

# BY-LAWS OF WARRENTON BIBLE FELLOWSHIP (WBF)

## ARTICLE I - MEMBERSHIP

### Section 1. Requirements

Members shall be individuals who are professed believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and His atoning work for their salvation, and who, having accepted Him as their Savior and Lord, give evidence by their confession and their conduct that they are living in real fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **A. Application**

Prospective members will apply to the Board of Elders using the elder-approved Application for Membership form. The Board of Elders will determine if the applicant qualifies for membership.

#### **B. Qualification of Candidates**

- All candidates will be required to attend the membership classes.
- Each candidate shall have attended WBF for at least six (6) months. Exceptions to this rule can only be made by the decision of the Board of Elders.
- Each candidate will submit an oral or written testimony to the Board of Elders.
- An elder interview will take place with each candidate.
- Each candidate must subscribe to the Statement of Faith and the Constitution and By-Laws of WBF. If a candidate cannot fully subscribe to each point of the Statement of Faith, he or she may submit in writing a description of their concern(s) along with their application for membership. The Elders, at their discretion, may waive this requirement for membership for that individual if they believe that the candidate has subscribed to all the essential elements of the Statement of Faith.

### Section 2. Membership

#### **A. Responsibilities**

- Members shall consider it their responsibility and privilege to regularly attend services, to attend congregational meetings for church decisions and town hall meetings for informational purposes, and to serve in the church.
- Members are urged to pledge themselves to systematic contributions from their income for the support of the church.

- Toward the world and each other, members are expected to be an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. Every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity. All members are expected to treat everyone as a fellow sinner in need of the same divine and unmerited mercy that we have received.

Members should mutually support and accept each other as part of the Body of Christ at WBF.

## **B. Privileges**

- Members of Warrenton Bible Fellowship who are 16 years of age or older may vote in the congregational meetings of the church provided their names are on the eligible voting list approved by the Board of Elders. The items require the affirmation of the congregation are found in Article II, Section 1.
- Members of Warrenton Bible Fellowship are under the shepherding care of the pastors and elders.
- Members also benefit from:
  - Being part of the local manifestation of the universal body of Believers and therefore making a visible commitment to the unbelieving world.
  - Being part of a Bible believing and Bible teaching local church during a time when so many local churches are not following what God says in the Bible.
  - Being surrounded by a loving community of their neighbors who encourage, support, hold them accountable and discipline them in Christ-like love.
  - Having the ability to consistently join with their believing neighbors to pray for and financially support key missionary activities, locally and around the world.
  - Enjoying like-minded but still diverse Christian fellowship in corporate worship, various learning opportunities and specialized activities like retreats and conferences.
  - Having a special place to exercise their Spiritual gift(s) and refine them through service to others.
  - Having a launching platform, from people who know them and have contributed to their growth, as they fulfill the great commission to make disciples of all nations.
  - Having a special place with special people to aid them as they grow into full Spiritual maturity, finish well in this earthly race and transition onto a heavenly eternity with God.
  - Having a safe place to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling” as they grow in grace knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
  - Having a place of living discipline when needed by caring, trained leaders familiar with their personal situation and background (see Sec 4 for details).

## **C. Non-Members**

- Warrenton Bible Fellowship welcomes any and all individuals seeking to grow in the Lord Jesus Christ whether or not they seek membership. Individuals attending any or all activities will be treated with love and respect by members of the church. In like fashion, non-members

are expected to reciprocate. Actions deemed to be disruptive, harmful or not in conformance with the Word of God will be acted upon expeditiously by the Board of Elders as necessary.

### **Section 3. Pastors**

Pastors, upon assuming a pastoral position on staff, will be granted membership in this congregation, and will be released from membership upon leaving pastoral duties with this congregation unless otherwise determined by the pastor and approved by the Board of Elders.

