursuit of holiness ought to characterize the life of a believer (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1, 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

We believe that growth in holiness is possible through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:1-14) and is experienced as a believer lives by faith in God’s Word (Prov. 3:5-6; Gal. 2:20; 3:1-3), puts forth every effort (2 Pet. 1:5), and avails himself of the means of grace. While sinless perfection will not be attained in this life, and indwelling sin will continue to war against a believer to the day of his death (Rom. 7:21-25; Gal. 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:11), genuine victory over sinful actions and desires can be experienced (Rom. 8:9-16), by renewing the mind and learning to live obediently (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:10).

We believe that perseverance in the faith is essential for eternal life (Matt. 10:22; Col. 1:23; Rev. 3:10) and is the decisive evidence of true saving faith (John 8:31; Heb. 3:14). Moreover, we believe that all who truly belong to Christ will be sustained and kept by God’s power (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:30-39; Phil. 1:6; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; Jude 1, 24). Therefore, believers should rejoice in full



assurance of their salvation and that such assurance may be theirs as they persevere in their confession of the Gospel and obedience to the truth (1 John 1:5-10; 2:23-25, 29; 2 Pet. 1:10).

We believe that those who continue in impenitence and unbelief in the Gospel experience no part of the salvation just described but remain under God's wrath (John 3:18; 36). We reject any form of annihilation. We believe in the grave reality of the everlasting conscious suffering of all unbelievers (Isa. 66:24; Mark 9:48; Luke 16:25; Rev. 14:11).

#### 8. Civil Governments

We believe that civil governments are of Divine appointment for the interests of good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed except in things opposed to the will of God as expressed in His Word and interpreted in the light of this Constitution and Confession and Practices of Faith (Rom. 13:1-7; Tit. 3:1; I Pet. 2:13-14, 17).

#### 9. The Church

We believe that the church is the fulfillment of God's eternal plan in Christ (Eph. 3:9, 11), through which His infinite wisdom is put on display to the universe (Eph. 3:10), His character is reflected, and His Gospel is made visible. Therefore, the church exists as a primary means whereby God and Christ are eternally glorified (Eph. 3:21; 2 Cor. 8:23).

We believe that the church is the bride of Christ (Rev. 19:7-8) which He loved (Eph. 5:25-27) and obtained with His own blood (Acts 20:28); it is the body of Christ in which all have equal standing and access to the Father by the Spirit (Eph. 2:18; 1 Cor. 12:12-14); Christ is its head, bringing the whole body in conformity to His image (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15; Col. 1:18); and it is the temple in which God dwells through His Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:21-22).

We believe every true believer is a member of Christ's body through the Spirit (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12-13). Yet Christ's body is manifested in local assemblies (Acts 14:27; 20:17, 28), in which believers commit themselves to one another, submit themselves to godly leaders (1 Tim. 3:1-13), and regularly gather for fellowship, preaching, worship, and observing the ordinances.

We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control (Acts 13:1-3; Rom. 16:1, 4; I Pet. 5:1-4).

We believe that the church ought to preach and teach the whole counsel of God (Matt. 28:20; Acts 20:27; 2 Tim. 4:2), build itself up into Christ's image (Eph. 4:12-16), pursue love, unity, and holiness (John 13:35; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:1-6), practice church discipline (Matt. 18:5-14; 1 Cor. 5:6-13), and spread the Gospel to the world (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42).

We believe that the church ought to be led by godly elders (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) who teach (Titus 1:9), model (Titus 2:7), and oversee the flock (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). And it should be served by godly deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-13) who model humility and servanthood and care for the temporal needs of the saints (Acts 6:3-6). In submission to God's Word, the congregation acts as the final court of appeals in matters of dispute, especially in regard to doctrine and church discipline (Matt. 16:19; 18:17; Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Cor. 2:6-7).

We recognize water baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper as the Scriptural ordinances of obedience for the church of this age (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; Acts 2:41; Acts 8:36-38).

#### 10. The Lord's Return

We believe in the bodily, personal, imminent, premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ to receive His church unto Himself (1 Thess. 4:17) and give believers glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15:50-52; 1 Thess. 4:15-16).

We believe Jesus Christ will come with His church to the earth to judge the living nations and set up His Millennial Kingdom (Matt. 25:31-46; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; Rev. 19:11-21).

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men: the saved to eternal life and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28-29, 11:25-26; Rev. 20:5-6, 12-13).

We believe that this creation will be destroyed once more in judgment (2 Pet. 3:10-12) through which God will bring forth a new and transformed Heavens and Earth in which only righteousness dwells (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1). God will then dwell in unhindered fellowship with His redeemed people for eternity (Rev. 21:3-4, 15-27), thus fulfilling His purpose in creation (Gen. 1-2).

