

The Membership Documents for

# **Riverbend Bible Church**

**CONTAINING:**

**The Confession of Faith**

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**The Constitution**

# **CONFESSION OF FAITH**

## **THE SCRIPTURES**

We believe the Bible in its original writings to be verbally (i.e. every word) and planarly (i.e. in its totality) inspired by God. We deny that inspiration applies to any translation of the original languages. We believe that the Bible is our only infallible rule for faith and practice, profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness.

We believe that the 66 books of the Canon are the total revelation of God's saving will, teaching us what we are to believe concerning God and what our responsibility is to do His will. We deny that God continues to give further special revelation.

## **THE GODHEAD**

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is omnipotent, that is, He is all-powerful; He is omniscient, that is, nothing is hidden from His sight; He is omnipresent, that is, He is present throughout all His creation but not limited by it. The one true God is infinite, immutable and independent. He is limited by nothing other than His own nature and character. We believe the God we serve is holy, righteous, severe, good, loving and full of mercy. He is the Creator, Sustainer and Ruler of everything that has been made.

We believe that the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, is truly and eternally God, of one substance and equal with the

Father. When the fullness of time came, He took upon Himself man's nature with its essential elements and common weaknesses, but without sin. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary of her substance, so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. This Jesus of Nazareth is truly God and truly man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

We believe also that the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and Son and therefore is neither made, created, nor begotten. He is the third person of the Holy Trinity, is of one and the same essence, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, and therefore is the true and eternal God.

## **MAN**

### **Fall**

We believe that man, created in God's image, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God but also the ability to choose sin so that they might fall from that state. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has completely lost all ability to will any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so, as a natural man, being completely corrupted and dead in sin, he is not able by his own strength to convert himself or to prepare himself for conversion.

## **Election**

We believe that God then showed His mercy by unconditionally electing a people for His name. We believe that God freely chose us for His own mysterious but gracious reasons and not because of any foreseen faith in us.

Being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, election comprehends all the means of salvation including regeneration, faith and repentance. It is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable. It utterly excludes boasting but promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and the active imitation of His free mercy.

Election encourages the use of prayer and preaching in the highest degree.

Election may be determined in all who believe the gospel, that it is the foundation of Christian assurance, and that to determine it in regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence. Election also demonstrates God's justice by passing over the non-elect, leaving them in the sinful state that they have freely chosen.

## **The Atonement**

We believe that the Lord Jesus in perfect obedience offered Himself once and for all as a sacrifice to God for all those whom the Father gave Him. He has fully satisfied the justice of God, reconciling and redeeming His people through the cross and giving to them an eternal inheritance in the kingdom of heaven.

All those for whom Christ died have their sins remitted and their guilt removed so that they pass from the bar of God's justice fully acquitted of all sins.

## **Regeneration**

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born from above, that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind. The Holy Spirit frees us from our natural bondage to sin and by His grace alone enables us freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good. Regeneration is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Spirit in tandem with His Word so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel. The evidence of regeneration appears in the holy fruit of repentance and faith and newness of life.

## **Justification**

We believe that justification is the great gospel blessing which Christ secures for all that believe in Him. In justifying sinners, God declares believers to be righteous because He has imputed to them the very righteousness of Christ and for His sake has forgiven all their sins.

Justification is an act of God's pure grace and in no way merited by man but received through faith alone in the perfect, sacrificial and atoning work of Christ. It is a permanent and settled state since God, who is Judge of all men, no longer regards believers as His enemies but as righteous in Christ. Therefore, we believe that we are justified by grace alone through faith alone on account of Christ alone.

## **Sanctification**

We believe that all who are justified are also sanctified. Sanctification is that gracious operation of the Holy Spirit involving our active and responsible participation by which we are made partakers of His holiness.

This work of God delivers us progressively from the pollution of sin, renews our entire nature according to the image of God, and enables us to live lives that are pleasing to Him. While no man will ever achieve perfect sanctification in this life, we believe that it is the purpose of God's redemptive work to lead us into the ever-increasing practice of true holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

## **Perseverance**

We believe that all those whom God has effectually called, justified and sanctified can not fall from that state of grace but will certainly persevere to the end and be eternally saved. This persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark that distinguishes true believers from superficial professors.

