

Redeemer Church

THE BASICS

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I. NAME:

The name of this church shall be Redeemer Church. This will be a non-profit corporation of the State of Oklahoma. This church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control. Recognizing, however, the universal communion of followers of Christ and the benefit of a wider association, this church will be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention in its national, state, and local expressions.

II. THE PURPOSES OF REDEEMER CHURCH ARE:

A. Redeemer exists to glorify God as we center on the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it redeems all of life –our families; our community; our world.

- * To value and teach the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as told by Scripture and as displayed by those whose faith is in Him.

- * To value the family of God created by adoption through the work of Jesus; expressed simply in a household of faith as central and the most influential presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the future generation; in the gathering of the family of God in the local church and ultimately in the family of God in the universal church.

- * To live in community and honest fellowship to our neighbors, our culture, and our city as partakers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- * To live on mission to love our neighbors, our communities, our nation, our world as witnesses to the redemptive Gospel of Jesus Christ.

B. We will seek to accomplish our vision through various ministries including but not limited to: gathering in communal worship services of celebration, administration of the Lord's supper and baptism, intimate prayer and discussion in community groups, in-depth study and discipleship of the radical life of a follower of Christ, counseling and support services, various community services, shelters for people in need, and other initiatives as deemed necessary by the governing body.

III. ARTICLES OF FAITH:

The doctrinal outlook of the corporation is reflected in the following statements:

A. WE BELIEVE GOD WROTE THE BIBLE THROUGH MEN WITHOUT ERROR. The Old and New Testaments, in their entirety, constitute the written Word of God and are without error in the original manuscripts. They were written by men, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and are therefore fully authoritative in all matters for the follower of Christ.

B. WE BELIEVE THAT GOD EXISTS ETERNALLY IN TRINITY: FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT. There is one God, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, love, justice, goodness, and truth, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who desires that we should know Him intimately and live a life of fulfillment through the pursuit of His glory.

C. WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SECOND PERSON OF THE TRINITY WHO BECAME A MAN, LIVED A SINLESS LIFE, DIED ON A CROSS, WAS BURIED, AND ROSE BODILY FROM THE GRAVE TO REDEEM SINFUL HUMANITY. He is True God of True God, begotten, not made. He became human, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and made His dwelling among us, living a full life without sin. His perfect life and death on the cross provide the only atonement that satisfies the righteous requirements of God for the sinner. The death of Jesus Christ fully and finally paid for sin, and was redemptive, substitutionary, and efficacious. The historic fact of Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead testifies powerfully to His deity, and is itself humanity's ultimate hope. Jesus Christ will make a personal and imminent return to the earth; this return is a sanctifying "hope" having vital bearing on the life of every Christian.

D. WE BELIEVE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SUPERNATURAL AGENT IN SALVATION, BAPTIZING ALL CHRISTIANS INTO THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH AT CONVERSION, INDWELLING AND SEALING THEM UNTIL THE DAY OF CHRIST'S RETURN. The Holy Spirit bears persuasive testimony to the realities of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the personal, divine third member of the Godhead. He convicts the world of sin and its consequences; He brings repentance and faith to the believer; He indwells the believer with the radical life of Jesus Christ; He gives gifts to every believer for mutual service within the body of Christ; He unites each believer in the Body of Christ and seals them in that relationship; He bears the fruit of Christian character in the lives of every believer; He guides, instructs, and empowers the believer for godly living and service. He is worshipped with the Father and the Son.

E. WE BELIEVE ALL HUMANS ARE SINFUL AND IN NEED OF SALVATION. SALVATION IS THE GIFT OF GOD BROUGHT TO HUMANS BY GRACE ALONE, AND RECEIVED BY PERSONAL FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. A TRUE CHRISTIAN WILL BE KEPT BY GOD'S POWER FOREVER. God has created every person in the image of God, but we have fallen into sin, and are therefore lost; only through the regeneration by the Holy Spirit can we obtain salvation and spiritual life. All humans are sinners and face the judgment of God. The shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and only those who place faith in Jesus Christ and initiate a relationship with God on the basis of the work of Christ are delivered from the wrath of God toward sin required by His holy character. Those who receive Jesus Christ by faith are said by Holy Scripture to be justified, regenerated, redeemed, and adopted into the divine family as co-heirs with Christ of all the blessings of the Godhead. We proclaim that all persons must consciously repent of their sins and confess that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord.

