

# The Constitution

of Faith Fellowship Church of Cincinnati, Ohio

## Preamble

In the beginning God created the world and everything in it and declared it all very good. However, our first parents, though created perfectly, sinned, severing a relationship with the holy God. But God, in His mercy and kindness, sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to die on a cross and be raised from the dead to restore this broken relationship with God. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, those who embrace Christ's sacrifice become God's children. As God's children, we willingly organize ourselves under the headship of Christ. We submit ourselves to the following articles so that all of our affairs may be conducted in a fitting and orderly fashion for the glory of God.

## Article I: Name and Location

The name of this church shall be Faith Fellowship Church of Cincinnati, Ohio. This church is located at 6734 Bridgetown Road, Cincinnati, OH 45248.

## Article II: Purpose

**Section 1.** Since God the Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to redeem us and make us His own, the purpose of this church shall be to glorify, enjoy, worship and make known the only true, most high and living God. We will do this by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as the only means of our salvation and, by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, laboring to fulfill His great commission (Matt. 28:18-20). We will make disciples who proclaim God's greatness in worship, serve one another and minister the Gospel in the world.

**Section 2.** This purpose shall be accomplished by using the many means that God has established, namely through preaching (2 Tim. 4:2); teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, and singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord (Col. 3:16); the public reading of the Scriptures (1 Tim. 4:13); and the administration of baptism (Matt. 28:19) and the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:17-20). We will perform all of these in obedience to Him with understanding, faith, reverence and godly fear, regularly worshiping together (Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:24-25), encouraging one another in the things of God (Heb. 3:13), exercising church discipline (Matt. 18:15:-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-13), equipping the saints for works of service (Eph. 4:12) and performing all other duties found in the Scriptures.

**Section 3.** In order to spread the good news of the salvation that we so richly enjoy and to make disciples of Christ, this purpose will also include supporting missionary and church-planting work at home and abroad (Matt. 28:19-20) as well as supporting other ministries assisting in these efforts.

### **Article III: Affiliation**

**Section 1.** This church believes in the autonomy of the local church under God. This church believes that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church and that we have fellowship with every other church that acknowledges His Lordship. This church believes that every local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs.

**Section 2.** This church is also affiliated with CBAmerica, aka the Conservative Baptist Association of America, and is pledged to support the program, policies and institutions inherent in this fellowship.

### **Article IV: Statement of Faith**

**Section 1. God.** We believe in one God, having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**Section 2. The Bible.** We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old Testament and New Testament, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings; the complete revelation of His will for salvation; and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires and trusted in all that it promises.

**Section 3. The Human Condition.** We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

**Section 4. Jesus Christ.** We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah—was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin, Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

**Section 5. The Work of Christ.** We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

**Section 6. The Holy Spirit.** We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

**Section 7. The Church.** We believe that the true Church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true Church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the Gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

**Section 8. Christian Living.** God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the Gospel in word and deed.

**Section 9. Christ's Return.** We believe in the personal, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, requires constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

**Section 10. Response and Eternal Destiny.** We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the Gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

## **Article V: Church Government**

**Section 1. Congregation.** The final authority for this local church shall be vested in its voting membership, which operates as one body under its Leader, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Section 2. Leadership.** According to the Scriptures, there are two offices in the Church: elder and deacon. The congregation of this church will exercise the authority described in Section 1 of this article by affirming elders and respectfully and peacefully submitting to them and by affirming deacons to serve and support the church (1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7-8, 17).

**Section 3. Elders.** The board of elders will provide leadership (1 Tim. 3:4-5), preach and teach God's Word (1 Tim. 5:17), and tend to the souls given to their care (1 Peter 5:1-2). They will work to equip the saints (Eph. 4:11-12), devote themselves to prayer and fasting (Acts 6:4, 13:1-3), preside over the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper (Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26), enforce proper church discipline and restoration (1 Cor. 5:1-5), pray for the healing of the sick (James 5:14-15) and other scriptural duties.

- A. Senior Pastor. The senior pastor is an elder who is called into full-time ministry by the church and set aside to dedicate himself to all the elder duties—especially to prayer, preaching and teaching (Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 5:17), and shepherding (leading and caring for the church).
- B. Officers. The board of elders shall serve as the board of directors of the corporation. The officers of this church shall be the chairman, vice chairman, clerk and treasurer of the corporation and shall be elected to those positions by the board of directors of the corporation. These offices are not scriptural requirements but are necessary to comply with state regulations, and we therefore submit to them (Romans 13:1). In order to meet the state’s requirement and at the same time maintain a biblical form of government, only elders will fill these offices.

**Section 4. Deacons.** Deacons will administer the benevolent and temporal concerns of the church. They will fulfill the duties of the office in cooperation with and under the direction of the elders.

**Section 5. Bylaws.** This church may establish a set of bylaws to implement this constitution. The Bible is the preeminent authority in this church. Below that, the order of authority of documents within this church will be (1) this constitution, including any articles of doctrine; (2) any established bylaws; and (3) other official policies and documents.

## **Article VI: Membership**

**Section 1. Membership.** Membership, as a function of Faith Fellowship Church, is to confirm membership in Christ’s Church, to enjoy our Christian life together and for the purpose of maintaining local church government so that our affairs may be conducted in decency and good order (1 Cor. 14:40). Church membership is not to be used to disrupt Christian unity or prevent fellowship with saints in other churches (Eph. 4:3-6).

**Section 2. Qualifications.** Members of this church must have a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior (Romans 1:16), have submitted to the waters of Christian baptism (Acts 2:41), be manifesting in their lives the fruit of a true and living faith in Christ (James 2:17) and be in agreement with the statement of faith (Article IV).

**Section 3. Duties.** All members should endeavor, with God’s help, to faithfully perform their Christian duties, including the regular, systematic reading of the Bible (Acts 17:11); private and family prayer (Eph. 6:18); personal and public testimony (2 Tim. 1:8); presenting the reason for their hope to the lost (1 Peter 3:15); participation in the activities of this church (Heb. 10:25), including business meetings; interaction and fellowship with the saints; and regular attendance at church worship services, including the Lord’s Supper (Acts 2:42).

**Section 4. Stewardship.** Members will make regular, significant and generous contributions of their time, talents and finances to the work and ministry of this church.

Members are expected to give as the Lord leads, with 10% of their income being a good guideline in their giving to the Lord through this local church.

**Section 5. Termination of Membership.** A person's membership in this church may be terminated upon his or her physical death, at the member's request, upon excommunication, due to lack of attendance at regular times of worship or due to a consistent lack of participation in the life of this congregation (see Section 3 of this article).

## **Article VII: Services and Meetings**

**Section 1.** This church shall meet at least weekly on Sunday, the Lord's Day, to worship God corporately. This worship will at least include singing, praying and preaching of the Holy Bible. The Lord's Supper will be celebrated at least monthly. This church shall also meet for prayer and other worshipful activities and gospel ministries.

**Section 2.** An annual church business meeting will be conducted, as well as other regularly scheduled business meetings. Special meetings can be called as required, under the direction of the board of elders.

## **Article VIII: Dissolution**

**Section 1.** If division should occur, from which we earnestly ask God to spare us, the name and property of this church shall be retained by those adhering to this constitution and bylaws.