### **Section 4. Discipline Leading to Restoration**

#### **A. Discipline**

The goal of any church discipline, as with everything we do, is to glorify God. Church discipline accomplishes this by maintaining purity in the local church, by deterring sin and by making a way of redemption and restoration to all who confess their sin, seeking God's mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 5:6, 1 Tim. 5:20 and Gal. 6:1)

If it is determined by the Board of Elders that any member (or non-member) is in violation of scripture by engaging in sinful and ungodly activities or who is causing division by teaching doctrine which is in error, that member shall be subject to church discipline up to and including immediate dismissal from membership according to Matt. 18:15-18. However, before such an individual is dismissed, there are steps that should generally be followed:

- Step 1: Any attendee of this church who has knowledge of the erring individual's misconduct should go to this individual in private and seek to convince that brother or sister of their need for repentance so he or she might be restored.
- Step 2: If this is not successful, the attendee who has knowledge of the misconduct should go again to the erring individual along with one or two other individuals who can confirm that the misconduct has occurred or is continuing to occur. These witnesses shall also be able to confirm that the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and still refuses to repent.
- Step 3: If the erring individual continues to refuse to repent, the Board of Elders should be notified. The Board of Elders will then conduct a thorough investigation as mandated in Scripture (see Matt. 18:15-18 and 1 Tim. 5:19) and members of the Board of Elders will confront the individual again seeking his repentance and warning him or her of the consequences for unrepentant sin, which may, in the case of members, include public notification to the congregation.
- Step 4 for members: If there is corroborating evidence that the sin has occurred or is continuing and the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and still refuses to repent, then the Board of Elders will inform the church regarding the member's unwillingness to repent at a regularly scheduled worship service. The purpose of this notification is to advise the congregation in order to call that erring member to repentance.

If the Board of Elders subsequently determines that the disciplined member has demonstrated repentance, they will notify the congregation at another regularly scheduled worship service.

- However if the disciplined individual still does not choose to repent, then the Elders will go to the final step of church discipline and publicly dismiss this individual from membership and fellowship of the congregation at a regularly scheduled worship service.

- Step 4 for non-members: For non-members who refuse to repent, the Board of Elders will not publicly inform the congregation but will immediately and privately dismiss this individual from fellowship of the congregation.

## **B. Restoration**

If the disciplined member later demonstrates repentance and requests reinstatement before the Board of Elders, then the Elders, at their discretion, may restore this individual to all of the rights, duties, privileges and responsibilities of membership and will announce this publicly at a regularly scheduled worship service. Likewise, if the Board of Elders subsequently determines that the disciplined non-member has demonstrated repentance, and requests to be restored to fellowship, the Board of Elders will privately inform the non-member that he or she may be restored to fellowship with the congregation.

There is no specific time limit within which any of these steps must occur.

## **C. Special Circumstances**

If the Board of Elders, at their sole discretion, determines that it is in the best interest of the church, they may proceed directly to step four above when one or more of the following have occurred:

- The member's transgression was against the entire church and both the transgression and the refusal to repent have been done publicly (1 Cor 5:1-5);
- When the member to be disciplined has first taught or otherwise disseminated doctrine that the Elders have determined to be false and then has chosen to ignore the direction and reproof of the Elders and has continued to teach or disseminate this false doctrine (Rom. 16:17).
- When the individual has twice ignored the warning of the Elders to cease from factious and divisive conduct (Tit. 3:10-11).

## **D. No Civil Recourse**

Both members and others who participate with the church agree that there shall be no appeal to any court due to any church discipline. This includes, but is not limited to the dismissal of a member or to statements that are made publicly to the congregation during church discipline.

At the discretion of the Board of Elders, any member or non-member may be notified that he or she is not to be present on church premises or to participate in any church-sponsored activity for any time period that the Elders determine is necessary for the safety and well-being of others in the church. This may, but need not, be done as part of the church discipline process described above.

## **Section 5. Resignation from Membership**

Only members who are in good standing may voluntarily resign from membership. Members who are in any step of church discipline described above or who have been subject to any other disciplinary action waive the right to resign from membership until the church discipline process has been completed (see Section 4).

## **Section 6. Absence and Withdrawal**

If any member of the church in good standing leaves the area or desires a letter of commendation for an evangelical church, the letter shall be written by a pastor or an elder upon request.