F. WE BELIEVE THAT GOD HAS CREATED ALL HUMANS IN HIS IMAGE. HE HAS CREATED THEM UNIQUELY FEMALE AND MALE. All humans are created in God's

image; therefore all human life is sacred. In creating humans as male and female, God communicated His image in harmonious interpersonal relationships, equality of personhood and importance and a distinction in role and authority.

G. WE BELIEVE THAT THE CHURCH IS A SPIRITUAL ORGANISM MADE UP OF ALL BELIEVERS EVERYWHERE FOR ALL TIME. All Christians in all times and in all places have been united into a single body by an operation of God. This resultant union is called the Body of Christ, the Universal Church.

H. WE BELIEVE IN THE AUTONOMY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH AND RECOGNIZE BELIEVERS BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER. Christ commanded that all Christians band together in assembly for instruction, worship, service, and fellowship. These assemblies are called local churches. As a local church, Redeemer embraces the rich and vibrant traditions of the Universal Church. Only those who are members of the Universal Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church. Baptism of believers by immersion and the Lord's Supper are the only two ordinances to be observed by the local church in the present age. These ordinances are not to be regarded as means of salvation.

I. WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS WILL RETURN TO EARTH TO JUDGE ALL PEOPLE AND TO RULE AND REIGN WITH HIS SAINTS FOREVER. All people will be resurrected to give account of their lives before God. The believer in Christ will be resurrected to everlasting blessedness and joy in the presence of God. The unbeliever will be resurrected to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

J We subscribe to the "Baptist Faith and Message" adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000 as our larger statement of faith with scriptural references.

H. We hold these truths in humble conviction.

IV. GOVERNMENT:

A. The government of Redeemer Church is vested in its members. This church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control.

B. The senior leadership of Redeemer Church shall be vested in a governing board of male elders/pastors, hereinafter referred to as the Council of Elders or the Eldership, which is composed of both paid and unpaid elders/pastors who follow the leading of Jesus who is the Senior Pastor of Redeemer (1 Peter 5:1–4).

C. QUALIFICATIONS To be considered as an elder, a man must have been called by God into leadership at Redeemer (Acts 20:28) and be a man of the highest Christian character according to the qualifications of Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9).

1. Relation to God

- a. A man – masculine leader
- b. Above reproach – without any character defect
- c. Able to teach – effective Bible communicator

- d. Not a new convert – mature Christian
- 2. Relation to Family
 - a. Husband of one wife – one-woman man, sexually pure
 - b. Pastors and Shepherds his children
 - c. Manages family well – provides for, leads, organizes, loves
- 3. Relation to Self
 - a. Temperate – mentally and emotionally stable
 - b. Self-controlled – disciplined life of sound decision-making
 - c. Not given to drunkenness – without addictions
 - d. Not a lover of money – financially content and upright
- 4. Relation to Others
 - a. Respectable – worth following and imitating
 - b. Hospitable – welcomes strangers, especially non-Christians for evangelism
 - c. Not violent – even-tempered
 - d. Gentle – kind, gracious, loving
 - e. Not contentious – peaceable, not quarrelsome/divisive
 - f. Good reputation with outsiders – respected by non-Christians

D. ELDER SELECTION

The process of becoming an elder/pastor involves at least the following steps:

1. He must be a member in good standing at Redeemer who has demonstrated the calling, character, and competency of an elder.
2. He must make his desire to become an elder known to one of the elders and be interviewed by the lead elder for approval.
3. His nomination must be approved without objection from anyone on the Council of Elders.
4. If accepted as an elder nominee, the man will then undergo a period of training and testing.
5. Training, prior to becoming an elder, will include whatever is deemed necessary to enhance the nominee's understanding of an elder's responsibilities as outlined in Scripture.
6. Upon completing his training and testing process, the man must be approved by all elders without objection to be introduced to the church members as an official elder candidate.
7. If approved as an elder candidate, members of Redeemer will be notified that he has met the criteria of an elder. Anyone in or out of the church having a concern regarding the man's qualifications to lead as an elder will have four weeks to notify the elders, who can investigate the matter to determine if there is any reason to disqualify the man.
8. Consensus approval from the elders and a congregational affirmation, indicated by a majority vote, are required prior to installation of an elder.
9. If the elders do not find any reason to reject the man as an official elder, an official final vote of the elders shall be taken and if there are no objections to his installation from any elder, the man will be installed by the laying on of hands, after which he shall be considered an ordained and licensed minister of the gospel.