Our security rests solely in the preserving will and power of God who promises that nothing can ever separate his children from His love. Further, the Scripture never teaches that God preserves us apart from watchfulness, prayer and faith, but that our endurance will be in the struggle against sin, Satan and the world. We believe that the certainty of our deliverance does not rule out the indispensability of godly means and that we must take seriously the

command of God to work out our salvation with fear and trembling because God is at work in us to will and to do His good pleasure.

## **Eternal State**

We believe that at death our bodies return to dust where they wait for their resurrection but that our souls, which neither die nor sleep, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous are confirmed in holiness, received into the glorious presence of God and wait for the full redemption of their bodies. The souls of the unrighteous are cast immediately into Hell where they remain in torment until the judgment of the last day. We deny that there is any other place reserved for us besides Heaven and Hell.

We believe that on the last day Christ will descend from heaven and raise our dead bodies from the grave while those still living will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. There will be a solemn and permanent separation of the wicked and the righteous. The unrighteous will be cast into endless punishment, while the righteous will enter the new heavens and new earth where there is endless joy.

## **THE CHURCH**

### **Defined**

We believe that the universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect who have been, are, or shall be gathered into one body under Christ, her head and bridegroom.

We believe that the visible church of Christ is a congregation of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, are baptized and are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel. It regularly observes the sacraments of Christ, is governed by His laws, and exercises the gifts, rights and privileges invested in it by His Word.

## **Offices**

We believe that there are two offices given to the church by her Lord consisting of Elders and Deacons. Elders, including Pastors, are given responsibility to oversee the congregation as those who will one day give an account to the Chief Shepherd. They are to receive honor, respect and frequent prayer from the church as men who have been set apart to care for the souls of the congregation. Deacons are those members of the church who are set apart to look after the welfare of the needs of the congregation and should also be honored for their work. It is incumbent upon the church to use great care in the selection of these officers in accordance with the qualifications, claims and duties of the Scripture.

## **Ordinances**

We believe that Christ has given two holy and solemn sacraments to His Church: baptism and communion. These ordinances are a constant reminder of His unfailing grace and matchless love. They are designed to strengthen the faith of the believer and bolster his assurance. As such, they are to be received soberly and only by those who have properly discerned the spiritual realities they

signify by placing their full confidence in the finished work of Christ.

We believe that baptism is a sign of the Holy Spirit's work in uniting us with Christ by washing away our sins and giving us new life. It is a most beautiful display of what takes place inwardly through the work of the Spirit in regeneration. We believe that gracious activity is best signified by immersion and is properly given to those who have repented of their sins and believed the gospel.

We also believe that communion is a sign of our Lord's atoning death for all who believe. In those elements we have a display of that great sacrifice which effected the salvation of His people. It is to be observed regularly and received with great joy because it signifies the marvelous and matchless love of our Lord. All those are welcomed to His table who can testify that their faith rests solely in that sacrifice. It is especially important for the true believer whose faith has been buffeted and needs again to hear the words of his Lord, "...this is my body which is broken for you...this cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you." But, it is necessary for each member to examine himself, so that he does not partake in an unworthy or unbelieving manner.

# Membership Covenant

Having been born again by the Spirit of God and drawn to faith and repentance in the Lord Jesus Christ, we now, relying on God's grace, enter into covenant with one another as Christ's body:

We will seek to magnify the cross of Christ in all that we do, knowing that it is by the grace of God alone that our sins have been forgiven, our old nature put to death, and we have been raised to new life in Christ.

We will live our lives according to the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, having submitted ourselves to God's Word and embraced this church's Statement of Faith as a trustworthy summary of biblical teaching.

We will seek to exemplify a true Christian community, caring for one another, admonishing one another, and bearing each other's burdens.

We will use our spiritual gifts in God honoring ways to build up the body.

We will strive to be faithful in the Word of God and prayer, studying the Scriptures privately and corporately, and praying for ourselves and others.

We will show the joy of new life in Christ, by active participation in the life of the church, through hearing the Word of God and observing the Lord's Supper, and by faithful attendance to worship, all to the glory of God.

We will give 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.

We will accept the spiritual guidance of the church, obeying its doctrines and teaching.

