

# Constitution and Bylaws of Reformed Baptist Church

## Article 1. Name

The name of this church shall be The Reformed Baptist Church at Lewisburg.

## Article 2. Purpose and Mission

Reformed Baptist Church (RBC) is a diverse group of people, redeemed by God's sovereign grace and passionate about His glory.

[Our purpose] As such we joyfully strive to love the Lord God and all mankind by:

[Our mission]

**Reflecting God's glory** in our corporate worship, our personal lives, our fellowship within the body of Christ, and through our ministry to the local community.

**Building disciples** through the faithful preaching and teaching of the Word of God, sharing the love of Christ, and encouraging one another through consistent prayer.

**Communicating the Gospel** in a clear manner as we answer the call of Christ to take His message of salvation into all the world.

## Article 3. Statement of Faith

This Statement of Faith presents the set of beliefs that we hold as a church. It is the foundation for what we will preach, teach, pray, instruct, and counsel, and how we will discipline. We are passionate to proclaim these beliefs.

The preconditions for church membership include an understanding of and agreement with the Gospel followed by baptism (immersion) and a willingness to accept and support the beliefs as presented in our Statement of Faith.

### Section 3.1. The Holy Scriptures

We believe that the sixty-six books of the Holy Bible are the complete, final, authoritative, and only word of God to man. The Holy Spirit guided men to select every word of the original writings of the Bible which makes them without error or fallibility in all matters of which they speak.

(II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21)

### Section 3.2. The True God and the Trinity

We believe that the God of the Bible is the one true and living God who is infinite, inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love. He eternally exists in the three distinct, yet equal, Spirit persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit which persons have the same divine nature and perfection.

(Genesis 1:1, 26; Exodus 20:2-3; Isaiah 44:6-8, 45:22; Matthew 28:18-20; John 1:1-2; Romans 9:5; II Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 1:8; I Peter 1:1-2; II Peter 1:21; Revelation 4:11)

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## **Section 3.3. The Lord Jesus Christ**

We believe that Jesus Christ existed from all eternity as God the Son. In a miraculous work by the Holy Spirit, sinless human nature was joined to His divine nature and He was born of Mary, a virgin. As the only mediator between God and men, He fulfilled God's law and freely suffered and died as the sacrificial substitute for sinners. He took the sinner's place under God's judgment and bore man's sins in Himself. He was buried, rose bodily after three days, ascended to His throne in heaven, and now compassionately intercedes for His people.

(Isaiah 7:14, 9:6; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; Romans 1:1-6, 3:21-26, 5:1-21; I Corinthians 11:25, 15:1-8; II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 9:15)

## **Section 3.4. The Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is an eternal person of the Godhead. He was actively involved in the creation of all things. He restrains the devil. He convicts unbelievers of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He indwells believers and is responsible for their spiritual life, growth, blessings, and continuance in the faith.

(John 14:16-17; Matthew 28:19; Hebrews 9:14; John 3:5-6; Luke 1:35; Ephesians 1:13-14; Mark 1:8; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; Genesis 1:1-3; John 16:8-11; Acts 5:30-32; John 14:26; Romans 8:14, 26-27.

## **Section 3.5. The Devil or Satan**

We believe that Satan is a person who was created by God as a good angel, but through proud rebellion against his Creator became evil and the enemy of God. As the god of this world and adversary of all of God's people, he assaults Christians with temptations and trials to turn them away from faithfulness to God. He is destined to eternal punishment in the lake of fire.

(Job 1, 2; Zechariah 3:1-2; Matthew 4:1-11; II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; Revelation 12, 20:10)

## **Section 3.6. The Creation and Fall of Man**

We believe that the physical universe, angels, and man, are the direct creation of the pre-existent God and all exist for the purpose of glorifying God. He created man in His image without any sin. The first man, Adam, yielded to Satan's temptation and voluntarily rebelled and sinned against God and His purpose. This resulted in the total corruption, depravity, deserved condemnation, and death of Adam and his descendants. The deserved penalty for sin is death, both physically and spiritually.