#### B. CHURCH COVENANT

Our church covenant states in what manner the members of Timberlake Baptist Church have agreed to live and function together as a church since its original establishment in 1943:

1. Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.
2. We engage 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 promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

3. We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting and sinful anger; to abstain from drunkenness; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.
4. We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; and to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.
5. We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

#### C. AUTHORITY OF THE CONFESSION OF FAITH AND COVENANT

1. The Confession of Faith and Covenant do not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible, itself, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the Confession of Faith and Covenant accurately represent the teaching of the Bible.
2. Differences in interpretation of the Confession of Faith and Covenant are resolved using the Bible. The Elders shall oversee the interpretation of the Scriptures in order to establish the doctrinal positions of this church.

### ARTICLE V—PRACTICES OF FAITH

#### A. STATEMENTS ON GENDER, MARRIAGE, FAMILY, AND SEXUALITY

##### 1. HUMAN GENDER

We believe that each human being is created in the image of God as either male or female, a gender that is encoded genetically and manifested physiologically prior to birth. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. Any effort to violate the creative order of

God by attempting to modify or transform human gender or biological sex is sin (Gen. 2:18, 24-25).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). 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 this church. Genuine love manifests itself by graciously urging people to acknowledge and repent of their sin and to receive the redemption and restoration which God offers to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Prov. 28:13; Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 12:9; 1 Cor 6:9-11).

## 2. MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen 2:18-25). Therefore, this church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Since marriage is biblically defined as between one man and one woman, all other unions are sinful, including homosexual or polygamous unions.

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). Sexual sin includes, but is not limited to, inordinate sexual desires (Col. 3:5-6), premarital sexual relations, extramarital sexual relations, homosexual or bisexual conduct, bestiality, incestuous relations, pornography, and pedophilia (Lev. 18:22-23; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Tim. 1:10). All such sexual immorality is sinful and an offense to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10). Persons engaged in such sin, like all other people, should be called to turn from their sin and seek forgiveness through repentance and faith in Christ. Any member that engages in an unrepentant expression of gender, marriage, or sexuality that is contrary to the Bible’s teaching shall be subject to church discipline.

## 3. DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

We believe that God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between a man, a woman, and Himself (Prov. 2:17; Mal. 2:14-15). Marriage was designed by God as an arena in which His covenant love—ultimately demonstrated in Christ’s sacrificial love for the church—might be put on visible display (Eph. 5:22-33). God, therefore, hates divorce and intends for marriage to last until the death of one’s spouse (Mal. 2:11-17; Matt. 19:4-9; Rom. 7:1-3).

Sin, however, often harms God’s good design for marriage and causes difficulty within the relationship. Yet, regardless of any sin in the marriage, reconciliation

and forgiveness should always be pursued owing to the gravity of this covenant (Prov. 2:17), God's great mercy shown to believers (Matt. 18:23-35; Eph. 4:32-5:2), God's command to love even one's enemies (Matt. 5:43-44), and the model of God Himself freely loving and forgiving His adulteress bride (Hos. 3:1; 11:8-9; 14:4).

Scripture on some occasions does provide limited grounds for divorce: adultery (Matt. 5:32; 19:9) and abandonment by an unbelieving spouse (1 Cor. 7:15). In such cases, the believing spouse is free to remarry (1 Cor. 7:12-16). There may be other sufficient grounds to warrant the separation (either temporary or long-term) of one spouse from another. These include, but are not limited to, physical and sexual abuse. Divorce and remarriage for any other reason is equivalent to committing adultery (Matt. 5:32; 19:9).

Since the reasons and causes for divorce are complex, the consideration of persons for the offices of Elder or deacon will be made on a case by case basis by the Elders and the congregation. Evident sexual and marital faithfulness of a man to his wife is a primary qualification for the offices of Elder and deacon (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6).

#### 4. GENDER ROLES AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

We believe that men and women possess equal value and dignity as image bearers of God (Gen. 1:27) and are equal partners in the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Nevertheless, they possess distinct roles and functions in the home and the church.

The husband is to be the spiritual leader of the home and the head of his wife (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23). As the head, he is to lead through sacrificial love and service to his wife and his home (Matt. 20:25; John 13:12-16; Eph. 5:25; Col. 3:19). He bears the ultimate responsibility and accountability before God for the spiritual and physical health, wellbeing, and direction of the home. Likewise, men are to be leaders of the church.

The wife is to submit herself to the headship of her husband just as the church submits to Christ (Eph. 5:24; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1-7). The role of a wife is to lovingly support and help her husband fulfill his role as head of the home (Gen. 2:18-20; Titus 2:4-5). She is to manage and care for the daily affairs and needs of the home (Prov. 31:10-27; 1 Tim. 5:14). Likewise, women are not to exercise any spiritual authority over men in the church (1 Tim. 2:12-15).