We will walk in a spirit of Christian love in the congregation, seeking the things that make for unity, purity, and peace.

We will, upon moving from this place, unite with a church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

# Constitution

Adopted by the membership on April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008

## **PREAMBLE**

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants to unite under the name of Riverbend Bible Church for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and He has sustained and prospered this work to the present day; and

Whereas we, the members of Riverbend Bible Church, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Spirit, have recognized the need to reconstitute ourselves to more closely conform to His will for the Church in this age and prepare ourselves for greater efforts in His name;

Now therefore we, the members of Riverbend Bible Church, do hereby organize ourselves in accord with this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in the Confession of Faith and Covenant of this church. This Constitution will replace any existing constitution of the church.

## **ARTICLE 1 – NAME**

The name of this church is Riverbend Bible Church.

## **ARTICLE 2 – PURPOSE**

This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities.

This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through: Worshipping Him; Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study; Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture; Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work, local, domestic, and international; Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion; Encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers; Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ; and Calling fellow churches to biblical faithfulness and purity through instruction and encouragement about the nature of the local church.

## **ARTICLE 3 – MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1 – Qualifications**

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible.

Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Confession of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders shall

be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

## **Section 2 – Admission of Members**

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission and accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

## **Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership**

In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God.

Only those who are members of this congregation shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation. Under Christ this Congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election

of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

## **Section 4 – Associate Membership**

Students and others temporarily residing in the Atchison, KS area who are members of an evangelical church may apply for associate membership. Qualifications are identical to those for full membership as set out above, except that home church membership must be retained. The Elders will seek a letter of commendation from the applicant's home church.

Duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for other members except that:

(a) when absent from the Atchison, KS area for extended periods of time they are released from the responsibility to attend our church services and,

(b) while they will be encouraged to participate in members' meetings they will not be eligible to stand for any office or to vote. Termination of associate membership as a disciplinary measure will be as it is for other members, except that the elders shall notify the pastor or elders of the home church of that termination. Associate membership will normally terminate immediately upon the ending of the period of temporary residence in the Atchison, KS area.

## **Section 5 – On Church Discipline**

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be

dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3: 14–15; 1 Timothy 5: 19–20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5).

The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15:5; 29: 15; 1 Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; 1 Timothy 3:4–5; Hebrews 12:1– 11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27 5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26–27; 18:15–17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1–5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14–15; 1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 1: 13–14; James 1:22);

For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24–32);

For the purity of the church as a whole (see 1 Corinthians 5:6–7; 2 Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2); For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see

Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13–16; John 13:35; Acts 5: 1–14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John 3:10); and

Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18: 17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5–6; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7: 1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12).

## **Section 6 – Termination of Membership**

Termination of membership shall be recognized by the church following the death or voluntary resignation of any church member. Membership may be terminated as an act of church discipline at the recommendation of the elders and with the vote of majority of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members.

## **ARTICLE 4 - MEETINGS**

### **Section 1 – Worship Meetings**

Worship services shall be held each Sunday, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

### **Section 2 – Congregational meetings**

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There shall be a regular congregational meeting at least every quarter, at some time apart from a public worship service agreed upon by the membership.

An officer designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all congregational meetings of the church.

The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present.

A budget shall be approved by the membership at a congregational meeting no more than three months prior or less than one month after the start of the fiscal year.

At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

Special congregational meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of five percent of the voting membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

# **ARTICLE 5 – OFFICERS**

## **Section 1 – Summary**

The Biblical offices in the church are Elders and Deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of clerk and treasurer.

## **Section 2 – Elders**

The Lord Jesus Christ alone is The Supreme Head of this church. Following His direction and guidance, this church undertakes to manage its own affairs under the government and rule of the inerrant Word of God alone. It is particularly guided by the practices of the churches of the New Testament and under the oversight of God appointed Elders.

The Elders shall be comprised of men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of Elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 6–9.

The active Eldership shall be composed of church members, some of whom may be in the regular pay of the church.

No Elder shall hold the office of Deacon during his tenure.

In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6: 1–6 and 1 Peter 5:1–4, the Elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock.