Church membership is automatically revoked when the Board of Elders determines that a member has moved out of the area or otherwise has stopped attending services for more than three months. A member, however, may submit a verbal or written request to the Board of Elders that their membership be temporarily extended because their absence is temporary (i.e. due to school, temporary job assignments, health issues, family responsibilities or at the Elders' discretion). Upon the approval of the Elders, their membership may be extended for up to one year. Members may submit additional requests if the temporary absence continues past one year. Individuals whose membership has been revoked may reapply for membership. The membership will be reinstated provided they still meet the qualifications in Section 1B and upon the approval of the Elders.

## **ARTICLE II - GOVERNMENT**

### **Section 1. Congregation**

A business meeting shall be called by the Elders at least once per calendar year. Additional meetings may be called by the Board of Elders as the need arises or when twenty-five (25) percent of the members sign a written notice requesting the meeting.

Congregational meetings must be called to affirm the annual budget (or to subsequently affirm an amended budget that exceeds the already affirmed annual budget by more than 3%), to affirm elders and deacons, to affirm the purchase, sale or rental of property, to affirm changes to the Constitution or By-Laws, or to call a senior pastor. Voting shall be by members as described in Article I who are 16 years old or older.

Notice of the meeting must be posted in the church bulletin or other printed medium and announced during the Sunday morning services for at least two consecutive Sundays before the date of any such meeting. However, if the situation is urgent, this notice requirement may be met by attempting to notify all voting members personally, by E-Mail, or by phone.

- A quorum consisting of twenty-five percent (25%) of the members who are eligible to vote is necessary to conduct any congregational meeting. If, after announcements have been made of a congregational meeting for two consecutive Sundays and a quorum is not present at the congregational meeting, the announcement shall be made again for two consecutive Sundays for another congregational meeting. If then a quorum is not present at that meeting, decisions shall be made by those Elders present. If the necessary quorum is present, decisions shall be by a 75% majority of those attending members voting.

Voting by proxy or absentee voting is not permitted.

### **Section 2. Elders**

#### **A. Purpose**

Elders are those men who are responsible for shepherding the flock at Warrenton Bible Fellowship, over which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers. The Board of Elders includes men appointed

by the congregation and may include members of the pastoral or ministerial staff, as deemed appropriate by the Elder Board and affirmed by the congregation. The senior pastor alone will act in the dual role of elder as well as representative of the staff and pastors on the Board of Elders in matters requiring voting. He will be allotted a single vote as such. He may choose a designee from the staff to vote in his absence. However, as provided in Section 2C, bullet one, this voting privilege is null and void in matters regarding termination and suspension of any member of the pastoral staff.

- The Elders are responsible for determining the church's official doctrinal positions and for ensuring that the teaching presented to the congregation is biblically sound and accurate. They will guard the congregation from false teachers, dangerous doctrines, and other influences that could harm the flock that God has placed in their charge.
- The Elders are to pray for, and to provide spiritual oversight, pastoral care and counsel to the congregation.

Executive authority to administer, guide, protect and direct the church and its ministries is vested in the Board of Elders.

## **B. Selection Procedure**

- The Board of Elders will select men as candidates for the Board based on the qualifications for an elder as listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 along with the candidate's doctrinal beliefs and demonstrated pastoral and teaching abilities, and other factors determined by the Board of Elders. Elders must also be members of the church.
- Each recommended man will be asked to provide information about his qualifications and, along with his wife (if married), to be prepared to come before the Elders for an interview.
- The Board of Elders will then make its recommendation to the congregation. This will be done both from the pulpit in all services and in the church bulletin.
- The congregation shall have a minimum of two weeks prior to a town hall style meeting where they may provide input to the Board of Elders on its recommendation. This town hall meeting is a discussion-only meeting with no voting and may be held during the Sunday school hour.
- At a congregational meeting, the candidates selected by the Elders will be voted on for affirmation.
- Within one month, the Elders will then confirm the congregational affirmation by a Service of Installation.