Both father and mother bear the responsibility for the spiritual instruction and discipline of their children (Deut. 6:4-9; Prov. 1:8; 6:20; 10:1; Eph. 6:4), leading them through consistent lifetime example (Prov. 4:1-2, 10-11) and appropriate discipline (Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 23:13-14), with the goal that they would be made "wise for salvation through faith in Christ" (2 Tim. 3:15).

## B. ADDITIONAL CONVICTIONS

### 1. HUMAN LIFE

We believe human life is sacred. It is given by God and is not to be taken by another in the absence of scriptural justification (Gen. 1:26; Ex. 20:13; Matt. 5:21). We believe that God grants authority for taking life in self-defense, national conflict, and by duly-directed capital punishment following the process of lawful trial and sentence by the state (Rom. 13:1-4). Having accepted the Bible as our guide for faith and practice, we believe that it teaches that the sacredness of human life extends from conception until natural or accidental death (Ps. 139:13-16; Luke 1:41, 44). Accordingly, we believe that abortion violates the Word of God and should not be practiced (Ex. 1:15-22). We also believe, by authority of the Bible, that euthanasia is a violation of God's Word and not to be practiced. We are therefore called to work for the defense, protection and value of all human life (Prov. 24:10-12; Jer. 22:3).

### 2. LAWSUITS BETWEEN BELIEVERS

We believe that Christians should not bring civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members (I Cor. 6:1-8).

### 3. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

We believe that believers are to be responsible stewards with everything in their possession (Matt. 25:14-30), managing and using their money and resources according to the Lord's commands, one of which is generous giving, especially directed toward the household of faith (Matt. 25:32-46; Gal. 6:10).

The command to support one's local church and the needy therein is built upon the fact that believers are members of a spiritual family (Luke 8:20-21; 14:12, 26; 18:29-30; 21:16), believers are in fellowship with one another (Acts 2:24; Phil. 2:1, 3; Rom. 12:13), and because the New Testament applies Jesus' teaching on giving primarily to giving within the local church (Luke 12:33; 18:22; Acts 2:45; 4:34-35; Acts 20:35; 1 Tim. 5:1-16).

Believers are commanded to financially support Gospel teachers and leaders in their local church (Gal. 6:6; 1 Cor. 9:9-12, 14; 1 Tim. 5:17-18), truly needy members in their local church (Acts 2-5; 1 Tim. 5:3-14; 1 John 3:17), and Gospel missionaries sent out from their local church (1 Cor. 16:6, 10-11; Phil. 4:15-16; 3 John 5-8; Rom. 15:24).

Believers under the New Covenant are commanded to give generously. All Christian giving is to be a joyful response to God's great grace shown to believers

(2 Cor. 8:4-9; 9:5-8, 14-15) and is a great privilege in itself (2 Cor. 8:4; 1 Chr. 29:14).

Christian giving ought to be sacrificial (2 Cor. 8:3, 6-7, 9; Heb. 13:16), proportionate with one's prosperity (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:12-15; 9:11), prioritized in one's life and budget (1 Cor. 16:1-2), be done with consistency (1 Cor. 16:2), the amount willingly decided according to conscience (2 Cor. 8:3; 9:7), and be done for the glory of God alone (Matt. 6:1-4; 2 Cor. 9:11-14).

#### 4. MISSIONS

We believe that God has given the church a Great Commission to make and mature disciples through proclaiming the Gospel to all nations so there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:5; Rev. 5:9).

We believe that missions and theology are inseparable. Since every missions endeavor ought to be rooted in sound doctrine and have the teaching of this doctrine among the nations as a core goal, this church will only support people and/or organizations which are congruent with our doctrinal positions.

We believe that ministry may take various forms depending on cultural context and the specific needs of those targeted. All missions work, however, ought to center around the proclamation of the Gospel, the establishing of healthy churches, and the maturation of believers such that the work of ministry may be handed off to the nationals, and their churches may become self-sustaining (Acts 13:1ff; Titus 1:5ff).

We believe that it is the responsibility of each member of this church to prayerfully and financially support those missionaries and mission endeavors which have been appointed and/or recognized by the Elders and congregation, including the training of future missionaries (2 Tim. 2:2).

### C. POLICIES

#### 1. USE OF CHURCH FACILITIES

Neither property nor facilities owned or controlled by the church (or used with permission obtained by the church) shall be used or permitted to be used for any activity or speech that is contrary to any stated or implied doctrine or religious belief or practice of this church.

## 2. WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

A wedding or funeral of any person is permitted only insofar as the ceremony comports with the teachings of the Bible and the doctrinal standards of this church. If it becomes evident that a wedding or funeral does not or will not comply with the teachings of the Bible and the doctrinal standards of this church, the church may, within its sole discretion, cancel or modify the event, so as to comport with the teachings of the Bible and church doctrinal standards. In no event shall an unbiblical ceremony be permitted to proceed.