**Section 2.** In the event of dissolution of the corporation, its assets remaining after payment, or provision for payment, of all debts and liabilities of this corporation shall become the possession of the CBAmerica, North Central District, provided that adherence to the doctrine of this constitution is maintained by that body. In the event that this body has not remained faithful to said doctrine, the property shall revert to a denominational group or missionary board that qualifies, as determined by the church's board of directors. In any case, the assets shall be distributed only to organizations that are organized and operated exclusively for religious purposes and that have established their tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). In the event of dissolution, the elder chairman, elder clerk and elder treasurer of this church shall constitute the board of directors during the dissolution process.

## **Article IX: Terms and Limitations**

**Section 1.** The term of existence of this corporation shall be in perpetuity without specific term of existence.

**Section 2.** The corporation is organized and operated exclusively for religious or charitable purposes within the meaning of IRC section 501(c)(3).

**Section 3.** No substantial part of the activities of this corporation shall consist of carrying on propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence local, state or federal governmental legislation. Further, the corporation shall not participate or intervene in any political campaign (including the publishing or distribution of statements) on behalf of any candidate for public office.

**Article X: Amendments**

**Section 1.** Articles II; III Section 1; IV; VIII; IX; and X Section 1 of this constitution may be amended by an 80% vote at a congregational business meeting with a quorum of at least 60% of church members. Written notice of such amendments must be made available at least two weeks before the meeting.

**Section 2.** Any article or section of this constitution not excluded in Section 1 of this article may be amended by majority vote at a congregational business meeting with a quorum of at least 50% of church members. Written notice of such amendments must be made available at least two weeks before the meeting.

# **The Bylaws of Faith Fellowship Church of Cincinnati, Ohio**

## **Introduction**

These bylaws are established under Article V, Section 5, of the constitution of the Faith Fellowship Church of Cincinnati, Ohio, and are in accordance with that document.

## **Article I: Membership**

**Section 1. Admission.** Membership, as a function of this church, is to confirm membership in Christ's Church, to promote and enjoy our Christian life together and for the purpose of maintaining local church government so that our affairs may be conducted in decency and good order. To that end, the following will apply for those seeking membership:

- A. Regular Attendance. Normally, to be considered a candidate for membership, an individual shall have regularly attended at least the weekly worship service for four months. This is to demonstrate a genuine desire to worship with us, to make a commitment to this church, to allow time to develop relationships and to ensure a desire to be part of this congregation.
- B. Membership Class. All candidates for membership shall be required to complete a membership class conducted by the elders. The class will cover the distinctions of CBAmerica, aka as the Conservative Baptist Association of America, and Faith Fellowship Church's constitution, bylaws, articles of doctrine, vision and ministries, as well as other topics that the elders deem necessary. Candidates will present their personal testimony during the class so that the elders can verify that they meet the qualifications for membership as stated in Article VI, Section 2, of the constitution of this church. Any reservations that prospective members might have with the church's statement of faith (Article IV of the constitution) will be discussed during the class or privately, and the elders will determine whether those reservations are significant enough to disqualify the prospective member.
- C. Letters of Transfer. No letters of transfer will be accepted or issued.
- D. Congregational Vote. To be received into the membership of this church, a candidate must have completed the membership class, be recommended to the congregation by the elders and be accepted by a simple majority vote of the members at a congregational business meeting with at least a 30% quorum.

## **Section 2. Benefits and Privileges.**

- A. Members. Members who are 16 years of age or older may vote at any congregational business meeting. If qualified according to these bylaws and

called, members may serve in affirmed positions of leadership in this church. Members will benefit from significant ministry opportunities and personal care and concern.

**B. Nonvoting Members.**

1. Members unable to attend business meetings for reasons such as out-of-the-area school or work commitments, missionary or military service, or physical incapacity may be designated as nonvoting members by the elders and will not be counted toward a quorum. This should normally be a temporary situation with a foreseeable conclusion, except for incapacity.
2. Members under the age of 16 may not vote in business meetings but are afforded all other rights and privileges.

**C. Voting Privileges.** Nonvoting members who desire to be voting members must apply to and be approved by the elders and be designated as such at a congregational business meeting before any voting takes place.

**Section 3. Responsibilities.** Members must seek to fulfill their duties as described in Article VI, Sections 3 and 4, of the constitution. They should maintain contact with the elders so that the elders can help them fulfill these requirements.

**Section 4. Termination.**

- A. Resignation or Death. Members will be dropped from membership by the elders at a time of a member's resignation or in the event of his or her death. A member's resignation shall be presented to an elder in writing with a signature.
- B. Nonattendance or Lack of Commitment. Members who have not attended worship services or congregational business meetings at this church for a significant period of time, or those who have not given of their time, talents and finances, may be dropped from the membership by the elders. The individual will be given notice before removal. Furthermore, if the elders see the member regularly failing to live up to the responsibilities outlined in Article VI of the constitution, they will seek to strengthen, encourage and edify the member. If, after diligent efforts, the member is still failing in constitutional duties, the elders may drop him or her from membership.
- C. Disciplinary Action. When church discipline is necessary, the biblical guidelines outlined in Article II, Section 2(D)(4), of these bylaws shall be followed at the elders' discretion.

**Section 5. Reinstatement.** Those dropped from the membership as provided for in the previous section may be reinstated by the elders in the following manners:

- A. If by Resignation. Those who resign their membership may be reinstated without attending the membership class unless the elders determine that it would be beneficial for the church or for the person seeking to be reinstated.
- B. If by Nonattendance or Lack of Commitment. Those who have been removed for nonattendance or lack of commitment, and desire reinstatement, shall be in regular attendance and demonstrate commitment for at least six months before being considered. The elders shall decide whether enrollment in the membership class is necessary.
- C. If by Disciplinary Action. At the elders' discretion, see Article II, Section 2(D)(4), of these bylaws.

## **Article II: Government**

### **Section 1. Congregation.**

- A. The final authority for this church is vested in its membership as stated in Article V, Section 1, of our constitution. We do not understand this to mean that the Body of Christ is a democracy where each member must vote on every decision, though each is to be involved in the governance of the church (for example, see Acts 1:12-26, 6:1-6). This congregation will seek to recognize God's calling of men to leadership positions, appoint such men as their leaders and willingly and humbly submit to those leaders as unto Christ (see Article V, Section 2, of the constitution).
- B. Members of this church shall exercise their vested authority by (1) approving the church's budget; (2) affirming the calling of men to be elders and deacons; (3) approving the calling or removing of a man to be senior pastor; (4) approving all changes to the church's constitution and bylaws; (5) adopting articles of doctrine; (6) accepting people into membership; and (7) approving major property decisions. Major property decisions require at least a 30% quorum and a majority vote to pass.

### **Section 2. Elders.**

- A. Qualifications. A man whom this church shall affirm for the office of elder shall meet the biblical requirements of 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-5 as a current, present reality in his life. Additionally, he must be a member of this church in good standing for at least one year, shall have attended this church's worship service regularly for at least a year and shall be a spiritually mature man who has evidence of the spiritual gifts to lead the church. He shall have a good understanding of biblical doctrine and be in agreement with the doctrinal position of the church as expressed in the church's statement of faith (Article IV of the constitution) and support the articles of doctrine.

Most of the biblical qualifications for elders are clear and easily understood. However, some are more difficult because of the differences between our culture and those of the New Testament. Following is basically how we understand those qualifications to apply to us today. Much more could be said, but here is a brief description:

1. “The husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6). In the day in which this statement was written, bigamy was practiced. We do not understand the apostle Paul here to mean that only married men may be elders, nor that divorced and remarried men cannot be. His marriage and household are covered in other biblical injunctions.
  2. “Able to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9). One of the most important roles of an elder is that of teacher. This does not mean that a prospective elder must be a preacher or a teacher in a formal church setting since not all elders devote themselves to these tasks (1 Tim. 5:17). In Titus 1:9, Paul says an elder must hold “fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.” In other words, he must be a man who understands doctrine well and can explain and apply it – someone who is theologically astute enough to recognize and refute error. He must be able to publicly address the congregation from the Scriptures in an encouraging and understandable manner.
  3. “Not addicted to wine” (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7). An elder must not be a drunkard. This does not mean complete abstinence from alcohol, nor would it exclude a man who once had a problem with drinking but has lived a sober life for an acceptable period of time. If an elder drinks alcohol, he should not drink to the point that he loses respectable control of himself.
  4. “Having children who believe, not accused of being wild or disobedient (Titus 1:6). Paul has established that men who are qualified to be elders are men whose households are in order (1 Tim. 3:4). Considering what Paul said in 1 Tim. 3:4, we understand this to mean children who are obedient, in respectful submission to their father’s authority while under his roof. His children should not be self-indulgent nor needlessly cause division or resist authority.
- B. Selection. The senior pastor is exempt from this process (see Article II, Section 3, of these bylaws).
1. Nomination. Each year, the elders will develop a list of men to be considered for the office of elder and will forward it to the nominating committee. The desired minimum number of qualified and gifted men called to this office is four. The elders will select as many qualified men as is necessary for the smooth functioning of the church. Other members may be involved in this process if it is deemed necessary or helpful by the elders.

- a. The performance and qualification of sitting elders will be considered and if they remain qualified and willing to serve, they may be asked to serve again. The term of office is three years. A sitting elder will not automatically be returned to office. If it is determined that a sitting elder should not serve again or an elder decides not to return to the office, the elder will not be presented to the congregation for affirmation. He will cease to function as a sitting elder on Jan. 1 of the following year. Terms for the board of elders will be staggered to ensure continuity of leadership.
  - b. The affirmation process is not intended to, and should not, replace church discipline. If an elder is involved in sin that warrants it, church discipline shall be exercised.
  - c. If there are no gifted men available for the position, none will be nominated. If this is the case, the senior pastor will more diligently seek to train and disciple promising men for the office. The congregation should focus their prayers on God equipping and raising up such men for them.
2. Congregational Review Period. At least two weeks before the business meeting at which the nominated elders will be affirmed, the church nominating committee will publish the names of the men being considered for the office. During this time, members will pray and should fast concerning the calling of these men.
  3. Affirmation. Elders will be affirmed by the congregation no later than the fall quarterly congregational business meeting. Elders will be affirmed in a secret-ballot election by at least a 40% quorum with at least 75% voting in favor.
  4. Installation. The elder's term will normally begin Jan. 1 of his first year of service and end Dec. 31 of his last year of service. Newly affirmed elders will be installed by having the current elders lay hands on them before the congregation. This shall normally take place in January.
  5. Midyear Appointments. In the event that another elder is needed during the year (for example, to replace a sitting elder who can no longer serve), the same qualifications and basic procedures apply. The elders must submit the prospective elder's name to the members at least two weeks in advance, and a special congregational vote of affirmation will occur. His term as elder will begin once the congregation has affirmed him and the elders have laid hands on him, and will end Dec. 31 of the year of the term of the elder being replaced.
- C. Organization. The elders shall meet as often as is needed but not less than monthly. They shall select from among themselves a chairman, vice chairman, clerk and treasurer in accordance with Article V, Section 3(B), of the constitution.

The senior pastor may not serve as an officer and will vote only in the case of a tie. The elders will fill these positions before the first elder meeting of the year, as soon as is practical after the congregational vote of affirmation. In making decisions, the elders will seek unanimity, although a majority vote is sufficient unless otherwise stated. At times, unanimity might not be possible; in such cases, the chairman will exercise great care when deciding to proceed without unanimity. A quorum of at least 50% of the elder board is required to meet. Elders must be present to vote.

1. Chairman. The elder designated as chairman of the elder board will:
  - a. Set the agenda for and preside over elder meetings.
  - b. Set the agenda for and preside at all congregational business meetings. He will employ Robert's Rules of Order, or a modified version of them at his discretion, to ensure that meetings are conducted in an orderly fashion.
2. The Vice Chairman. The elder designated as vice chairman of the elder board will fill in for the chairman when the chairman is not available.
3. Clerk. The elder designated as clerk of the elder board will:
  - a. Record and publish the minutes of elder meetings after review by the chairman.
  - b. Oversee the recording and publishing of the minutes of all congregational business meetings after review by the chairman.
  - c. Oversee the keeping of the roster of all members of this church and the record of attendance at all congregational business meetings.
  - d. File minutes and all official documents and correspondence with the church.
4. Treasurer. The elder designated as treasurer of the elder board will:
  - a. Oversee and coordinate the church financial secretary, church treasurer and church business administrator, as necessary.
  - b. Assure that the management of the church's financial affairs is carried out in a manner consistent with recognized good business practices.
  - c. Provide financial records of this church for audit. The elders will appoint an audit committee at least once each year as defined under these bylaws (see Article II, Section 5(E) of these bylaws). The elder treasurer and audit committee shall report the results of this annual audit no later than the summer quarterly business meeting.
  - d. Submit a written annual financial report at the fall quarterly business meeting.

D. Duties.

1. Leadership. All programs, ministries and activities, as well as administrative, business and financial matters, of this church shall be under the oversight of the elders. The elders, in fellowship with the senior pastor, shall set the

direction of the church. In doing this, they shall seek to honor and glorify God through Jesus Christ, follow the commandments and limitations of the Scriptures, and strengthen and build up the church. The chairman of the elder board, the treasurer of the elder board, the clerk of the elder board, the business administrator of the church or the senior pastor, under the oversight of the elders, may obligate the church.

2. Shepherding. The elders will watch over the souls that have been given into their care (Heb.13:17, 1 Thess. 5:12-13, 1 Peter 5:1-5). In order to do this, the elders will dedicate themselves to prayer, fasting and personal discipleship of the congregation.
  3. Preaching and Teaching. One of the elders' primary roles shall be to preach and teach God's Word. The senior pastor will preach at the regular Lord's Day worship. The other elders should be involved in teaching to some degree.
  4. Discipline. The elders will encourage the church body to pursue holiness together as the normal course of their life together in Christ. If intervention becomes necessary to correct sinfulness, the elders will follow such passages as Gal. 6:1-2; Matt. 7:21-23 and 18:15-35; John 20:22-23; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; 2 Thess. 3:14-15; 2 Tim. 2:25-26; Heb. 3:12-19, 6:1-8 and 10:26-31; and James 5:19-20. When a member is considered by the elders to be under the discipline process, the member's resignation shall not be accepted.
- E. Charges Against an Elder. Disciplinary actions against an elder discovered to be in sin shall follow Article II, Section 2(D)4, of these bylaws, except that charges against an elder must be presented by two or three witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19-20). These witnesses will be interviewed separately by the other elders. If the charges are serious enough and the elders agree, an accused elder may be suspended during the discipline process. If the accusation is true and it disqualifies him from the office of elder, he will be removed and be publicly rebuked. Restoration will be pursued through church discipline. If the elder charged is the senior pastor and he is found to be disqualified from the office of senior pastor, the procedures for termination listed in Article II, Section 3(E), of these bylaws will be followed.
- F. Pastoral, Ministerial and Other Staff. As deemed necessary by the elders, this church may employ and support various types of staff members, full- or part-time. The senior pastor has the authority to hire and terminate all staff with approval from the elders. Such staff members will report to and be supervised directly by the senior pastor and indirectly by the elders. All pastoral staff members and their spouses shall be granted voting member status of this church.
- G. Committees. The elders may appoint committees at any time in order to complete required tasks, inform and advise the elders or for other designated reasons.

Committees should normally be filled with church members. Nonmembers, including regular attendees, may be included when deemed appropriate.

**Section 3. Senior Pastor.** In order to fulfill its stated purpose, this church shall call and support a man to be the senior pastor.

- A. Qualifications. The senior pastor shall meet the same qualifications as other elders and shall be considered the head elder. Additional attention shall be given to his ability to preach and teach God's Word and his gifts and abilities to shepherd the flock of Jesus Christ. The senior pastor shall subscribe to the church's constitution (notably Article IV, the statement of faith), the articles of doctrine and bylaws.
- B. Responsibilities. The senior pastor should be ordained by CBAmerica, aka the Conservative Baptist Association of America, or a denomination holding like doctrine and faith, or he must seek such credentialing. The senior pastor will be the primary preacher at regular worship services, devoting his time to the teaching and preaching of God's Word, to prayer for the church and to the care and oversight of the ministry of the church. The senior pastor shall be considered the primary leader of this church and "first among equals" in regard to the elders.
- C. Privileges. The senior pastor is an elder who serves the church in full-time ministry. In order to set him aside for ministry, the church will provide a suitable income for him and his family. Installation of the senior pastor may be conducted at any date that is convenient. By virtue of his position, the senior pastor and his wife shall be members of this church. The senior pastor shall be an *ex officio* member of all committees of this church.
- D. Selection. If the position of senior pastor is vacant, the elders shall establish a pastoral search committee, which will screen candidates for the office. The committee shall be composed of a broad representation of the body at large. The elders will oversee the development of a profile of the man they are seeking, and the committee will use this profile in a search for the candidate. The committee will select a candidate to recommend to the elder board for its approval. Following this approval, the candidate will be presented to the congregation for approval. A special business meeting shall be called to consider the candidate, with written notice given at least two weeks before the meeting. A quorum of at least 50% of the membership, with at least an 80% affirmative vote by secret ballot, shall be the minimum required to extend a call to a candidate. Only one candidate shall be considered by the congregation at a time.
- E. Termination. If the senior pastor desires to resign his position or the congregation desires to terminate his ministry in this church, three months' notice of such action shall be given in writing, unless waived by mutual consent of the senior pastor and the elders. To terminate the senior pastor's ministry, the elders shall call a special business meeting with written notice given at least two weeks before the meeting. A recommendation by the elders for termination shall be presented,

and a secret-ballot vote shall then be taken. A quorum of at least 50% of the members, with at least 80% of those members voting for termination, shall be the minimum requirements.

#### **Section 4. Deacons.**

A. Qualifications. A man whom this church shall affirm for the office of deacon will meet the biblical requirements of 1 Tim. 3:8-13 in his life. He must be a member of this church in good standing for at least one year, shall have attended this church's worship service regularly for at least a year and shall be spiritually mature. He shall have a good understanding of biblical doctrine and be in agreement with the doctrinal position of the church as expressed in the church's statement of faith (Article IV of the constitution) and support the articles of doctrine.

Most of the biblical qualifications for deacons are clear and easily understood. However, some are more difficult because of the differences between our culture and those of the New Testament. Following is basically how we understand these terms to apply to us today. Much more could be said, but here is a brief description:

1. "Let deacons be husbands of only one wife" (1 Tim. 3:12). In the day in which this statement was written, bigamy was practiced. We do not understand the apostle Paul here to mean that only married men may be deacons, nor that divorced and remarried men cannot be. His marriage and household are covered in other biblical injunctions.
2. "Not addicted to much wine" (1 Tim. 3:8). A deacon must not be a drunkard. This does not mean complete abstinence from alcohol, nor would it exclude a man who once had a problem with drinking but has lived a sober life for an acceptable period of time. If a deacon drinks alcohol, he should not drink to the point that he loses respectable control of himself.

B. Selection. The deacons will be selected in the same manner as the elders following the procedure in Article II, Section 2(B). The difference in selection shall be in the man's qualifications and giftedness for this unique office.

C. Duties. The deacons will administer the benevolent concerns of this church as instituted by the elders. Additionally, they will oversee the physical condition of the church property. They must fulfill the duties of their office in cooperation with, and in subjection to, the elders. They will meet at least monthly and will submit a monthly report to the elders.

1. At their first meeting of the year, the deacons will appoint a chairman and a vice chairman from among themselves who will interface with the chairman of the elders. This will be the primary, but not necessarily exclusive, form of liaison between these groups.

2. Deacons will receive donations for the church's benevolence fund and will administer the fund under the oversight of the elders. They also can be called upon to perform other tasks, such as assisting members with day-to-day needs as they arise and assisting with hospital visits.
  3. Deacons will record the minutes of their meetings and publish the minutes after review by the chairman.
- D. Decisions. In making decisions, the deacons will seek unanimity, although a majority vote is sufficient. At times, unanimity might not be possible; in such cases, the chairman will exercise great care when deciding to proceed without unanimity. A quorum of at least 50% of the deacon board is required to meet. Deacons must be present to vote.

### **Section 5. Other Offices.**

- A. The Officers Council. This body will be composed of the elders, deacons, elected church officers and heads of ministry as designated by the elders. The senior pastor will preside over the meetings of the officers council.

#### Duties:

1. The officers council will meet quarterly, before the posting of the congregational business meeting agenda, which is at least two weeks before the meeting.
2. This body will serve as an advisory body to the elders.

- B. The Nominating Committee. This body will be composed of two elders (appointed by the elder board), two deacons (appointed by the deacon board) and three at-large church members in good standing. The three members of the congregation will be recommended by the officers council. The nominating committee shall be submitted to the congregation for approval at the summer quarterly business meeting. A quorum of at least 50% of the nominating committee is required to meet.

#### Duties:

1. Members shall select a chairman at their first meeting.
2. The committee will receive written recommendations from the congregation through Aug. 31.
3. The committee will select a slate of officers for the following year, after much prayer and leading by the Holy Spirit. Before candidates are notified, the slate of officers shall be forwarded to the senior pastor for his approval.
4. The committee's report shall be posted in prominent locations and published in the bulletin at least two weeks before the fall congregational quarterly business meeting, at which time an election of church officers will take place.

5. The nominating committee shall stand for one year from the date of members' election.

C. Finance Committee. This body will be composed of the elder treasurer, church treasurer, church financial secretary, church business administrator and a deacon selected by the deacons. This committee shall be a standing committee and shall be responsible to the elder board. It is responsible for overseeing the financial and stewardship areas of Faith Fellowship Church. A quorum of at least 50% of the finance committee is required to meet.

Duties:

1. This committee is responsible for modifying the budgeted expenditures of the church (when financial conditions dictate), accepting all designated giving requests, establishing a financial plan for the church and overseeing all areas of building fund and general fund finances.
2. This committee shall provide systematic and regular information to the church family regarding our financial position and our needs.
3. This committee will make recommendations to the elder board regarding changes and programs that need to be implemented to promote sound church finance.
4. All members of this committee also are part of the expanded budget committee, which will include the addition of two at-large members of the congregation, as defined in these bylaws (Section 5(D)).

D. Budget Committee. This body will be composed of finance committee members and two at-large church members in good standing, the latter being recommended by the elder board for approval at the summer congregational quarterly business meeting. A quorum of at least 50% of the budget committee is required to meet.

Duties:

1. Members shall choose a chairman at their first meeting.
2. This committee shall consult with the various departments of the church and prepare the annual budget, subject to review and adjustment by the elder board, for presentation and adoption at the fall congregational quarterly business meeting.
3. Upon adoption of the annual budget, this committee shall disband.

E. Audit Committee. This body will be composed of at least three at-large church members in good standing who have not been directly involved in the handling of church finances during the year being audited. They shall be recommended by the elder board for approval at the winter congregational quarterly business meeting. The audit committee is a standing committee and as such will have members who serve terms of two years with at least one remaining each year for continuity. Neither the elder treasurer, the church treasurer, the church business administrator, the church financial secretary nor the church assistant financial secretary shall be a member of the audit committee.

Duties:

1. This committee shall audit the books of the treasurer and financial secretary for the preceding year, excluding the records of individual giving.
2. Results of these audits are to be made a matter of written record and reported to the church no later than the summer congregational quarterly business meeting.

- F. Church Business Administrator. This position shall be filled by a church member in good standing. The business administrator shall be appointed, and can be dismissed, by the senior pastor with elder board approval.

Duties. The business administrator will:

1. Manage all business contracts of the church.
2. Be responsible for verifying the accuracy of all bills and preparing payment through the church treasurer, or paying them as needed.
3. Be responsible for working with the budget committee to prepare and present a budget to the congregation each year.
4. Order materials for various ministries and supplies for deacons, as needed, as well as the weekly church giving envelopes on an annual basis.
5. Acquire and renew the various licenses, such as those for music and video or those required by governments, for the smooth operation of the church.
6. Ensure that the church is in compliance with governmental regulations, such as placement of workplace notices or inspections of the septic system and the kitchen.
7. Maintain financial policies that protect the church and ensure good stewardship.
8. Perform additional duties deemed as necessary by the board of deacons or the senior pastor.

- G. Church Treasurer. This position shall be filled by a church member in good standing. He/she will be nominated by the nominating committee with the approval of the elder board and voted on by the congregation at the fall quarterly business meeting. This position is for a one-year term.

Duties. The church treasurer will:

1. Receive a report from the counting teams of all tithes and offerings and dispense such reports as ordered by the church.
2. Present a written report at the quarterly congregational business meetings, showing the actual financial condition of the church.
3. Prepare checks to be signed by the church treasurer or other officers authorized through the elder board by the bank.
4. Be available to attend elder board meetings as requested.
5. Reconcile bank records to the church records.

6. Provide records and updated database elements in support of the audit committee review.

H. Financial Secretary and Assistant Financial Secretary. These positions shall be filled by church members in good standing.

The church financial secretary will be nominated by the nominating committee with the approval of the elder board and voted on by the congregation at the fall quarterly business meeting. This position is for a one-year term.

Duties. The financial secretary will:

1. Be responsible for recording all gifts to the church.
2. Provide quarterly and annual reports to members and attendees who use the envelope system for giving.
3. Supply individuals with offering envelopes after the envelopes are ordered and received by the business administrator.
4. Furnish a record of gifts, tithes and offerings upon request by any member or attendee who uses the envelope system.
5. Maintain complete confidentiality of all individual records.

The assistant financial secretary will be nominated by the nominating committee with the approval of the elder board and voted on by the congregation at the fall quarterly business meeting. This position is for a one-year term.

Duties. The assistant financial secretary will:

1. Assist the financial secretary in the above responsibilities.
2. Work under the direction of the financial secretary.

I. Church Clerk. This position shall be filled by a church member in good standing. He/she will be nominated by the nominating committee with the approval of the elder board and voted on by the congregation at the fall quarterly business meeting. This position is for a one-year term.

Duties. The church clerk will:

1. Keep an accurate record of all congregational business meetings. These records shall be made available to the elder clerk for publishing after review by the chairman of the elders.
2. Keep a roster of all members of this church in cooperation with the elder clerk.
3. Keep a record of attendance at all congregational business meetings in cooperation with the elder clerk.
4. Preserve all documents, papers and letters coming into his/her hands during the term of office and deliver those to his/her successor.

J. Children's Ministries Director and Assistant Children's Ministries Director. These positions shall be filled by church members in good standing.

The children’s ministries director will be nominated by the nominating committee with the approval of the elder board and voted on by the congregation at the fall quarterly business meeting. This position is for a one-year term.

Duties. The children’s ministries director will:

1. Oversee the following programs: nursery and toddlers ministry; Kids Own Worship (children’s church); Faith Odyssey (Sunday School); and Kids Clubs (Wednesday night program). The children’s ministries director shall work with the leaders of these programs to provide appropriate curriculum, staffing and resources.
2. Conduct meetings of workers in children’s ministries as needed for planning and informational purposes.
3. Coordinate with the senior pastor and the elder board the scheduling of special events for outreach purposes.

The assistant children’s ministries director will be nominated by the nominating committee with the approval of the elder board and voted on by the congregation at the fall quarterly business meeting. This position is for a one-year term.

Duties. The assistant children’s ministries director will:

1. Assist the children’s ministries director in the above responsibilities.
2. Work under the direction of the children’s ministries director.

**Article III: Business**

**Section 1. Congregational Business Meetings.** The elders shall call congregational business meetings at least quarterly, including a meeting in the fourth quarter to affirm elders and deacons, vote on other officers and approve a budget. Other special congregational business meetings may be called as deemed appropriate only by the elders. The elders will approve and publish agendas at least two weeks in advance of a congregational business meeting. Only members are allowed to speak at congregational business meetings, unless approved by the elders in advance.

**Section 2. Quorum and Voting.** Church members must be present to vote at business meetings; no absentee or proxy voting is allowed. Following is a summary of the minimum quorum and voting requirements provided for reference only.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Quorum</b>	<b>Vote</b>	<b>Secret</b>	<b>Paragraph</b>
Call senior pastor	50%	80%	Yes	Art. II, Sect. 3(D), of bylaws
Terminate senior pastor	50%	80%	Yes	Art. II, Sect. 3(E), of bylaws
Affirm elders	40%	75%	Yes	Art. II, Sect. 2(B)3, of bylaws
Affirm deacons	40%	75%	Yes	Art. II, Sect. 4(B), of bylaws

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Quorum</b>	<b>Vote</b>	<b>Secret</b>	<b>Paragraph</b>
Amend constitution	50%/60% <sup>1</sup>	Majority/ 80% <sup>1</sup>	No <sup>2</sup>	Art. X of constitution
Amend/suspend bylaws	50%	Majority	No <sup>2</sup>	Art. IV of bylaws
Adopt/amend an article of doctrine	50%	Majority	No <sup>2</sup>	Art. XIV of articles of doctrine
Receive new members	30%	Majority	No <sup>2</sup>	Art. I Sect. 1(D) of bylaws
Approve budget	30%	Majority	No <sup>2</sup>	Art. III Sect. 3 of bylaws
Major property decisions	30%	Majority	No <sup>2</sup>	Art. II Sect. 1(B) of bylaws
All others	30% <sup>3</sup>	Majority <sup>3</sup>	As determined by the elders	

<sup>1</sup> See Article X of the constitution for quorum and voting requirements.

<sup>2</sup> At the elder chairman's discretion.

<sup>3</sup> The elders may increase these minimum standards on individual votes as deemed appropriate.

**Section 3. Budgets.** Each year, the elders shall present the proposed church budget to the congregation for the coming fiscal year. The church budget year shall be the calendar year. The budget shall be passed by a simple majority vote with at least a 30% quorum. The elders shall be responsible for overseeing the management of the church's budget. The elders may authorize expenditures exceeding any budgeted line item provided that the total annual budget is not exceeded without congregational approval. Such excess expenditures shall be reported at the next regular congregational business meeting.

**Section 4. Basic Operating Manual.** The elders shall establish and maintain a "basic operating manual" containing policies and practices deemed necessary for the proper functioning of this church.

#### **Article IV: Amendments and Suspensions**

These bylaws may be amended or portions suspended by a simple majority vote at any congregational business meeting with a quorum of at least 50% of church members. Written notice of such amendments and suspensions must be given at least two weeks before such a meeting. However, sections requiring more stringent voting requirements may be suspended or amended only by those voting requirements in the preceding chart.

## **The Articles of Doctrine of Faith Fellowship Church of Cincinnati, Ohio**

These articles of doctrine represent the beliefs of Faith Fellowship Church of Cincinnati, Ohio, but not all are essential for salvation. The essentials of the faith are outlined in our statement of faith (Article IV of the church constitution and, with scriptural references, as an appendix at the end of this document).

### **Article I: Justification—Change in Our Relationship with God**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that justification is the judicial act of God whereby He declares the believer to be righteous through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Justification includes the pardon of sin, the imputation of God's righteousness and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness. It is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness that we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood. Justification brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity. (Isaiah 53:11; Acts 13:39; Romans 5:1-9, 8:1; II Cor. 5:18-21; Titus 3:5-7)

### **Article II: The Freeness of Salvation**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his or her own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel – a rejection that puts him or her in an eternal condemnation. (John 1:12, 3:16-17, 36; Acts 3:19, 17:30; Romans 3:10, 23, 6:23, 10:13; II Thess. 1:8-9; Rev. 20:11-15)

### **Article III: Regeneration—Change in Our Moral and Spiritual Nature**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated or born again; that regeneration is wholly an act of God; that it is effected, in a manner above our comprehension, by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life. (Ezek. 36:26; Matt. 7:20; John 1:13, 3:3, 5, 7-8; Romans 5:5, 6:17, 19, 8:9; I Cor. 1:30, 2:14; II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 4:20-24, 5:9; Phil. 2:13; Col. 3:9-11; James 1:16-18; I Peter 1:22-25; I John 5:4, 18; Rev. 21:27)

#### **Article IV: Repentance and Faith**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby, being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and seeing the way of salvation through Christ, we turn with genuine repentance, confession and supplication for mercy, and heartily receive and rely on the Lord Jesus Christ as our only all-sufficient Savior. He is also our Prophet, Priest and King. (Psalms 2:6, 51:1-19; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37-38, 3:19-22, 16:30-31, 20:21; Romans 10:9-13; II Cor. 7:10-11; Eph. 2:8; II Tim. 1:12; Hebrews 1:8, 4:14, 7:25; James 4:7-10)

#### **Article V: Sanctification**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of His holiness. It is both an immediate and a progressive work which is begun in regeneration and is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness and prayer. (Prov. 4:18; Luke 9:23, 11:35; John 3:6; Romans 8:5; II Cor. 7:1, 13:5, 9; Eph. 1:4-6; 4:11-12, 30; Phil. 1:9-11, 2:12-13, 3:12-16; I Thess. 4:3, 5:23; Heb. 6:1; I Peter 2:2; II Peter 1:5-8, 3:18; I John 2:29.

#### **Article VI: Return of Christ and Related Events**

We believe that the Scriptures teach the personal, imminent coming of Christ for the Church; the resurrection and physical glorification of the saints who will stand before the judgment seat of Christ for accountability and rewards; the great tribulation, after which He will visibly return with His saints to this earth, where He will sit on the throne of David and shall subdue all enemies and reign in righteousness for a thousand years. Following this shall be the judgment of the Great White Throne when the unsaved dead shall be raised and judged, resulting in their eternal punishment in the lake of fire, which is the second death. The saved shall enjoy eternal life and glory with God. (Matt. 24:21-22, 30; Luke 1:32; John 5:28-29, 14:1-3; Acts 2:29-30; Romans 6:23; I Cor. 15:20-58; Phil. 3:20-21; I Thess. 4:13-18; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 7:14, 19:1, 11-16, 20:1-4, 6, 11-15, Chapters 21 and 22)

#### **Article VII: Angels—Fallen and Unfallen**

A. Satan and Fallen Angels. We believe that the Scriptures teach that God created an innumerable company of sinless, spiritual beings, known as angels. One, “Lucifer, son of the morning”—high in rank—sinned through pride, thereby becoming Satan. A great company of the angels followed him in his fall; some became demons and are active as his agents and associates in the prosecution of his unholy purposes, while others who left their first estate are

“reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” (Isaiah 14:12-17; Col. 1:16; I Tim. 3:6; II Peter 2:4; Jude 6) We believe that Satan is the originator of sin and under the permission of God, he, through subtlety, led Adam and Eve into transgression, thereby accomplishing their fall and subjecting them and their posterity to his own power. He is the enemy of God and the people of God, opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, who at the beginning said, “I will be like the Most High.” He appears as an angel of light, ever counterfeiting the works of God by fostering religious movements and systems of doctrine. These systems in every case are characterized by denying the efficacy of the blood of Christ and salvation by grace alone. (Gen. 3:1-19; Romans 5:12-14; Eph. 6:10-12; II Thess. 2:4; I Tim. 4:1-3)

- B. Judgment of Satan. We believe that Satan was judged at the cross, though not bound. He, a usurper, now rules as the “god of this world.” At the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years, after which he will be loosed for a little season and then “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,” where he “shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.” (Col. 2:15; Rev. 20:1-3,10)
- C. Ministry of Angels. We believe that a great company of angels kept their holy estate and are before the throne of God, where they are sent forth as ministering spirits to them who shall be heirs of salvation. (Matt. 18:10; Luke 1:26-33, 2:8-14, 15:10; Heb. 1:14; I Peter 1:12; II Peter 2:11; Rev. 7:11-12.
- D. Relation to Man. We believe that man was made lower than angels, and Christ, in His incarnation, condescended to become man for a little time so that He might elevate the believer to His own sphere above the angels. (Heb. 2:6-10)

### **Article VIII: The Lord's Day**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, commemorating the resurrection of Christ. It was instituted by the Apostles and the early church for worship, instruction and edification. It is distinct from the Sabbath Day. (Gen. 2:3; Exodus 20:8; Psalms 118:24; Isaiah 58:13-14; Mark 2:27-28; John 20:19; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:2; Heb. 10:24-25; Rev. 1:10)

### **Article IX: Civil Government**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that civil government is of divine appointment for the interest and good order of human society. Those in authority are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed, except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the King of the kings of the earth. (Exodus 18:21-23; Deut. 16:18; II Samuel 23:3; Psalms 2:1-8, 72:11; Jer.

30:21; Matt. 22:15-21; Acts 4:18-20, 5:29; Romans 13:1-7; I Tim. 2:1-4; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13-17)

### **Article X: The Law and the Gospel**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government. This law is holy, just and good. The Scriptures ascribe to fallen men the inability to fulfill its precepts because of their sinful nature. One great purpose of the Gospel is to deliver them from the power of sin and restore them to God through the Mediator, Jesus Christ, to complete obedience to the Law of God. (Psalm 119; Matt. 5:17-18; Luke 16:17; Romans 3:20, 31, 4:15, 7:7, 12, 14, 22, 8:2, 4, 7, 8, 10:4; Gal. 3:21; Heb. 8:10)

### **Article XI: Eternal Security of the Believer**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that all who are truly born again are kept by God the Father and sealed by the Holy Spirit in the Lord Jesus Christ. Real believers are characterized by their persevering attachment to Christ – which is the grand mark that distinguishes them from superficial professors. God watches over the believers' welfare, and they are kept by His power through faith unto salvation. (Matt. 6:30-33; John 6:66-69, 8:31, 10:28-29, 13:18; Romans 8:28, 35-39; II Cor. 1:22; Eph. 4:30; Phil. 1:6, 2:12-13; Hebrews 1:14, 7:25, 13:5; I Peter 1:3-5; I John 2:19, 27-28, 3:9, 4:4, 5:18)

### **Article XII: Election**

We believe that the Scriptures teach that election is the eternal purpose of God. It is a most glorious display of His sovereign goodness, which is infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable, and in which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners. It excludes boasting and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God and active imitation of His free mercy. It is the foundation of Christian assurance. (Isaiah 46:9-10; Jer. 31:3; Luke 18:7; John 15:16; Romans 8:28-31, 9:22-24, 11:28-29; I Cor. 1:26-31; Eph. 1:3-14; I Thess. 1:4-5; II Tim. 1:8-9; James 1:18, 2:5; I Peter 2:9)

### **Article XIII: The Triune God**

- A. God the Father. We believe God, as Father, reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures and human history according to the purpose of His grace. He is Father to those who become His children through personal faith in Jesus Christ.
- B. God the Son. We believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, is absolute Deity, is very God, existing from all eternity, equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit and that He has never ceased to be God. As perfect Man, He was miraculously begotten of the Holy Spirit, born of Mary, a virgin.

Therefore, He is both perfect God and perfect Man, the Son of God and the Son of Man. He atoned for the sin of the world by His death and shed blood upon the cross. He rose bodily from the tomb on the third day, He ascended into heaven, and He is now at the right hand of God the Father as our only sufficient mediator and advocate. (Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25, 28:6-7; Mark 16:6, 19; Luke 1:34-35; John 1:1, 14, 29; Acts 1:9-11; Romans 8:34; I Cor. 15:4, 47; Gal. 4:4; I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 1:3, 2:17, 5:9-10, 7:25, 8:1, 6, 12:2; I John 2:1, 5:20)

- C. God the Holy Spirit. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person, equal with God the Father and God the Son, of the same nature; that He was active in creation; that He convicts of sin, of judgment and of righteousness; that He bears witness to the truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the agent in the new birth; that He seals, intercedes for, baptizes, empowers, endues, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, helps and comforts the believer in accordance with the Scriptures. (Gen. 1:1-3; Matt. 28:19; John 3:5-6, 14:16-17, 26, 5:26, 16:7-11, 13-14; Acts 5:30-32; Romans 8:16, 26-27; I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:13-14, 5:18; II Thess. 2:13; Heb. 9:14; I Peter 1:2)

#### **Article XIV: Amendments**

Any section of these articles of doctrine, excluding the appendix (statement of faith), may be amended by majority vote at a congregational business meeting with a quorum of at least 50% of church members. Written notice of such amendments must be made available at least two weeks before the meeting.

#### **Appendix: Statement of Faith (Article IV of the church constitution), with scriptural references**

**Section 1: God.** We believe in one God (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29), having limitless knowledge (Psalms 139:1-16, 147:5; Isaiah 46:10; John 21:17) and sovereign power (Jer. 32:17; Eph. 1:11; Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 6:18; Eph. 3:20; Rev. 1:8), Creator of all things (Gen. 1:1; Psalm 33:6; John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 11:3), holy (Exodus 15:11; Isaiah 6:3, 57:15), infinitely perfect (Deut. 32:4; Job 1:7-10; Psalm 18:30, 50:2, 90:2, 145:3; Matt. 5:48) and eternally existing (Psalm 33:11, 102:25-27, 115:3; Daniel 4:34-35; John 5:26; Acts 17:24-25) in a loving unity (John 3:35, 17:24; 1 John 4:8,16) of three equally divine Persons (John 17:11; Matt. 3:16-17, 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2): the Father (Deut. 32:6; Matt. 6:6; Romans 8:15; 1 Cor. 8:6), the Son (Matt. 3:17; John 1:14, 3:16; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 1:5) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17, 26, 15:26, 16:7-15; Romans 8:9, 26; Gal. 4:6).

**Section 2: The Bible.** We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures (Matt. 1:22, 4:4, 19:4-5; Heb. 1:1-2), both Old Testament and New Testament (2 Peter 3:15-16), through the words of human authors (Luke. 1:1-4). As the verbally inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), the Bible is without error in

the original writings (Num. 23:19; 2 Samuel 7:28; Prov. 30:5; Psalm 119:96, 160; Matt. 5:18; John 10:35, 17:17; Titus 1:1-2); the complete revelation of His will for salvation (Luke 16:29-31; Gal. 1:8-9; 2 Tim. 3:15); and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged (John 17:17; 1 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:23; Psalm 119:44-45,165). Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches (Matt. 22:29; Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:16), obeyed in all that it requires (Matt. 28:20; 2 Thess. 3:14; 1 John 2:5) and trusted in all that it promises (Romans 1:2, 4:21; Heb. 10:23; 2 Peter 1:4, 3:13).

**Section 3: The Human Condition.** We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image (Gen. 1:26-27, 5:1, 9:6; 1Cor. 11:7; Col. 3:10; James 3:9), but they sinned when tempted by Satan (Gen. 3:1-6; John 8:44; Romans 5:12-14, 16:20; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:13-14). In union with Adam (Job 14:4; Psalm 51:5; John 3:6; Romans 3:12, 5:12-14; 1 Cor. 15:22a; 1 John 1:8), human beings are sinners by nature and by choice (Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Isaiah 6:5; Romans 5:15, 8:5-8; Eph. 2:1-2, 4:17-19), alienated from God (Romans 5:10), and under His wrath (Romans 1:18, 2:5, 3:9-19, 3:23; Eph. 2:3). Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5) can we be rescued (1 Thes. 1:10), reconciled (Romans 5:1-2, 10; Col. 1:20) and renewed (Romans 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:24; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2).

**Section 4: Jesus Christ.** We believe that Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:21, 16:18) is God incarnate (John 1:14, 18; 1 John 4:2), fully God (Isaiah 9:6; Jer. 23:6; John 1:1, 20:28; Romans 9:5; Col. 2:9) and fully man (Matt. 4:2; Luke 2:40, 52; John 11:35; Heb. 5:7-8; 1 John 1:1-3), one Person in two natures (John 3:13, 10:30, 17:5). Jesus—Israel's promised Messiah (Gen. 3:14-20, 12:1-3, 49:8-12; 2 Samuel 7:11b-16; Matt. 1:1, 17; Luke 4:16-22, 24:25-27; John 1:41, 4:25-26; Acts 2:36, 13:23, 32; Romans 1:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:8-9)—was conceived through the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:34-35) and born of a virgin, Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:34-35). He lived a sinless life (Rom. 5:19; Gal. 4:4-5; Matt. 3:15; Phil. 2:7-8; Heb. 4:15), was crucified under Pontius Pilate (Deut. 21:23; Psalm 16:10; Matt. 27:26; Mark 15:15; Luke 23:16; John 19:16; Acts 2:27, 37), arose bodily from the dead (Matt. 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:39; Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:20, 44-45; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5), ascended into heaven (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:6-11; Eph. 1:20, 4:8-10; 1 Tim. 3:16) and sits at the right hand of God the Father (Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 8:1, 10:12; 1 Pet. 3:22) as our High Priest (Heb. 2:17, 3:1, 4:14, 6:20, 8:1) and Advocate (Romans 8:34; Heb. 7:25, 9:24; 1 John 2:1).

**Section 5: The Work of Christ.** We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative (Gen. 2:15-17; Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13; Romans 5:18-19; 1 Cor. 1:30, 15:45, 47; Phil. 3:9) and substitute (Mark 10:45; Heb. 2:16-17; 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18), shed His blood on the cross (Lev. 17:11; Mt. 26:28; Heb. 9:14, 22, 10:19; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Rev. 12:10-11) as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice (1 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 9:23-24, 26, 28, 10:1, 13:11-12) for our sins (Isaiah 53:5-7, 12; John 1:29; Romans 3:21-26; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 1 John 3:5). His atoning death (Romans 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10) and victorious

resurrection (Col. 1:13; 2:13-15; Heb. 2:14-15) constitute the only ground for salvation (Romans 4:25, 6:4, 11, 14; 1 Cor. 6:14, 15:20; 2 Cor. 4:14; Eph. 1:19-20, 2:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3).

**Section 6: The Holy Spirit.** We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ (John 16:14). He convicts the world of its guilt (John 16:8; 1 Cor. 2:14). He regenerates sinners (Ezek. 36:25-27; John 3:3, 5; 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13; 1 Thess. 1:4-5; 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3), and in Him they are baptized (Mark 31:8; Acts 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:13) into union with Christ (Romans 3:24, 5:15-21, 12:5; 1 Cor. 1:2, 5:19, 15:22b; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 1:22, 2:17, 3:28; Eph. 1:4, 2:12, 3:6, 4:32; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Thess. 4:16) and adopted as heirs (Romans 8:15, 23, 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5; Titus 3:7) in the family of God (Matt. 12:49-50; 2 Cor. 6:18; Eph. 3:14; 1 John 3:14-18). He also indwells (John 14:17; Romans 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16), illuminates (1 Cor. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4-15; Eph. 1:17-19; Phil. 1:9-11), guides (John 16:13; Acts 15:28; Romans 8:4, 14; Gal. 5:16, 18), equips (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-10; Eph. 4:7-11; 1 Peter 4:10-11) and empowers (Acts 1:8; 10:38; Romans 15:13; 1 Cor. 12:11; Eph. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:7) believers for Christ-like living and service (Acts 6:8; Romans 8:4-6, 12-16; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 3:3, 5, 5:22-23, 25; Eph. 2:22, 4:3; Phil. 2:1-2).

**Section 7: The Church.** We believe that the true church (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:4-6, 5:25; Heb. 12:28) comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone (Psalms 103:12; Isaiah 44:22; John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Romans 3:20-28, 4:3, 5:1, 21, 8:1, 30, 33-34, 10:4, 9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 3:9; Titus 3:7; Heb. 10:14). They are united by the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-27), of which He is the Head (Eph. 1:22-23, 4:15-16; Col. 1:18, 2:19). The true church is manifest in local churches (Acts 9:31, 20:28-30; Romans 16:5; 1 Cor. 1:2, 16:19; 2 Cor. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; Philem. 1-2), whose membership should be composed only of believers (Matt. 18:15-20; Acts 2:41, 47, 14:23, 20:7; 1 Cor. 1:2, 9, 11:20, 12:13, 14:40, 16:1-2; 1 Tim. 3:1-13, 5:9; Titus 1:5-9; Heb. 10:25). The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism (Matt. 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-4; Col. 2:12) and the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26), which visibly and tangibly express the Gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer (John 6:55-56; Acts 2:38, 8:39, 16:34; 1 Cor. 10:16, 11:29-30; Col. 2:12).

**Section 8: Christian Living.** God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:37-39; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27), and to live out our faith with care for one another (Romans 12:10; 14:13; 15:7, 14; Gal. 5:26; Eph. 4:32; 1 Thess. 3:12; 5:11, 15; Heb. 10:24-25; 1 Peter 4:9), compassion toward the poor (Deut. 15:11; Psalms 82:3, 4, 140:12; Prov. 14:21, 31, 19:17, 22:9, 16, 22-23, 28:8, 29:7, 31:8-9; Jer. 22:16; Gal. 2:10; James 1:27) and justice for the oppressed (Exodus 23:6; Lev. 19:15; Psalms 82:3-4,

140:12; Prov. 29:7, 31:9; Isaiah 1:17; Jer. 9:24; Micah 6:8; Zech. 7:9-10; Matt. 23:23; Luke 4:18). With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name (Eph. 6:10-18), we (Heb. 3:13, 10:25), are to combat the spiritual forces of evil (2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:11-12; 2 Tim. 4:7; 1 John 5:3-4). In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people (Matt. 28:19; John 20:21; Rev. 7:9), always bearing witness to the Gospel (Acts 1:8) in word and deed (Matt. 5:13-16).

**Section 9: Christ's Return.** We believe in the personal, bodily (Matt. 24:30, 26:64; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7) return of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 25:31; Titus 2:13; 2 Thess. 1:6-8; Rev. 19:11-21). The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God (Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32), requires constant expectancy (Matt. 24:42-51; Romans 13:11-14; 1 Thess. 5:1-11; James 5:8-9; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Rev. 3:3) and, as our blessed hope (Titus 2:13), motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission (2 Thess. 1:6-8; 2 Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:14; Heb. 9:28; 1 John 3:2-3; 2 Peter 3:10-14).

**Section 10: Response and Eternal Destiny.** We believe that God commands everyone everywhere (Acts 17:30, 20:20) to believe the Gospel (Mark 1:15; John 6:29, 8:24, 11:26, 14:1, 20:31; Acts 16:31; Romans 3:22, 10:14; Gal. 3:22; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 Peter 1:8; 1 John 3:23) by turning to Him in repentance (Isaiah 55:6-7; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:37-38, 3:19, 14:15, 17:30, 20:21, 26:17-18; Romans 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:9-10) and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:12). We believe that God will raise the dead bodily (Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; 1 Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:13) and judge the world (Ecc. 12:14; Matt. 12:36, 26:31-32; Acts 17:31; Romans 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 20:12), assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment (Matt. 25:46; Luke 16:26; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 14:11, 21:6, 8, 22:14-15) and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord (Matt. 25:34, 46; John 14:2; Rev. 21:1-3), in the new heaven and the new earth (Isaiah 65:17, 66:22; Romans 8:19-21; Heb. 12:26-27; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1, 22:3), to the praise of His glorious grace (Eph. 1:6, 12). Amen.