## **C. Termination and Suspension Procedure**

- No pastoral staff member serving on the Board of Elders shall have a vote in the issue of dismissing or disciplining another member of the pastoral staff.
- If, after prayerful consideration, the other members of the Board of Elders unanimously request the temporary suspension of an elder, he shall immediately submit to the suspension. During the period of suspension, all duties associated with the position of elder or pastor will be suspended. (In the case of an elder who is a pastoral staff member, continued pay during suspension shall be at the discretion of the Elders).

- If, after prayerful consideration, the other members of the Board of Elders unanimously request the resignation of an elder, he shall immediately resign. If he fails or refuses to resign, his position is automatically terminated. Notification to the congregation will be made at the first Sunday service following such action.
- Any elder who does not fulfill the qualifications or duties of his office, fails to attend three consecutive Board of Elders meetings without good reason or does not regularly attend the Sunday services of the church shall, after notice and attempt to restore said member, be asked by the Elders to resign from the Board of Elders and notification of such action shall be made at the first Sunday service following. If he fails or refuses to resign, his position will be automatically terminated.

#### **D. Term of Office**

Once initially confirmed, elders shall continue to serve unless removed by the other elders for one of the reasons above or until 75% of the members voting at a congregational meeting request the elder to resign.

An elder who is not facing termination or suspension may request to be temporarily relieved of his responsibilities on the Board of Elders. He may resume his place on the board upon his request.

#### **E. Authority and Responsibilities**

- Ensure that the Purpose of Warrenton Bible Fellowship, as set forth in Article II of its Constitution, is being fulfilled.
- Approve and maintain statements outlining major doctrinal and policy, minutes of Board of Elders' meetings and other appropriate governance records.
- Annually review the job description, including duties and responsibilities of pastoral staff and their performance.
- Provide general supervision and assume final authority over all ministries of the church, the respective ministry teams and all staff and volunteers.
- Continually encourage, support and pray for each ministry of the church, their respective ministry teams and the pastoral staff, both individually and collectively.
- Annually review and approve the goals, direction, organization and accomplishments of all programs and ministries of the church, including, but not limited to, the statements of purpose, operating procedures, bylaws, and budget prior to year end congregational business meeting.
- Set compensation packages for the staff subject to the congregation's affirmation of the church budget.
- Recommend senior pastor candidates to the congregation.
- Establish the need for additional paid and unpaid staff and volunteer positions including pastoral and other ministerial positions, and to determine the requirements for these positions (i.e. qualifications, background checks, etc.). Based on their interpretation of scripture, the elders may determine that some positions may be limited to males only.
- Hire paid and unpaid staff, including other pastoral and ministerial staff (except for the Senior Pastor) and oversee the assignment of volunteers.

- Terminate employment of any member of the pastoral staff.
- Terminate employment of any non-pastoral staff member. Note: the Elders may delegate this responsibility to the Senior Pastor.
- Recommend to the congregation for affirmation candidates to the Board of Deacons.
- Request the suspension or dismissal of members of the Board of Deacons.
- Review and authorize the formation of any ministry teams, boards, committees or auxiliary organizations of the church and to approve their respective charters, bylaws, membership rosters and leadership.
- Act as overseer to the teams, boards, committees and organizations of the church and, if necessary, overrule the decisions of any particular team or organization.
- Consider for approval all recommendations brought before it by the ministries of the church, teams, partnership ministries, auxiliary organizations, or individual members of the church.
- Present the annual budget to the congregation for affirmation.
- Oversee all expenditures of the church.
- Inform and submit to the congregation its recommendations for an amended budget that exceeds the already affirmed total annual budget by more than 3%.
- Authorize, approve and oversee procedures for the raising and collecting of funds.
- Appoint a financial committee to make budget recommendations, handle routine financial operations and make recommendations on financial matters to the Board of Elders.
- Oversee those assigned the responsibility for the purchase, use and maintenance of all property and assets of the church.
- Review and make recommendations to the congregation for the purchase and sale, mortgage and rental of the real property of the church.
- Oversee the preparation of an Annual Report for oral or written communication to the congregation at the year-end congregational business meeting.
- Choose, oversee, support, and pray for Partnership and Associate Ministries.
- Convene, arbitrate, and make final decisions regarding church discipline in accordance with Article I, Section 4.

#### **F. Board of Elders Meetings**

- Board of Elders meetings shall take place at least once a month. Special meetings shall be held upon request of any two or more board members.
- A quorum of 75 percent of the voting members of the Board of Elders must be present to make decisions. Each Board of Elders meeting should have an acting chairman (usually the elder with most tenure) and an acting secretary.

- If a quorum is present, the chairman will determine if all the voting members of the Board of Elders must be present before voting on a particular item.
- No decision by the Board of Elders shall be approved if there is more than one dissenting vote.
- All elders must be informed of all Board of Elders meetings. This includes when the dismissal or discipline of an elder is being considered. During such a meeting it is understood that an elder being considered for discipline or dismissal may be excluded from the meeting but not the notification of such a meeting.
- Some or all elders may gather together for fellowship, training, or work sessions without calling an official meeting. Discussions on any topic and prayer may be conducted at these gatherings provided no decisions are made.

## **G. Officers**

### **1. Chairman**

The Elders shall appoint an elder from their number to serve as Chairman of the Board of Elders. The Chairman shall not be a pastor or other paid employee of the church. In addition to presiding at all meetings of the Board of Elders, the Chairman or his designee shall preside as moderator at all meetings of the congregation.

### **2. Secretary**

The Elders shall appoint a secretary annually. The secretary must be a voting member of the church. The secretary shall keep the minutes of all congregational meetings. The secretary shall also serve as clerk of the congregation and shall oversee the church roll of members and registration at congregational meetings. The secretary shall be charged with the duty of giving proper notice to the Board of Elders and the congregation of all congregational meetings.

### **3. Elder over Finances**

The Elders shall appoint one elder to be responsible for the accounting of all moneys collected and disbursed by the church and each of its ministries. He shall make regular financial reports to the other elders for them to use to monitor and oversee all expenses. The Elder over Finances may serve as long as the Board of Elders deems him competent and he desires to serve.

- The Elder over Finances shall ensure that the congregation receives a Financial Report at regularly scheduled annual congregational business meetings and that the congregation is informed periodically of the status of church finances and arrange audits as required by the Elders.
- The Elder over Finances will serve as the Treasurer. He may recommend to the Elders, for their approval, others to serve as assistant treasurer, bookkeeper, finance committee members and/or all other helpers he deems necessary. He will also assist the Elders in the selection of professional accounting or auditing services to insure: (a) the correct and timely payment of bills and salaries to staff, (b) the orderly and accurate maintenance of records and reports of disbursements and income, and (c) provision of accurate accounting and tax advice.

- He chairs the Finance Committee, and oversees the finances of the Missions Committee, the benevolence fund and all other church funds and activities.
- He shall also prepare individual giving reports to the members of the congregation by the end of January for tax purposes.

#### **4. Other Chairpersons**

Adequate boards and teams shall be appointed and maintained by the Board of Elders as needed for efficient service in the church. The Chairperson(s) of each respective board and team shall be affirmed by the Elders. The Board of Elders shall ask each board or team to produce job descriptions for their chairpersons for the Elders' approval

### **Section 3. Pastoral and Ministerial Staff**

#### **A. Calling**

When the need arises to call a man as senior pastor the intent to do so must be formalized as a motion from the Board of Elders and put to a vote at a congregational meeting. Passage of such a motion obliges the Board of Elders in a timely fashion to:

- Define the particular qualities expected in the senior pastor which would include the candidate's training, experience, reputation, ministerial standing, doctrine, and required giftedness.
- Produce a job description that covers goals, duties, tasks, and salary/compensation package.
- Appoint a Pastoral Search Team. Such a team would consist of five persons: three members of the Board of Elders and two other voting members of the church. These two voting members must first be affirmed by the congregation at a congregational meeting. The team will identify potential candidates, and after appropriate, careful investigation and personal interviews, one candidate will be invited to meet with the Board of Elders. Following their approval the candidate will then be invited to minister the Word at a service of the church. Additionally, the candidate and his wife (if married) will be invited to meet with the congregation at an informal gathering or dinner for the occasion. The candidate the Board of Elders agrees upon will then be recommended to the church for a vote.

#### **B. Pastoral or Ministerial Staff**

When the Elders determine that there exists a need to hire additional pastors or other ministerial staff, the Board of Elders must:

- Define the particular knowledge, skills and abilities for a specific position. This includes the candidate's training, experience, reputation, ministerial standing, doctrine, and required giftedness.
- Produce a job description that covers goals, duties, tasks, and salary/compensation package and length of term.
- Identify potential candidates, and after appropriate, careful investigation and personal interviews, hire the ministerial staff member.

### **C. Term of Service**

Senior pastors serve an indefinite term. Other pastors and ministerial staff members may be appointed to serve for an unlimited or limited period of time as specified in their job description at the time of appointment.

### **D. Oversight**

The daily supervision and training of the other pastor(s), ministerial staff and non-ministerial staff is the responsibility of the Senior Pastor. All pastor(s) and ministerial staff are accountable to the Board of Elders in matters of pastoral ministry and department.

### **E. Termination of a Pastor's Ministry**

The relation between any pastor or ministerial staff member and the church may be dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a three-month notice or by mutual consent.

If a member of the pastoral or ministerial staff should radically depart from the Word of God in his conduct or in doctrine as contained in the Statement of Faith of Warrenton Bible Fellowship as determined by the Board of Elders, the Elders shall admonish him in love. Should this not have the desired result, the Elders shall take the initiate procedures to terminate the offending pastor's employment.

## **Section 4. Board of Deacons**

### **A. Qualifications**

Candidates for Deacon must meet the spiritual qualifications for leadership as stated in Acts 6:3, 1 Timothy 3, and Titus 1. They must also be members of the church.

### **B. Appointment**

The Board of Deacons will select candidates who meet with their approval and then present the names to the Board of Elders for review. The Elders will formulate a roster of candidates and present the candidates' names to the congregation during all services two weeks prior to a town hall style meeting where they may provide input to the Board of Elders on its recommendation. This town hall meeting is a discussion-only meeting with no voting and may be held during the Sunday school hour. At a congregational meeting the men will be introduced and a vote of affirmation will be conducted.

### **C. Board of Deacon Meetings**

- Board of Deacon meetings shall be held at least once a quarter or more often as determined by the Chairman of the Board of Deacons. Special meetings shall be called at the request of any two or more board members.

### **D. Term of Office**

Once initially confirmed, a Deacon shall continue to serve unless removed by the Board of Elders (see Section 4F) or until he resigns.

## **E. Duties**

The Board of Deacons shall recommend its own chairman, secretary and treasurer and submit those names to the Elders for approval. Each Deacon is to be responsible for a specific area of service in the church. He will also be responsible for enlisting and coordinating volunteers to help. These areas include such things as:

- Maintenance and care of the building, information technology, vehicles, etc.
- Maintenance and care of the grounds
- Purchase of equipment, supplies and other day-to-day needs of the church
- Sunday morning activities such as security, offerings collection, greeters, sound system and/or audio-visual
- Disbursement of the benevolence fund for internal needs and community social action under the oversight of the Elder over Finances
- Coordination of schedules to facilitate requirements for special functions and the needs of various ministries including partnership ministries
- Assistance to the Board of Elders with planning for building and maintenance programs, equipment replacement, budgeting and financial planning, and special projects.
- Visitation as requested by the Pastoral Staff
- Oversight and coordination of outreach or administrative activities and other ministries of mercy as determined by the Board of Elders
- Other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders

## **F. Discipline and Dismissal**

- Effort must be made to restore a deacon ensnared in sin according to Article I, Section 4.
- The Chairman of the Board of Deacons must attempt to restore any deacon who does not fulfill the qualifications or duties of his office, fails to attend three consecutive Board of Deacon meetings or functions without good reason, or does not regularly attend the Sunday Services of the Church. If these efforts are not successful, the Chairman of the Board of Deacons will make a recommendation to the Elder Board that they consider requesting the suspension or dismissal of the offending deacon.
- If the Board of Elders requests the temporary suspension of a deacon, he shall immediately submit to the suspension. During the period of suspension, all duties associated with the position of deacon will be suspended.
- If the Board of Elders requests the resignation of a deacon, he shall immediately resign. If he fails or refuses to resign, his position is automatically terminated. Notification to the congregation will be made at the first Sunday service following such action.

## **Section 5. Trustees**

- There shall be at least three Trustees to serve in a fiduciary capacity for all church assets and to perform such duties as are prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Virginia governing religious corporations and duties pertaining to trusteeship. Only elders or deacons may serve as a Trustee. One of the three must be the church Treasurer. Pastoral and ministerial staff may not serve as Trustees.
- The Board of Elders will appoint Trustees and will notify the congregation of their appointment. Trustees will continue to serve in that capacity until they resign or the Board of Elders requests their resignation or the Congregation votes to ask for their resignation at a duly-called congregational meeting. Application shall be made to a court of competent jurisdiction for the judicial appointment of those Trustees to serve as juristic representatives of the congregation in financial and property concerns of the church.
- The Trustees shall have the authority to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any real or personal property as authorized by congregational vote and may execute any legal documents required for that sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of that real or personal property. They have the authority to execute any legal documents required to hold in trust all savings, investments, or accounts where assets must be held in trust. Trustees also have the authority to sign, execute, or otherwise authenticate all documents required by State or Federal law to be executed by Trustees on behalf of the church.
- The private property of the Trustees of this church shall be exempt from corporate debt.

## **ARTICLE III. KEY MATTERS**

### **Section 1. Services**

Worship services, Sunday School, and other church services shall be conducted at such times as decided by the Elders.

### **Section 2. Baptism**

Following Jesus' command recorded in Matt. 28:19, we believe that all Christians should be identified as believers in Jesus Christ through baptism. The biblical example that we follow is baptism by immersion in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pastors, elders or any other Christian may administer this ordinance.

### **Section 3. Communion**

We believe that during the Last Supper described in Matt. 26, Jesus commanded the church to celebrate the Communion, regularly sharing the bread and wine (or grape juice) as an act of remembrance/participation of the sacrifice He made to atone for our sins and save us. Membership is not required to participate in this celebration. Individuals who do not recognize Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior should refrain from participating.

### **Section 4. Marriage**

Marriage is the original and foundational institution of human society, established by God and described in Scripture (i.e. Matt. 19:5) as a one-flesh, covenantal union between a man and a woman

that is intended to be life-long (until separated by death), exclusive (monogamous and faithful), and procreative in nature (designed for bearing and rearing children). It is to reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. This definition of marriage is intimately connected to other foundational matters of our faith as described in our Statement of Faith. Therefore, we regard any restrictions and definitions we apply in our church concerning marriage to be an exercise of the freedom of religion clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Only marriages that are determined by the Board of Elders, at their sole discretion, to be in conformity with biblical doctrine may be conducted on church property and/or officiated by members of the congregation (including pastoral or ministerial staff).

### **Section 5. Building Use**

The use of the facilities for meetings, family/social functions, not-for-profit classes & functions and other purposes deemed appropriate by the Elders, will be restricted to voting members of the congregation. Any such use shall be in harmony with our theology, doctrine and the Elder Board's determination of how the Scriptures would apply to any given situation. In the event of any dispute over how the building or grounds may be used, the Elders' decision will be final.

### **ARTICLE IV. - AMENDMENTS**

These By-Laws may be amended or altered by a 75% majority of those voting at a congregational meeting provided notification of the amendment(s) or alteration(s) proposed by the Elders has been made in writing, and announced to the congregation at least two Sundays in succession prior to such meeting.