Church leaders, members, and staff shall not use their title, position, or ordination in a way that contradicts or undermines the teachings of this church and the Bible by, including but not limited to, officiating over or solemnizing weddings or ceremonies joining more than two people or two people of the same sex.

## 3. CHURCH EMPLOYMENT

Except as a vendor or independent contractor, in order to be eligible for employment at the church, the applicant or employee must be a member of the church. Since a purpose of the church is to teach and instill biblical values, and because every employee of the church is a representative of the church, in order to be eligible for employment at the church the applicant shall not be actively engaged in unrepentant sin and shall not be perceived to undermine or contradict, through his or her actions, behaviors, or speech, the tenets of the Bible and the doctrines of this church.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Timberlake Baptist Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Timberlake members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by this church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by the Statements on Gender, Marriage, Family, and Sexuality (ARTICLE V. A.) (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22).

## 4. AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

No auxiliary organizations using the church's name, property, or influence shall be formed without the knowledge and consent of the Elders. All auxiliary organizations shall fully subscribe to and share the Confession of Faith, Covenant and Practices of Faith as set out in this document.



## D. THE FINAL AUTHORITY OF THE PRACTICES OF FAITH

These Practices of Faith do 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.

The Elders shall oversee the interpretation of the Scriptures in order to establish the practices and policies of this church.

## ARTICLE VI—CHURCH OFFICERS

The biblical offices in the church are Elders and deacons. For brevity and simplicity, church staff and other positions will be included within this article. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

### A. ELDERS

#### 1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This church is led by a plurality of Elders, comprised of not less than three men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of Elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Although the title Elder is most common, the New Testament includes other descriptions of this position: pastor or shepherd (Eph. 4:11) and overseer (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-2; Titus 1:7). As Christ's under-shepherds, Elders mediate the rule of Christ to His church through the faithful proclamation of His word.

#### 2. COMPOSITION

The Elders share equal authority and are mutually accountable to one another and to the congregation. Though equal, there will inevitably be differences among the Elders based on gifts, time availability, maturity and ministry experience. Some of the Elders who labor in teaching shall be supported financially by the church as vocational Elders (1 Tim. 5:17-18) with the respective titles of Senior and Associate Pastors.

The Elders shall consist of the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastors and other men as set apart by this church. The Senior Pastor shall be the "first among equals" among the Elders as the designated pastor-teacher of the entire congregation, of which every Elder is a part. He shall also direct the pastoral staff.

### 3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. The Elders shall devote their time to willingly and prayerfully shepherding God's flock with the truth through public preaching and private counseling (Acts 6:1-6; 20:20; 1 Pet. 5:4).

The Elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, train and mentor faithful men for ministry, and mobilize the church for world missions.

Further, the Elders should seek to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, affirm our fundamental gospel convictions and do not teach our church anything contrary to our Confession of Faith.

### 4. QUALIFICATIONS

An Elder candidate must be a male (1 Tim. 2:12) who willingly desires the work (1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Pet. 5:2) and meets the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9:

- Blameless as a steward of God; above reproach (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6-7)
- A faithful husband (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6)
- Temperate, sober, vigilant (1 Tim. 3:2)
- Sober-minded, prudent (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- Of good behavior; orderly, respectable (1 Tim. 3:2)
- Given to hospitality (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- Able to teach; he can exhort believers and refute false teaching (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9)
- Not addicted to wine (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- Not violent, not pugnacious (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- Patient, moderate, forbearing, gentle (1 Tim. 3:3)
- Not a brawler; uncontentious; not soon angry or quick tempered (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- Not covetous; not a lover of money; not greedy for gain (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)
- Manages his own household well; children are faithful, not accused of rebellion to God (1 Tim. 3:4; Titus 1:7)
- Not a new convert (1 Tim. 3:6)
- Has a good reputation with outsiders (1 Tim. 3:7)

- Not self-willed (Titus 1:7)
- A lover of what is good (Titus 1:7)
- Just, fair (Titus 1:8)
- Holy, devout (Titus 1:8)
- Self-controlled (Titus 1:8)

Each Elder must also be a member of Timberlake Baptist Church, believe wholeheartedly in the Confession of Faith, polity, Bylaws, philosophy of ministry and objectives of this church. In the situation of hiring a Senior or Associate Pastor from the outside, membership will take place upon installation.

## 5. APPOINTMENT

After an initial period of inquiry and vetting by the current Elders (1 Tim. 5:22, 24-25), the Elder candidate shall be recommended to the congregation for a period of 30 days. He shall be installed by a two-thirds vote of the congregation at the subsequent business meeting. When an Elder is installed, he has been appointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28) and shall be received by the congregation as a gift of Christ to his church (Eph. 4:7-11).

Since an Elder has been appointed by the Spirit, Elders shall not serve predetermined rotating terms. Any Elder may request a sabbatical for up to two years and still retain his Elder status. However, matters arising from Elder meeting actions should be addressed by/to the active Elders only.

## 6. ESTABLISHING COMMITTEES & POSITIONS

The Elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The Elders and congregation shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of Senior and Associate Pastors. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.

## 7. BUDGET

The Elders, after consultation with the deacons and staff, shall oversee the formulation and the presentation of the annual budget to the church. This budget, posted two Sundays prior, shall be presented for affirmation at a regular or specially-called budget meeting and called up for vote by the members. (See Article X. A. for the role of the Finance Committee in the budget process.)

## 8. MEETINGS

In order to faithfully shepherd and lead the church, the Elders shall strive to meet a minimum of twice per month. The Elders shall elect one from their number to serve as chair of the meetings and may appoint any active member of their

choosing to record minutes. A simple majority of the Elders constitutes a quorum. All Elders, however, must provide input for proposals that will require the vote of the congregation (see Article VII.C.).

Decisions of the Elders shall be reached after prayerful consideration in a spirit of humility, with each Elder regarding the others above himself. Decisions of the Elders shall be made by vote and require a minimum three-fourths majority (75%) of those present. After a decision has been made, all Elders agree to be unified in the final decision, in public and in private, even though it may not agree with their personal preference. The Elders shall make all decisions for the church except those requiring the vote of the congregation (see Article VII.C.).

Under the discretion of the Elders who are not compensated by the church, portions of Elder meetings regarding staff policy and salary may be closed to any Elder that is employed and compensated as church staff, with the exception of the Senior Pastor.

## 9. REMOVAL

Each Elder will continue to serve until he biblically disqualifies himself, desires to remove himself from office, or is requested to step down by the other Elders and congregation, at which time he will no longer be considered an Elder. Any two members with scriptural reason to believe that an Elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the Elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. Any of the Elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members' meeting of the church. At least two Sundays notice shall be given to the members of the congregation, in writing, prior to conducting the meeting.

## B. DEACONS

### 1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This church is served by a group of deacons, comprised of those who meet the qualifications for the office described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Although every member of the congregation is a servant, deacons are exemplary servants. In keeping with the pattern of the Seven in Acts 6:1-7, deacons, under the oversight of the Elders, provide care for the physical and logistical needs of the church. In this way, they also serve and assist the Elders by freeing them to prioritize the ministry of the Word and prayer. There shall be as many deacons as the needs of the church may require.

## 2. RESPONSIBILITIES

Deacons are responsible for any of the needs of the church which distract or prohibit the Elders from effectively carrying out their shepherding responsibility. Each deacon shall be responsible for one or more tasks under the oversight of the Elders. Examples of such tasks include, but are not limited to, caring for the physical needs of members, attending to accommodations for public worship, maintaining church facilities and property, drafting church budget proposals, and serving communion. The deacons, with the agreement of the Elders, may establish teams of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

The deacons shall also oversee a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the Elders at their request.

## 3. QUALIFICATIONS

A candidate for deacon shall possess the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Each deacon candidate must also be an active member of Timberlake Baptist Church, believe wholeheartedly in the Confession of Faith, polity, Bylaws, philosophy of ministry and objectives of this church.

## 4. APPOINTMENT, TERMS & REMOVAL

After an initial period of inquiry and testing by the Elders and deacons, deacon candidates shall be recommended to the congregation at any time during the year. He shall be installed as deacon by a majority vote of the congregation. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, these shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons.

Deacons shall continue to serve until they desire removal from office, become biblically disqualified, or are requested to step down by the Elders. All deacons shall be reaffirmed each year at the annual meeting.

## C. STAFF

### 1. THE SENIOR PASTOR

#### i. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Senior Pastor is the lead vocational Elder. He shall perform the duties of an Elder described in VI.A.3 and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 5:17-18). As such, he shall be the primary pastor-teacher and provide oversight to all pastoral staff.

ii. APPOINTMENT

The Elders, or a committee set apart by them, shall be responsible to search for and screen candidates for the position of Senior Pastor, ensuring the candidate's life, doctrine, and gifts are in accord with the biblical requirements of an Elder, as described in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and as outlined in VI.A.4. Upon the recommendation of the candidate to the congregation by the Elders, the church shall be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of the recommended candidate. Only one name shall be considered at one time. The candidate shall then be installed by vote of the congregation at a special meeting called for that purpose. At least two Sundays notice shall be given to the members of the congregation prior to conducting such special meeting. Election shall be by ballot with an affirmative vote of three-fourths of voting members present and voting necessary for a call. Once installed, annual reaffirmation by the congregation is not required.

iii. PARTICULAR DUTIES

The Senior Pastor's principle responsibility is to equip the saints for the work of ministry, primarily through the teaching of God's Word (Eph. 4:11-12) under the oversight of the Elders. He shall preach on the Lord's Day, conduct religious services on stated and special occasions, administer ordinances, minister to members of the church, train and equip future church leaders, and perform other duties that usually pertain to that office. He shall be the ex-officio member of all organizations and committees, and he shall be the president of Timberlake Education Foundation. He shall also have primary responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of all staff members. This responsibility may be delegated to another staff member at the Senior Pastor's discretion.

iv. REMOVAL

The Senior Pastor may be terminated by resignation or dismissal in the same manner as the removal of Elders, described in VI.A.9. If the Senior Pastor intends to resign, he must give the Elders one month's notice. The time limit of a Senior Pastor's resignation or dismissal may be less than one month if both the Senior Pastor and Elders mutually agree.