(Genesis 1-3; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 1-5, 8:7-8; II Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:1-5)

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## **Section 3.7. The Salvation of Sinners**

We believe that the salvation of sinners comes about as a result of God's election and His sovereign grace. A spiritual new birth and new life is based on the work of Jesus Christ and brought about by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures. As the Gospel is freely offered to dead sinners and blessed by the living Spirit, willing faith in Jesus Christ as the only Savior and genuine conviction and repentance toward God over sin will result. Salvation also includes justification which is the crediting of Jesus Christ's righteousness to the life of believing sinners who lack any righteousness in themselves. God's work, not man's works, secures salvation. Saved sinners will persevere as believers because they are kept by God. (John 3:1-20, 6:37, 44, 65, 10:28-29; Acts 13:48; Romans 8:28-39, 9:11; Ephesians 1:3-14, 2:1-10; Philippians 1:6, 2:12-13; II Corinthians 5:17-21; II Thessalonians 2:13)

## **Section 3.8. The Local Church**

We believe that the local church is a body of saved and immersed sinners who are committed to one another for the ministry of the Word, the edification of fellow believers, the propagation of the faith, and the observance of the ordinances. We enjoy the right of self government under the laws of Jesus Christ. A local church congregation is organized under Jesus Christ as the Head with scripturally qualified elders and deacons, and spiritually gifted members. (Acts 2:42-47; 20:17-28; I Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:1-16; 5:21-33; Colossians 1:18; I Timothy 3:14-16)

## **Section 3.9. The Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are God given responsibilities under the authority and within the fellowship of the local church. Baptism precedes and leads to local church membership. Baptism is the single immersion of a believer in water to show symbolically that he or she willingly obeys and identifies with the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. The scriptural order is to place baptism before the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is the commemoration and celebration of Jesus' death until He returns. The daily practice of serious self examination and confession of sin finds a place here also. Since the Lord's Supper is the Lord's Table, none who are His shall be barred. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:41-42, 8:36-39; Romans 6:1-14; I Corinthians 11:17-34; Colossians 2:6-12)

## **Section 3.10. The Civil Government and Liberty of Conscience**

We believe that civil government is established by God for the good order of society by punishing those who do wrong and protecting those who do right. Christians should pray for, respect, and obey civil authorities in all things except when that would require disobedience to the written word of God and denial of the authority of Jesus Christ. (Jeremiah 29; Daniel 1-3; Matthew 22:15-22; Acts 4:18-20; 5:29; Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-17)

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## **Section 3.11. The Return of Jesus Christ and the Eternal State**

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ will return physically to this world. The main events associated with His coming will include the bodily resurrection, final judgment, and everlasting blessing or punishment of all mankind; the final judgment of Satan and demons; and the destruction of this present evil world and the creation of the new heavens and the new earth.

(Matthew 24 - 25; John 5:24-30; Acts 1:10-11; 17:31; Romans 2:1-16; I Corinthians 15; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; II Thessalonians 2; II Peter 3; Revelation 20-22)

## **Section 3.12. The Complementary Role of Men and Women**

Men and women are absolutely equal in essence, dignity, and value, but are different by God's design. As part of God's good created order, men and women are to have different, yet complementary, roles and responsibilities in the home and church, especially as it comes to authority and teaching. These role distinctions are God's grace to man and woman and are to be protected, preserved, and practiced for His glory and our joy.

(I Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:33-35; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; I Timothy 2:8-15; I Peter 3:1-7)

## **Section 3.13. Sexual Immorality**

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4)

We believe that the only Scriptural marriage is the joining of one naturally-born man and one naturally-born woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)

## **Article 4. Governance**

### **Section 4.1. General Statement**

The Head of this local church is Jesus Christ who reveals His will through the Scriptures. Guided by those Scriptures, the members of the congregation, led by their elected church officers called elders and deacons, make decisions for the life of the church at business meetings of the church. The membership and church officers have the final human authority to independently govern the church. The elders and deacons will serve as the trustees of the church.

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## Section 4.2. Congregational authority and responsibilities

### A. Congregational authority.

RBC operates with a congregational form of government where the ultimate human authority for governing the church rests in the members of the church. The members of the church delegate their authority to the church officers to make decisions regarding the preaching, teaching, ministries, policies, and operation of the church. The members of the church retain the final decision making authority for the following matters.

- 1) Approval of a change to the doctrine or beliefs of the church
- 2) Approval of a change or amendment to the church's constitution or bylaws
- 3) Election of church officers (elders and deacons)
- 4) Approval of an annual budget
- 5) Approval of a single expenditure over \$5,000 not included in the annual budget, except for emergency maintenance and repairs
- 6) Approval of a redirection of budgeted funds over \$3,000 unspent in a budget year
- 7) Approval to hire an elder, deacon, and/or a church staff member
- 8) Approval to purchase land and/or a building for the church with church funds
- 9) Approval to borrow money for the church
- 10) Termination of church membership for a serious breach in Christian doctrine or conduct (after seeking resolution through the biblical model)
- 11) A major change in direction to a ministry of the church

### B. Congregational Ministry Teams.

Our local church ministry teams provide the opportunity for those who attend RBC to become involved and assume major responsibility for the ongoing ministries of our church. The teams operate under the leadership of the church officers. Individuals may assist any team based on personal interest, natural talents, and spiritual gifts. Each ministry team will meet regularly, discuss strategies, set goals, and make recommendations to the officers and the church. Each team will act in agreement with the church doctrinal statement, church constitution and bylaws, church purpose, mission, and vision statements, and the mission statement of its particular ministry area. Each team will select a church member as a chair, a secretary, and a treasurer (if needed), subject to the approval of the church officers. At least one church officer will participate on each team.

- 1) Outreach Ministry Team. The mission of the Outreach Ministry Team is to help our local church find ways and means to contact and encourage people outside our congregation to pursue a genuine relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Some examples of ministry areas envisioned within the charter of this ministry team are: missions, visitation, and transportation.

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- 2) Hospitality Ministry Team. The mission of the Hospitality Ministry Team is to help our local church find ways and means to provide our congregation with an inviting atmosphere for social and spiritual fellowship under God through Jesus Christ. Some examples of ministry areas envisioned within the charter of this ministry team are: fellowship events, kitchen, nursery, and decorating.
- 3) Discipleship Ministry Team. The mission of the Discipleship Ministry Team is to help our local church find ways and means to inform and motivate people within our congregation to pursue a closer and deeper relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Some examples of ministry areas envisioned within the charter of this ministry team are: music, communion preparation, Sunday school, youth ministry, children's ministry, and seniors' ministry.
- 4) Property Ministry Team. The mission of the Property Ministry Team is to help our local church find ways and means to keep our congregation aware of how to care for, manage, develop, and expand our land and buildings which have come from God through Jesus Christ. Some examples of ministry areas envisioned within the charter of this ministry team are: building, grounds, equipment, and furniture upkeep, maintenance, and improvements.

### **Section 4.3. Church Officers**

#### **A. Church leadership.**

The church is led by church officers that are elected as an elder or a deacon. The church will follow the New Testament pattern of church government with a plurality of men leading the church together, thus sharing in the responsibilities of their office. The elders and deacons will focus on different aspects of the church. They will mutually support each other, since they are equally qualified in terms of character and spiritual life. The elders will have general oversight of the deacons. The elders have the teaching authority in the church and the deacons serve in a supportive role. As determined by the church officers, the elders and deacons will meet jointly or separately to address the affairs of the church. The church officers will decide jointly on recommendations for matters where the church members retain the final decision making authority. Any church officer may call for a matter to be considered or reviewed jointly that is being addressed separately by the elders or deacons.

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## B. Elders

### 1) General.

- a) The terms elder, overseer, and pastor are used in the New Testament to describe the same office of leadership in its various functions. As elders they display the character of spiritually mature men. As overseers they supervise the life, ministries, and functions of the church. As pastors these men shepherd the membership by faithfully teaching and applying the Word of God in agreement with the stated doctrinal principles summarized in this document.
- b) The elders are primarily responsible for: 1) oversight of the life, ministries, and functions of the church, 2) preaching and teaching sound doctrine in a variety of settings, and 3) visitation of members.
- c) Elders will be chosen according to the qualifications outlined by God in I Timothy, Titus, and related Scriptures, and the needs of the church. Any man chosen to this office must first be an active member in good standing and faithful in his attendance, except a financially supported elder coming from outside the congregation. In accordance with the scriptural pattern, RBC will function with a plurality of elders. The elders shall be elected for a three-year term by a two-thirds vote of the votes cast.
- d) Any man chosen as an elder must affirm his agreement with the purpose, mission, vision, doctrine, and constitution and bylaws of this church. He must possess the spiritual gifts, knowledge of the Bible, and ability to communicate necessary to fulfill this calling. He must faithfully demonstrate the spiritual, personal, domestic, and ministerial qualifications outlined in the Scriptures. He must be able to teach in one of a variety of situations (for example, preach Sunday sermon, teach adult Bible Study, teach youth Sunday school).
- e) Any elder, may resign without prejudice if he finds he cannot discharge his duties. If any elder is guilty of serious breach in Christian doctrine or conduct, the members of the congregation may bring his term to an immediate end.