10. Selection as an elder does not result in contract rights as an employee. All employees are “at will” and the employment relationship may be terminated without regard to such person continuing to serve as an elder.

E. ORGANIZATION

1. The Council of Elders may structure and organize however they deem necessary for the sake of simplicity, clarity of communication, and efficiency of organization, according to the needs of the church and the size of the Council of Elders so long as it preserves the plurality of elders and the doctrinal and character requirements for elders articulated in this document.

2. To promote efficient handling of Council of Elders matters, the Council 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 Council of Elders. The general functions of councils and committees are:

- a. To bring considered recommendations to the Council of Elders concerning ministries.
- b. To provide a wider base of counsel to the Elders having the oversight of specific ministries.

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

F. COOPERATION

Recognizing, however, the universal communion of followers of Christ and the benefit of a wider association, this church will be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention in its national, state, and local expressions.

V. MEMBERSHIP IN THE CONGREGATION

A. Membership shall be based upon (all of the below):

1. A confession of personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, and the testimony of believer’s baptism. Other membership requirements (participation in membership classes, required interviews, etc) may be added as necessary as determined by the elders to maintain the health and purity of the congregation. Current requirements are detailed in the “Current Membership Requirements” document.
2. An expressed desire to accept the responsibility of living a holy life, to participate actively in ministry, to give generously to Redeemer Church, and to live an evangelistic lifestyle. As such they solemnly commit to covenant with the Redeemer Church to uphold its fundamental doctrines, to participate in its core passions, to pray for and fellowship with the believers in the church.
3. A sympathy with and willingness to submit to the doctrinal outlook of the church.

B. Voting Privileges: Membership in this church shall not vest in any member any proprietary rights in the Corporation, but shall only entitle the member to vote at a

meeting of the members on those matters specifically set forth in the Bylaws or that the Council of Elders chooses to submit to the church membership for affirmation and approval. In such cases, voting privileges are restricted to members who are:

1. In good standing
2. At least 18 years of age
3. Not under any disciplinary action

All matters shall be determined by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by the constitution and by-laws.

C. Dual Membership - Any person who is currently a member of another church, yet through a temporary relocation has routinely been in attendance at Redeemer Church, shall be encouraged to have dual membership status. This status shall facilitate proper watchcare and oversight while the person is under the care of Redeemer Church.

D. Watchcare Membership – Watchcare members are persons who submit themselves to the teaching and discipline of Redeemer Church and are expected to actively serve. At the same time, watchcare members may not vote in membership meetings or serve in the office of deacon or elder. There are two situations in which watchcare membership may be appropriate:

1. Persons who are currently members of other churches, yet through a temporary relocation have routinely been in attendance at Redeemer, may find watchcare membership to be the most fitting step (for example, college students temporarily studying in Norman).
2. Persons who were baptized as infants and cannot in good conscience submit to believer's baptism by immersion can be considered for watchcare membership on a case-by-case basis.

E. Termination of Membership: Members shall be removed from the roll for the following reasons:

1. Death.
2. Transfer of membership to another church. A letter is needed from the church to which you have transferred in order to properly remove you from the membership rolls.
3. Withdrawal of Membership. In order to properly withdraw from membership, a written letter
4. Dismissal by Church Discipline

F. Restoration of Members: Members who are dismissed by the elder community shall be restored by the Council of Elders when they deem it appropriate and reinstated by the Council of Elders according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8.

VI. BUDGET

The budget may be amended in three ways: reallocation, adjustment for growth, and expansion

A. Reallocation

1. The budget may be amended by reallocation of funds from one account to another upon approval by the elders so long as the total change in funds does not exceed 5% of the annual budget. This change does not require

congregational approval.

2. