



Bylaws

EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2015

PREAMBLE

Real Life Church (RLC hereafter), located in Ankeny, Iowa, is a non-denominational church. The authority and government of this church is vested in the Elders. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body.

ARTICLE I

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Based upon the Bible as God's inerrant and infallible Word, we the people of RLC, as a local church, are called out by God as a body of believers established by God for His glory. Our foundational purpose is to glorify God by believing and obeying His Word, which declares that we as His people have various privileges and responsibilities toward both God and Man.

A. God's Word

RLC shall strive to declare and protect the whole counsel of God's Word by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by establishing and teaching sound doctrine, and by exhorting individuals and families to believe and obey God's word as well as to study it in order to know truth for themselves.

B. Worship

RLC desires to offer up to God the worship that He richly deserves as our Creator, Savior, and Lord, humbly worshiping Him in spirit and truth with a desire to please Him. The word of God instructs us to worship Him in many ways: through the public preaching and reading of the Word of God, through praising Him in word and song, with instruments, through prayer and thanksgiving, through joyful giving, and through our loving obedience in all things.

An important part of our worship is keeping the two ordinances which Jesus Christ gave us: the baptism of believers by immersion and the celebration of Lord's Supper as a proclamation of the Lord's death until He comes again. We confess that God alone is worthy of our worship, and that we are to worship no other.

C. Community

RLC is to build up, protect, and minister to one another in love through discipleship, serving one another's physical and spiritual needs, meeting together regularly, exercising church discipline, and through praying for, encouraging, loving, and admonishing one another.

D. Making Disciples

RLC is to make disciples by teaching the Word of God so that believers grow in their love of Christ, in their obedience to His word, and in their ability and desire to tell others the good news. We are to baptize those who believe in Christ and are saved, bringing them into the church, and training them to make disciples as well.

E. Evangelism

The members of RLC, individually and as a body, shall seek to tell others of the good news of Jesus' death, burial, resurrection. RLC must also show by example through relationships with family members, neighbors, co-workers, etc. the redeeming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

F. Statement of Basic Belief

The following statement of basic belief represents the core orthodox beliefs of RLC from a biblical perspective. These beliefs do not need to be held by any person who wishes to simply irregularly attend Real Life Church worship services. However, to partake in the Lord's Supper as part of the true universal church of Christ, these beliefs must be affirmed.

- The scriptures are true, authoritative, and sufficient (Psalm 119:160, 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21).
- There is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah 46:9-10, John 17:3, 1 Timothy 2:5).
- The Father is God. The Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. There is one God and three distinct Persons and one God (Genesis 1:26, Matthew 3:13-17, Matthew 28:17-20, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6).
- All of humanity (except for Jesus Christ) is sinful by birth and action (Genesis 6:5, Psalm 51:5, Romans 3:39, Ephesians 2:1-3).
- The penalty for sin is death, both physical and eternal (Genesis 2:15-17, Genesis 3:19, Romans 6:23).
- Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, was born of a virgin and is both fully and truly God and fully and truly human (Matthew 1:20, Luke 2:52, John 1:1-4, 14, Colossians 1:15-20, Hebrews 1:1-3).
- Jesus Christ died on the cross as my substitute to pay the penalty for my sin (1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 3:18).
- Jesus Christ rose physically from the dead (Matthew 28:1-20, Luke 24)
- Jesus Christ physically ascended into heaven and will one day return physically (Acts 1:11, 1 John 3:2, Revelation 1:7).
- There will be a future physical resurrection of all people. Those who trust in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal life. Those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31-46, Revelation 20:11-15).
- Only by trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ can one be reconciled to God and experience real, eternal life and joy (John 3:18, John 10:10, Romans 3:21-26, 1 Timothy 2:5-6).

G. Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

It is the biblical position that marriage involves the union of one man and one woman in permanent sacred faithfulness. Although various cultures and customs have evolving definitions of marriage, it is God alone who has ultimate authority to prescribe and describe the marital relationship (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:1-9, Mark 10:1-12).

Furthermore, sexual intimacy is only properly exercised and pursued within the confines of this marital relationship. Sexual immorality, defined as any sexual activity outside of the boundaries of the sacred marital relationship between one man and one woman, is clearly prohibited by God (Matthew 15:19, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 13:4).

As a consequence, RLC regards any and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, or pornography use as sinful and ultimately unsatisfying. RLC also regards as sinful the intent or desire to surgically alter one's biological sex to a different sex. Since the body is a creation of God, RLC holds sexual identity to be biologically determined, and associated gender norms are to be observed as appropriate to biblical standards (Genesis 1:27, Romans 1:26-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Though sexual immorality, as described in this section is depraved (as is all sin), the gospel provides redemption and reconciliation to all who confess and repent of their sin, coming to Jesus for forgiveness and new life (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 2:1-10, Titus 3:3-7).

Furthermore, there is a difference between temptation and unrepentant sin. Jesus was tempted in all ways as we are, yet He never sinned. Members, employees, volunteers and attendees of the RLC wrestling with all manner of

sexual temptation will find a Church ready to point them to Jesus and join with them to fight for their obedience to Christ. Jesus called the weary and heavy-laden to Himself. As a church desiring to follow Christ fully, RLC will be a safe place for men and women fighting sexual temptations of all kinds. For those fighting temptation and repenting of sin, RLC will provide love, care and direction (Matthew 11:28-30, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 2:17-18, Hebrews 4:14-16).

Hateful, bigoted, bullying, and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual, regardless of his/her lifestyle are to be repudiated as sinful and are not in step with the Scriptures nor the doctrines of RLC.

RLC's Statement on Marriage and Sexuality is based upon God's will for human life as conveyed to us through the Scriptures, upon which this Church has been founded and anchored, and this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality shall not be subject to change through popular vote; referendum; prevailing opinion of the majority of the church or the general public; influence of or interpretation by any government authority, agency, or official action; or legal developments on the local, state, or federal level.

ARTICLE II

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership Definition

The New Testament assumes that when someone repents of their sin and trusts in Jesus Christ, he or she becomes a member of the universal, worldwide church of Christ. Furthermore, the New Testament assumes that Christians will be an active part of a local church. This includes exhibiting a true and real faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the voluntary submission to the teaching and leadership of the local church, the active participation in the life and work of the church, the employment of gifts for the edification of the church, and financial support to the ministry of the church.

Section 2: Membership Inclusion

At this time, Real Life Church does not have a more formal policy for church membership, but regards members as those who regularly attend worship services and exhibit the qualities mentioned in the paragraph above.

Section 3. Church Discipline

The threefold purpose of church discipline is 1) to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), 2) to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20), and 3) to seek the good of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of teaching and behavior (Galatians 6:1).

Professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who walk away from the truth or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture, as determined by the Elders, shall be subject to church discipline, including dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18. Before such dismissal, however, (1) it is the responsibility of any member of this church who has knowledge of the individual's sin to bring correction in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If sinning individual refuses to repent then (2) the warning member shall again go to the sinning individual, seeking his or her repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals who can confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the sinning individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent. If the sinning individual still refuses to listen to this warning, then (3) it shall be brought to the attention of the Elders. If the Elders determine – after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-18, 1 Timothy 5:19, and

Titus 3:10 – that there is corroborating evidence that the individual has sinned or is continuing to sin, that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and that he or she has refused to repent, then the Elders shall inform the church and the congregation at a regularly-scheduled worship service in order that the church may call the sinning individual to repentance. If the sinning individual demonstrates repentance, then notice to that effect may be given at a regularly scheduled worship service. If, however, the sinning individual does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then (4) he or she shall be publicly dismissed from the fellowship of the church and the congregation at a regularly scheduled worship service. If the sinning individual, after dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests restored fellowship before the Elders, then he or she shall be publicly restored to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of fellowship.

The members of this church, and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the third or fourth stages of church discipline.

ARTICLE III

ELDERS

Section 1. The Composition of Elders

The Elders, which includes the Pastor-Teacher, shall consist of a plurality of godly men who meet the qualifications of the pertinent Scriptures, especially 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 per Article III, Section 2.

Section 2. Qualifications

Each member of the Elders must be an active member of this church and possess the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

Section 3. The Responsibilities of Elders

All the activities and affairs of the church shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Elders, who are responsible for shepherding, oversight, and spiritual leadership. It is hereby expressly declared that the Board shall have the following responsibilities in addition to the other responsibilities outlined in these Bylaws:

(A) To teach and preach God's word in accordance with sound doctrine for the edification, correction, encouragement, and spiritual growth and health of the church.

(B) To select and remove all the officers, agents, and employees of the church; prescribe such duties for them consistent with the Scriptures, with law, or with these Bylaws; and fix the terms of their offices and their compensation.

(C) To make such disbursements from the funds and properties of the church as are required to fulfill the purposes of this church and generally to conduct, manage, and control the activities and affairs of the church and to make such rules and regulations consistent with the Scriptures, with law, or with these Bylaws, as they may deem best.

(D) To establish policies and practices for the church consistent with the purposes of this church.

Section 4. Recommendation, Selection, and Affirmation of Elders

Recommendation

Recommendations to fill the office of Elder may be made through:

- (A) Formal request by the Elders to the members of the church.
- (B) Written request from any member to the Elders recommending another member of the church.

Upon recommendation, those who desire to be considered for the office of Elder then become nominees for the office of Elder.

Selection: The Elders shall review all nominees, extensively interviewing and examining each one to determine his qualifications. The Elders shall then approve or disapprove each nominee.

Affirmation: The Elders shall receive feedback from the church members concerning the nominee and if the Elders still approves the nominee for the office of Elder, the nominee shall be presented to the church to affirm the decision of the Elders at a regular or special meeting.

Section 5. Term of Office

Elders shall serve an indefinite term. However, an Elder may take a sabbatical from his active duties as deemed necessary by the Elders.

ARTICLE IV

DEACONS

Section 1. Composition and Qualifications

The Deacons shall consist of members possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Section 2. Responsibilities

The ministry of the Deacon is that of a servant of the church. It includes the honorable task of serving the physical and practical needs of the church and performing other duties as assigned by the Elders. This frees the Elders to fulfill their ministry as leaders and to watch over the souls of the congregation through prayer and the ministry of God's word.

Section 3. Recommendation, Selection, and Affirmation of Deacons

The recommendation, selection, and affirmation of Deacons shall be done in the same manner as for Elders, as set forth in Article III, Section 4 of these Bylaws.

Section 4. Term of Office

Deacons shall serve an indefinite term. However, a Deacon may take a sabbatical from his duties as deemed necessary by the Elders.

ARTICLE V

OTHER COUNCILS, COMMITTEES, AND OFFICERS

Section 1. Councils and Committees

To promote efficient handling of Board matters, the Elders may appoint various councils and committees from within its membership, the staff, and from the church at large. These councils and committees shall perform tasks solely in accordance with the duties and with powers specifically delegated by the Board. The general functions of councils and committees are:

(A) To bring considered recommendations to the Elders concerning ministries.

(B) To provide a wider base of counsel to the Elders having the oversight of specific ministries.

All councils and committees shall exist for the period specified by the Elders.

Section 2. Secretary

The Secretary shall meet the moral and spiritual qualifications as set forth in 1 Tim. 3:8-13 and shall be appointed by and serve under the direction of the Body of Elders until such time as another Secretary is appointed. The Secretary shall record actions of the church at any church conference and maintain an accurate membership roll.

Section 3. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall meet the moral and spiritual qualifications set forth in 1 Tim. 3:8-13 and shall be appointed by and serve under the direction of the Body of Elders until such time as another Treasurer is appointed.

The Treasurer shall ensure the stewardship of the physical and financial resources of the church. The Treasurer shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept or maintained, adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of the church. The financial books shall at all reasonable times be open to inspection by any Elder.

The Treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be deposited all moneys and other valuables in the name and to the credit of the church. He shall disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the church as may be ordered by the Elders, shall render, or cause to be rendered, to the Elders, whenever they request it, an account of all the transactions and of the financial condition of the church, and shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Elders. He shall make, or cause to be made, the financial reports at the request of the Elders.

ARTICLE VI

EMPLOYMENT AND ORDINATION

Section 1. Employment

Any person applying for employment opportunities or currently employed with Real Life Church must affirm belief in and conduct one's life in accordance with the church's Statement of Basic Belief as well as the Statement on Marriage and Sexuality.

Section 2. Ordination

Ordination refers to the unanimous recognition by the Elders of a man's call to the ministry, preparation as a shepherd, and qualification to serve. Ordination shall be conferred for life, so long as the man continues to manifest the qualifications of the office.

ARTICLE VII

SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

Section 1. General

In any dispute arising between church members, pastors, or staff pertaining to any matter of spiritual teaching or practices, church finances, or title to property purchased with church contributions, the dispute shall be resolved by the Elders of the church. A decision shall be reached after prayerful consideration, in a spirit of humility, with each Elder regarding one another before himself and striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1-3).

ARTICLE VIII

OTHER PROVISIONS

Section 1. Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended and new and additional Bylaws may be made at any time by the Elders in the exercise of the power granted to said Elders in these Bylaws.

Section 2. Record of Amendments

Whenever an amendment or new Bylaws is adopted, it shall be copied in the book of minutes with the original Bylaws, in the appropriate place. If any Bylaw is repealed, the fact of repeal with the date of the meeting at which the repeal was enacted or written assent was filed shall be stated in said book.

ARTICLE IX

RECEIPT, INVESTMENT, AND DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

Section 1.

The church shall hold, manage, and disburse any funds or properties received by it from any source in a manner that is consistent with the expressed purposes of this church.

ARTICLE X

CHURCH RECORDS AND REPORTS

Section 1. Records

The church shall maintain adequate and correct accounts, books, and records of its business and properties.

Section 2. Inspection of Books and Records

Every Elder shall have the absolute right at any reasonable time to inspect all books, records, documents of every kind, and the physical properties of the church.

ARTICLE XI

DISSOLUTION

Section 1. General

Upon dissolution of this church, the Elders shall cause the assets herein to be distributed to another religious organization.