### 2) Financially supported elder.

- a) As it is able, this church will financially support at least one full or part time elder as a pastor. He will share with the other elders all of the responsibilities of the eldership in their oversight of the church. Together they will determine where each elder is best suited to provide leadership needed in particular areas of their

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duties. This elder will give primary, though not exclusive, attention to teaching and preaching the Scriptures in a variety of settings in the church life.

- b) If the call of any elder who is financially supported is not renewed at a business meeting of the church, his term will expire 60 days from that date. The church may at any time, by a two-thirds vote of votes cast, request his resignation with the expectation that it will be effective within 60 days. Likewise, this elder shall give at least 60 days notice if he wishes to resign of his own volition. The resignation may be effective in fewer than or more than 60 days if mutually agreed upon by the elder and the members of the congregation.
- c) In the event that the church is without any elder who is financially supported, the church officers will lead a Search Committee to find such a man. The Search Committee will consist of at least a majority of the serving church officers and volunteers from the active church membership. The Committee will look within and outside of our church congregation for qualified candidates to recommend to the members for their approval. The Committee will present one candidate at a time for consideration. The Committee will interview each candidate to discuss his salvation experience, call to the ministry, family life, education, past ministry experience, conformity to the scriptural qualifications, and his ministry philosophy and goals. The Committee will develop its own format and schedule for meeting, content of a questionnaire, packet of information to be sent to a candidate, and arrangements for interviewing and presenting candidates. The Committee will endeavor to regularly communicate with the congregation about its progress.

### 3) Interim pastor.

In the absence of an elder who is financially supported, the congregation may choose an interim pastor until one is found. The congregation shall first look within and then outside the congregation for this man. The interim pastor must meet the spiritual qualifications for an elder and will be elected according to the guidelines for electing an elder. The church members will approve the term of an interim pastor based on the needs of the church and it is not fixed at three years. At the discretion of the congregation, the interim pastor may or may not be allowed to serve as a church officer.

(I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:7-13; I Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:7, 17; I Peter 5:1-4; Acts 14:23, 20:17; Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 5:17-20)

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## C. Deacons

- 1) Deacons are servant leaders of the church and, as such, will help the elders administer, shepherd, and care for the needs of the congregation. The deacons will assist the elders in ways that will allow the elders to devote themselves to prayer, the ministry of the Scriptures, and the general oversight of the church. The deacons shall have authority over the church's financial affairs, business dealings, day-to-day operations, care and custody of the property, and the distribution of benevolence funds within the limits established in the constitution and bylaws.
- 2) Deacons will be chosen according to the qualifications outlined by God in I Timothy and related Scriptures and the needs of the church. Although no specific number of deacons is required in the Scriptures, RBC will follow the scriptural pattern for local churches by functioning with a plurality of deacons. The deacons shall be elected for a two-year term by a two-thirds vote of votes cast.
- 3) Any man chosen to this office must be an active member in good standing and faithful attendance in this church. He must affirm his agreement with the purpose, mission, vision, doctrine, and constitution and bylaws of this church. He must demonstrate the spiritual, personal, domestic, and ministry qualifications outlined in the Scriptures.
- 4) A deacon may resign without prejudice if he finds he cannot discharge his duties. If any deacon is guilty of serious breach in Christian doctrine or conduct, the congregation may bring his term to an immediate end.
- 5) The deacons will assist the elders in administering the affairs of the church subject to the laws of the state.

(Acts 6:1-7; I Timothy 3:8-13; Philippians 1:1; Galatians 6:10)

## D. Other positions

- 1) Secretary: The secretary shall keep a faithful record of the proceedings of church business meetings. He or she is responsible for the maintenance of a register with the names and addresses of the members of the church, with dates and modes of their reception and removal, and a record of baptisms and marriages. He or she is responsible for the issuance of letters of transfer voted by the church, notifying the churches to which they are addressed; the preservation on file of all communications and official reports; the notification of all persons elected to offices and committees; the dissemination of proper notices of all meetings when notices are necessary; the conduct of all correspondence so far as it is not otherwise provided for, and the

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performance of such other duties as are prescribed by law or as usually pertain to the office of a secretary of an assembly. He or she may be assisted in the performance of these responsibilities by other members. The church officers will nominate a candidate and the church will appoint the individual on an annual basis.

- 2) Treasurer: The treasurer is responsible for the proper receipt and deposit of all funds received by the church. He or she is responsible for the timely payment of the bills of the church. He or she shall keep an accurate account of all receipts and disbursements and provide complete records of accounting. He or she is responsible for the timely filing of required tax returns. He or she may be assisted in the performance of these responsibilities by other members. The church officers will nominate a candidate and the church will appoint the individual on an annual basis.
- 3) Auditor: An auditor shall be appointed by the church officers to serve for one year. He or she shall examine the accounts of the treasurer and report thereon.

## Section 4.4. Other Staff

As the congregation or the officers see the need, other staff positions may be considered for incorporation into the life and ministry of the church. Such staff might include someone to oversee the youth program, to give additional direction to the music program, to concentrate on visitation in local communities, etc.

## Article 5. Membership

### Section 5.1. Qualifications for membership.

Those seeking membership must, through their actions, words, lifestyle, and affiliations, evidence a genuine experience of regeneration through faith in and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Applicants for membership must comply with the following conditions before applying for membership, even if the applicant submits a letter of transfer or recommendation.

- A. Proclaim an understanding and agreement with the Gospel.
- B. Profess faith as a believer in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior followed by baptism by a single immersion. An applicant that has been baptized prior to coming to RBC is not required to receive another baptism. RBC does not believe in triple/trine/triune baptism.
- C. Affirm that they are willing to accept and support the beliefs in the RBC statement of faith.
- D. Attend a pre-membership study of the church's statement of faith, the constitution and bylaws of the church, the ministries of the church, general church practices, and expectations of members.
- E. Be at least 18 years of age at the time of application.

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## Section 5.2. Application for membership.

The following steps are required for review of an applicant and acceptance as a church member (hereafter referred to solely as member). The members will consider each applicant separately regardless of family relationships.

- A. Upon meeting the qualifications set forth in Section 5.1., the applicant will complete a membership application and submit it to an elder of the church. The applicant will provide a written testimony of his or her salvation along with the membership application.
- B. A group of church officers will interview the applicant to ensure he or she fully meets the qualifications for membership and agrees to submit to the authority of the church and its leaders. The interview will also provide the applicant the opportunity to ask questions and address any concerns.
- C. Following the interview, the interviewing officers will make a determination, by unanimous vote, as to whether they will report to the members that the applicant is qualified for membership.
  - 1) If the interviewing officers agree the applicant is qualified, they will inform the other church officers that the request for membership is to be included as an agenda topic at a business meeting.
  - 2) If the interviewing officers do not agree the applicant is qualified, they will inform the applicant of their concerns and provide the applicant an opportunity to address those concerns. They will also inform the other church officers.
- D. The members will consider approval of an applicant for membership at a business meeting via a motion for each applicant.
  - 1) The church will publish the written testimony of the salvation of each applicant at least two Sundays preceding the date of the business meeting, via electronic and print means, to allow the members to read the testimony in advance and talk with the applicant as desired.
  - 2) After a motion is presented to approve an applicant, the applicant will be asked to publicly present his or her testimony to the members.
  - 3) The members will consider a motion to approve an applicant only if the applicant is present at the meeting, except if health issues, family emergency, or work conflict preclude his or her attendance at the meeting.

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## Section 5.3. The Church's Expectations of Members

### A. Active church members

- 1) We regard active church membership as the regular involvement of each member with the other members in the church's life and programs. Regular involvement includes all of the following: attending the meetings and services, giving tithes and offerings, serving with gifts and talents, participating in spreading the gospel, caring for each other, yielding to the church leadership, and continuing to willingly accept and support the statement of faith and constitution and bylaws of this church.
- 2) Members are responsible to follow the Scriptures in every other relationship such as family, workplace, school, and community.
- 3) Members also are responsible for the development of their own personal holiness and walk with God through their individual effort and support from other believers.

### B. Non-resident church members

- 1) A member that no longer maintains a residence in the Lewisburg area and has remained a member is considered a non-resident member. Upon verification that the member no longer resides in the Lewisburg area or at the request of the member, the church Secretary will change the member's status to non-resident. Once placed in this status, the member is not a voting member and is not considered available in calculating a quorum or a voting requirement.
- 2) Following the change in status, the church Secretary will present a motion for the members to terminate the individual's membership. If termination of membership is approved, a letter will be sent to the member informing him or her of the change in membership status.
- 3) If the former member reestablishes residence in the Lewisburg area and returns to RBC, the members may vote to change the former member's status back to an active and voting member.

### C. Inactive church members

- 1) A member that is physically able and has not actively participated in the church over a six month period shall be considered an inactive member. Active participation for this determination includes regular attendance at worship service and/or participation in other church activities (Sunday School, prayer meetings, men's or women's group study). Once placed in this status, the member is not a voting member and is not considered available in calculating a quorum or a voting requirement.
- 2) Upon verification that the member has not actively participated in the church over a six month period, the church officers will present a motion to the members to approve a change to the member's status to inactive. Verification of lack of participation before presentation of the motion will include: a) contacting other members about participation of the member in question, b) an attempt by a church officer to directly contact the member in question about his or her circumstances and desire to remain a member of the church, and c) if the member cannot be reached

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by a church officer, a letter will be sent to the member informing him or her of the potential change in membership status. The member will be given thirty (30) days to respond with reasons not to change his or her status from active to inactive.

- 3) If the member reestablishes active participation after an approved change of status to inactive, the members may vote to change the member's status from inactive back to an active and voting member. If after a six month period in an inactive status during which the member does not become active again, the church officers will present a motion for the members to terminate the individual's membership.

(Hebrews 10:23-25; Malachi 3:8-10; I Corinthians 16:2; II Corinthians 8:12; 9:6-7; I Corinthians 12; Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:42-45; Ephesians 5:21-6:9; Romans 12:1-2)

## Section 5.4. The Discipline of Members

- A. We expect that our members will affirm each other in doing right and attempt to correct each other when doing wrong according to the Scriptures.
- B. There are two kinds of discipline. Formative discipline involves routine and regular instruction in the Scriptures by means of preaching, teaching, and personal study. The purpose of formative discipline is to promote spiritual growth. Corrective discipline requires specific instruction and application of the Scriptures to delinquent members and is pursued if formative discipline is not effective. Corrective discipline applies to such things as: holding and spreading false doctrine, living in violation of the law of the land or biblical morality, disrupting the peace and unity of the church, or extended absence from the services and activities of the church. All members have a responsibility to apply corrective discipline to another member following the biblical model when a member's actions are inconsistent with scriptural expectations for a Christian.
- C. When there are corrective disciplinary matters to be addressed by the church officers, they will follow the biblical model for reconciliation and make all possible efforts to resolve the problem through counsel and admonition. If necessary, they will apply the further step of suspension, which is the taking away of the privileges of serving in the church, partaking in the Lord's Supper, and voting in business meetings. The elders will report to the members a decision to suspend a member. If after suspension the problem is not corrected, the elders, after consultation with the deacons, will ask the members of the church to approve the termination of the church membership of the offending member. Such an unrepentant person will be regarded as an unbeliever who needs the gospel. The process of corrective discipline will not be abrupt or rushed but each step will be treated carefully and prayerfully with the hope of restoring the errant member.

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- D. The goal of church discipline is to restore the delinquent member to the complete fellowship and membership of the church. The members will forgive and restore those who give satisfactory evidence of repentance and change. The elders will recommend restoration at a properly called meeting of the church, after consultation with the deacons.

(Romans 12; I Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4, 5; Matthew 5:23-23; 18:15-18; Romans 16:17-19; I Corinthians 5; II Thessalonians 3:6, 11-15; Titus 3:9-11; II Peter 2; II Corinthians 2:5-8; Galatians 6:1-5; James 5:19-20; 1 Timothy 5:1-2, 17-20)

## **Section 5.5. Termination of Membership for reasons not involving discipline.**

- A. No member of this church may hold membership in another church. The membership of any individual member shall be automatically terminated by the church officers without notice if the member unites in membership with another church.
- B. The membership of an individual will automatically terminate upon his or her death.
- C. A member may receive a letter of recommendation from this church, if he or she departs in good standing and joins another church that requests such a letter. Upon receipt of a request for a letter of recommendation from a church, the church officers may approve by majority vote the sending of the requested letter.

## **Article 6. Meetings**

### **Section 6.1. Worship**

- A. Services of worship shall be held at given hours each Sunday, except when temporarily suspended by the elders. Other services for worship, inspiration, prayer and study may be held as determined by the elders.
- B. The ordinances of the Lord's Supper and baptism shall be observed at such times as the elders shall determine.

### **Section 6.2. Business meetings and motions**

- A. A business meeting may be called by a majority vote of the church officers or upon written request of five church members. A request by church members to the church officers to call a meeting shall include a description of the matters for consideration by the members.

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- B. All business meetings of the members must be properly called. A properly called meeting has the following prerequisites.
  - 1) The intent to conduct the meeting is announced during the worship service of at least two Sundays preceding the date of the meeting. Other means of announcement are encouraged as well. A tentative agenda must be included in the announcement.
  - 2) The wording of all motions to be presented for consideration at the meeting, at least in draft, is made available in printed and electronic form to the congregation at least seven days preceding the date of the meeting, with one exception. The wording of a change or amendment to the church's constitution and bylaws, at least in draft, is made available to the congregation at least fourteen days preceding the date of the meeting.
- C. An annual business meeting shall be held prior to the start of a new budget year. The annual meeting will normally include annual reports from the church officers and ministry teams, election of church officers, approval of the annual budget, and plans for the new year.
- D. A church member may submit a motion for consideration by the members at a called meeting if the following prerequisites are met.
  - 1) A written motion is presented to the church officers by a church member and supported by at least four other church members.
  - 2) The motion is submitted to the church's officers at least five days preceding the date of a called meeting.

## Section 6.3. Quorum requirements and voting standards

- A. Quorum Requirements. The active church members present at any properly called business meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
- B. Voting Standards.
  - 1) Only active church members are entitled to vote. In order to vote, the member must be physically present or participating through a church-organized conferencing capability.
  - 2) Votes may be cast by ballot, voice, or raising of hands. The church officers will select the appropriate method for the matter under consideration with one exception. The exception is the election of officers shall be done by ballot. The members may request and approve by motion a different means of casting the vote than selected by the officers.
  - 3) The basic voting standard to approve a motion is a majority of votes cast in favor of a motion with one set of exceptions (enumerated in Section 6.3.B.4).

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- 4) The voting standard is two thirds of votes cast in favor of a motion for the following activities as an exception to the basic voting standard:
  - a) Approval of a change to the doctrine or beliefs of the church
  - b) Approval of a change or amendment to the church's constitution and bylaws
  - c) Election or removal of church officers (elders and deacons)
  - d) Approval to hire a financially supported pastor
  - e) Approval to purchase land and/or a building for the church with church funds
- 5) An increase to the established voting standard for a specific matter may be considered by the members if the following prerequisites are met.
  - a) A written motion is presented by a church member that states the specific matter for which a different standard is proposed and the proposed voting standard.
  - b) The motion is submitted to the church's officers at least five days preceding the date of a called meeting.
  - c) The voting standard is two thirds of votes cast in favor of such a change.
  - d) The revised voting standard will only apply to the specific matter at the meeting at which the members approve that standard and considers that specific matter.
- 6) The members can table the consideration of a motion with the same voting standard that would apply to the motion itself.

## Section 6.4. Other matters

- A. Official Year. The official year of the church shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31. All officers, annually appointed persons, or annually elected/appointed entities (such as a board or committee) shall assume their duties during that same period. If an election is not held prior to January 1, officers and annually appointed persons whose term would have ended will continue in office until their successors are elected or appointed.
- B. Moderator. One of the elders of the church shall ordinarily be the moderator of business meetings.
- C. Reports. The officers, ministry teams, and others as directed by the church officers shall report at the annual meeting and at such other times as may be requested by the church.

## Article 7. Auxiliary Organizations

All organizations connected with the church and using its equipment are regarded as integral parts of the church and under its general jurisdiction.

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