2. ASSOCIATE PASTOR(S)

With the approval of the Elders, the Senior Pastor may hire additional staff to assist with pastoral ministry, designated as Associate Pastors. These shall be Elders and shall perform the duties of an Elder described in VI.A.3, and any other responsibilities as defined by the Elders. He shall be recognized by the church as

particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 5:17-18).

An Associate Pastor may be terminated by resignation or dismissal in the same manner of the removal of elders, described in VI.A.9. If an Associate Pastor intends to resign, he must give the elders one month's notice. The time limit of an Associate Pastor's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time if both the Associate Pastor and the Elders, by mutual agreement, provide otherwise.

### 3. ADDITIONAL STAFF

The Senior Pastor may hire additional support staff in order to help facilitate the ministry of this church. Such support staff includes, but is not limited to, ministry directors, administrative assistants, and maintenance personnel. All additional staff shall report directly to the Senior Pastor, or another staff member at the Senior Pastor's discretion.

## D. OTHER POSITIONS

### 1. TRUSTEES

There shall be no less than three nor more than seven trustees. The trustees shall represent the church, wherever required by law, in strict accordance with directives from the Elders. They shall exercise the following specific duties as mandated by vote of the church membership:

- Purchase, hold, lease, or otherwise acquire real property on behalf of the church, and take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church.
- Sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of real property of the church.
- Exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church if such action is mandated by a vote of the church membership.

The trustees, who shall be members in good standing, shall be nominated by the Elders and appointed by the congregation to serve for a period of three years. Approximately one-third of the total number shall be appointed each year at the annual meeting by a simple majority vote of the congregation. A vacancy may be filled during the interim by appointing a person to fill the unexpired term of a trustee at a regular business meeting of the church. Trustees shall serve until their successor is appointed.

## 2. CLERK

The clerk, who shall be a member in good standing, shall be nominated by the Elders and appointed by a simple majority vote of the congregation annually at the annual meeting. It shall be the clerk's duty to attend or be represented at all church business meetings and keep an accurate record of all business meeting procedures. The clerk shall also be responsible for maintaining the church's membership roll, issuing letters of dismissal where required, and providing a written record of individual contributions to the church for all members so requiring or requesting. In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the Elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church clerk. The clerk, upon termination of service, shall release and return all records and church property to the church.

## 3. TREASURER

The treasurer shall be nominated by the Elders and appointed by the congregation annually at the annual meeting. The treasurer, who shall not be an active Elder or paid church staff member, shall be a member in good standing.

The treasurer shall support the Elders in providing oversight of the financial and accounting activities of the church, shall not have custody of church funds, and shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the church at each members' meeting. This responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the Elders. The treasurer shall also see that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to ensure that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall render to the Elders, whenever they may require it, an account of all activities as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

If necessary, the treasurer's books may be audited as directed by the Elders. All books, records, and accounts kept by the treasurer shall be considered the property of the church.

## 4. ASSISTANT TREASURER

The assistant treasurer shall be nominated by the Elders and appointed by the congregation annually at the annual meeting. The assistant treasurer, who shall not be an active Elder or paid church staff member, shall be a member in good standing. It shall be the duty of the assistant treasurer to perform those duties assigned to him by the treasurer and perform the treasurer's duties during the treasurer's absence.



## ARTICLE VII—MEMBERSHIP

### A. NATURE OF MEMBERSHIP

While every follower of Christ is a member of the universal church, the Scriptures expect this membership to be manifested in individual local churches. Membership is a formal covenant relationship between a local church and a Christian. The church takes a specific responsibility for this Christian, and likewise this Christian for the church. Membership defines who belongs to Timberlake (Acts 2:41) and identifies for whom the Elders will give an account (Heb. 13:7).

### B. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this church shall consist of persons who, based upon the recommendation of the Elders, give testimony of regeneration, have been baptized by immersion, wholeheartedly believe the Scriptures, are willing to submit to the church's doctrinal positions as described in our Confession and Practices of Faith, and desire to fulfill the responsibilities of church membership.

### C. RESPONSIBILITIES & PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

In keeping with the responsibilities outlined in the Church Covenant, church members are called by Christ to pursue a life of personal holiness and Christian love, mutually care for and edify other members, maintain the purity and unity of the church, regularly attend church services and meetings, submit themselves to the Elders of the church, and actively support the church through practical service, giving, prayer, and personal discipleship.

Additionally, church members are privileged to receive love and care from the congregation and pastoral care from the Elders and teachers. Active members will also vote on Elder recommendations in the following matters: new Elders and deacons; new members; the annual budget of the church; acquisition or disposal of real property and associated indebtedness; disposition of all or substantially all of the church's assets; amendments to the constitution or Bylaws; merger or dissolution of the church; situations of church discipline; and any other major event or decision as designated by the Elders.

A member, upon reasonable notice, may inspect or receive copies of the minutes of church meetings, and the financial statements of the church. Any cost of reproduction may be charged to the requesting member. A member may not, under any circumstances, inspect or copy any record pertaining to individual contributions to the church, benevolence received by an individual, or the accounting books and financial records of the church.

### D. ADMISSION INTO MEMBERSHIP

After completing the membership application through the church office, individuals who have met the qualifications for membership (I.B. above) shall be received into the church

by congregational vote at any worship service in one of three ways: by baptism, by statement of faith, or by a letter of dismissal from any church of like faith.

One may also be received into the church as a “watchcare” member. “Watchcare” is a special association, allowed by this church, for persons who are temporarily away from their home church due to such activities as a temporary job-related duty and attendance at institutions of higher learning. One may be received for “watchcare” by statement of faith, having been baptized by immersion and subscribing to the doctrines and practices of this church. Persons so received shall enjoy all privileges of membership except those of voting and holding elective office. A separate roll of “watchcare” members shall be maintained. This privilege ceases upon termination of the duty requiring “watchcare” members to be away from their home church.

#### E. TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP

Letters of dismissal may be granted to those desiring to transfer to churches of like faith and order for members in good standing. When letters are granted, membership in this church shall cease.

#### F. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this church may be terminated upon the following occasions. (1) When a member of this church joins a church of different faith and order, the Elders shall call for a removal of that individual’s name from the church roll and assure notification be given to the church. (2) Upon notification to the church, a member may resign at any time, unless the member is currently under church discipline. (3) When a member of this church joins another church, that member is terminated from membership by vote of the church upon recommendation of the Elders. (4) Membership in this church is automatically terminated at the death of a member. (5) This church has the authority to terminate the membership of an individual who has not attended the services of the church for six months unless that member has shown good cause for such absence to the Elders.

#### G. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

##### 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by protecting the purity and unity of the church (1 Cor. 5:6; Titus 3:10; Rom. 16:17), edifying believers by deterring them from sin (1 Tim. 5:20), and restoring erring believers by calling them to repent from their sin, whether their error is doctrinal or moral (Gal. 6:1). It shall be the practice of this church to pursue every reasonable measure for peace and reconciliation.

## 2. PROCEDURE

In accordance with Matthew 18:15-20,

(1) it shall be the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of the erring individual's false doctrine or misconduct to warn and correct such an erring individual humbly in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed the warning, then

(2) the warning member shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his or her repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent. If the erring individual still refuses to heed the warning, then

(3) it shall be brought to the attention of the Elders. If the Elders determine (after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matt. 18:15-18 and 1 Tim. 5:19) that there is corroborating evidence that the erring individual has sinned or is continuing to sin, that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and that he or she has refused to repent, then the Elders shall inform the congregation at a regularly scheduled worship service to call the erring individual to repentance. If the erring individual demonstrates repentance, then the notice to that effect may be given at a regularly scheduled worship service. If the erring individual does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then

(4) he or she shall be publicly dismissed from the fellowship and/or membership of the church at a regularly scheduled worship service. If the erring individual, after such dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Elders, then he or she shall be publicly restored to all the responsibilities and privileges of membership. The erring individual may not return to the worship services until they demonstrate repentance, request reinstatement before the Elders, and are publicly restored.

## ARTICLE VIII—MEETINGS

### A. WORSHIP SERVICES

Worship services shall regularly be held on the Lord's Day morning and evening for public worship of Almighty God and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

## B. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS

This church shall hold regular business meetings at which time the temporal and spiritual conditions of the church may be addressed as deemed necessary. The meeting shall include reports, proposals or plans, and all regular business.

## C. EMERGENCY BUSINESS MEETINGS

Emergency business meetings may be called when deemed necessary by the Elders, and publicly announced to the congregation at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical.

## D. DECORUM AT BUSINESS MEETINGS

Business meetings shall be conducted in a reasonable order, atmosphere of courtesy, and reverence. An Elder designated by the Elders shall preside as moderator of all general and special meetings of the church.

## E. VOTING PROCEDURE AT BUSINESS MEETINGS

A quorum shall consist of the members present. All members of the church who are physically present at a duly-called meeting shall be permitted to vote except those under eighteen (18) years of age. No person under disciplinary suspension shall be permitted to vote. There shall be no absentee or proxy voting.

## F. OTHER MEETINGS

Other meetings of authorized groups within the church shall be scheduled according to the needs of the congregation.

# ARTICLE IX—ORDINANCES

The ordinances of this church are two: baptism and the Lord's Supper. These are church ordinances and not Sacraments, meaning they are not a means of salvific grace; rather they exist as a means of confessing, illustrating, and memorializing the Gospel. These may be administered only by the church.

## A. BAPTISM

We believe that baptism is the complete immersion of the believer in water, as a testimony of his/her fellowship with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Baptism is a prerequisite to church membership. Those professing saving faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior ought to be, by the Elders or some person authorized by the church, immersed in water in accordance with the scriptural teaching (Matt. 28:19; Rom. 6:1-11).

## B. THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe that the elements of the Lord's Supper are unleavened bread or wafers and the fruit of the vine. The Lord's Supper calls believers to remembrance of Christ's finished work; it calls the church to unity and holiness, and it calls the church to anticipate the Lord's return (1 Cor. 11:17-34). The Lord's Supper shall normally be administered to the assembly on a Lord's Day of each month. The Elders shall oversee and the deacons shall serve the Supper. Because it is the Lord's Table, none who are His shall be denied the right to commune with Him in this manner. The Lord's Supper shall be preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Cor. 10:14-22; 11:17-34).

## ARTICLE X—COMMITTEES

Committees may be appointed by the Elders or by church election as deemed necessary. Committees may be established for a term of limited duration or for a long-term task requiring a committee of semi-permanent status. All committees are advisory in nature and have no responsibility or authority to establish policy or to appropriate funds. All committees are responsible to report their recommendations and requests to the Elders and/or deacons.

### A. FINANCE COMMITTEE

The duties of the Finance Committee are to formulate and propose an annual budget. The committee, or others so designated by the Elders, shall present the recommended budget to the church in preparation for congregational vote at the annual meeting. The committee shall also supervise expenditures as authorized by the church budget as adopted by the church.

### B. OTHER COMMITTEES

Other committees shall be selected or appointed as needed and shall operate on a basis directed by the Elders. These may include, but are not limited to, a Missions Committee and a Benevolence Committee.

## ARTICLE XI—TAX-EXEMPT PROVISIONS AND PROPERTY

### A. TAX-EXEMPT PROVISIONS

#### 1. DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS

From time to time, this 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. Funds established by a vote of the church will be used for designated purposes. All other contributions made to

specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and discretion of the Elders. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by any designated contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in ARTICLE I. C.

## 2. PRIVATE INUREMENT

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

## 3. POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

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

## 4. DISSOLUTION

Upon dissolution of the church, the trustees shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all liabilities of the church, dispose of all assets of the church to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) as the trustees shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to organizations which agree with the church's Confession and Practices of Faith and Covenant.

## 5. RACIAL NONDISCRIMINATION

This church shall have a racial nondiscrimination policy and therefore shall not discriminate against members, applicants, students, and others on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin.

## 6. LIMITATION OF ACTIVITIES

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution and Bylaws, the church shall not, except to an insubstantial degree, engage in any activities or exercise any powers that are not in furtherance of the purposes stated in Article I. C., hereof.

## B. PROPERTY

### 1. DEFINITION AND SCOPE

The church property shall be understood to include all land, buildings, portable furniture and equipment, bonds, bequests, money on deposit in the bank, or church money in possession of church representatives, though it is not deposited in the bank or invested, etc. It shall likewise include all physical assets acquired by the church at a later date.

### 2. THE POWER

The power to acquire, control, retain, sell, lease, or mortgage property shall rest solely in the hands of this church. Extensive improvements, transfer, lease, or sale of church property shall be in violation of this Constitution and Bylaws except when authorized by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a meeting of the church called for such action. The said action shall be after due publicity in the form of Sunday announcements for two consecutive Sundays and, if wisdom directs, by additional forms of communication.

### 3. MEMBERS' RIGHTS TO PROPERTY

Members of this church have no contract, property, or civil legal rights in the property or other ministry affairs of the church.

## ARTICLE XII—ASSOCIATIONS

A New Testament church cannot “join” anything outside of itself but only affiliate with others on the grounds of Christian fellowship. Therefore, this church declares itself to be in fellowship only with those of “like precious faith” or with any church or individual who will be in agreement with our Confession and Practices of Faith and Covenant as contained in ARTICLES IV and V.

## ARTICLE XIII—ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

### A. ADOPTION

This Constitution shall be considered adopted and in immediate effect if and when two-thirds of the members present and voting in a regular business meeting of the church shall vote in favor of it, provided, however, that the proposed Constitution shall have been given to the church clerk in writing, and that it shall have been presented to the church no less than thirty (30) days prior to the time the vote is taken.

### B. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended in the same manner in which it was adopted.

THE CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS  
As adopted on November 15, 2020