Though a plurality of Elders is the New Testament norm for every church, the New Testament does not specify the number of Elders

each church should have, nor does it dictate the length of an Elder's term of office. One truly called to this office is usually called to it for life. He is a gift of Christ to the church, and the gifts of God are without repentance. Only when an Elder fails to meet the necessary Scriptural qualifications for his office does he disqualify himself from being an Elder.

An Elder may honorably resign from his office for a time if he feels he is providentially hindered from properly discharging his pastoral responsibilities. He may at the discretion of the Elders and without re-examination by the congregation re-assume the office when these providential hindrances have been removed.

An Elder's term of office may be terminated by dismissal. Any two members with 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 majority vote of the members at any congregational meeting of the church, but only after the scriptural procedures outlined above have been followed.

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, and mobilize the church for world missions.

The Elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions.

The Elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities.

The Elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.

The Elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

The Elders shall elect a Chairman for the Elder Meetings. The Elders shall elect a Church Officer to serve as Moderator of Member Meetings.

### **Section 3 – Deacons**

The Office of Deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 and Acts 6:1–7. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service.

These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as Deacons. Though a plurality of Deacons is the New Testament norm for every church, the New Testament does not specify the number of Deacons each church should have, nor does it dictate the length of a Deacon's term of office. One truly called to this office is usually called to it for life. He is a gift of Christ to the church, and the gifts of God are without repentance. Only when a Deacon fails to meet the necessary Scriptural qualifications for his office does he disqualify himself from being a Deacon.

Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration.

Each year the Deacons, with the approval of the Elders, shall present to the church an itemized budget at a regular congregational meeting. This budget shall be presented for discussion at that time and called up for a vote at the following congregational meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the Elders and Deacons.

The Deacons shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the Elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.

The Deacons, with the agreement of the Elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

The Deacons shall receive, hold and oversee the assets of the congregation. In case of disbandment, all remaining assets should be disbursed to another Section 501(C)(3) tax exempt organization, as explained in IRS Publication 557.

## **ARTICLE 6 – ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS**

### **Section 1 – Summary**

In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution. The positions of treasurer and clerk must be filled by members of the church prior to receiving these responsibilities

### **Section 2 – Clerk**

It shall be the duty of the Clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the Elders, the Deacons, or the Church.

The Clerk shall be nominated by the Elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of not more than three years.

In the absence or incapacity of the clerk the Elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the church Clerk.

The Church Clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution shall be available for all church members.

## **Section 3 – Treasurer**

The Treasurer, who shall not be a paid church staff member, 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. The responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the Elders.

The Treasurer shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee 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 annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

The Treasurer shall be nominated by the Elders and elected by the Congregation to serve a term of not more than three years without the church's approval.

## **ARTICLE 6 – ELECTIONS**

### **Section 1 – Principles**

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles: Substantial prayer, both

individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process; Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders; All candidates for church offices or administrative positions shall be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members; The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Section 2 – Selection of Officers and Administrative Positions**

The election of Elders and Deacons and selection of Clerk and Treasurer shall be held at a congregational meeting of the church.

At a time when the Elders may recognize a man with the biblical qualifications fitting for the office of Elder or Deacon, the Elders should seek the recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the affirmation process. Any recommendations for nominees to serve as Elders, Deacons, shall be presented by the Elders at the previous members' meeting (providing that previous meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior) or at another opportunity as deemed necessary by the Elders).

Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the Elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the Elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church congregational meeting.

After the Elders have discussed and come to an agreement based on Scripture and the Calling from the Lord for that man, the recommendation to recognize that man as an Elder or Deacon should be announced at the next members' meeting. The moderator shall declare those men recognized by the Elders and those men shall be affirmed by the majority.

For all other positions, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

These other positions elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

## **ARTICLE 7 – INDEMNIFICATION**

### **Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification**

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

## **Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification**

At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

## **Section 3 – Procedure**

If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

## **Article 8 – Dispute Resolution**

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18:15–20, 1 Corinthians 6:1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts.

Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles and the avoidance of suits of law or equity to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities.

The elders shall adopt policies and procedures to effect these requirements and aspirations.

## **ARTICLE 9 – AMENDMENTS**

The Confession of Faith and Church Covenant will continually be reaffirmed by the teaching of Scripture.

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members by the Church Clerk.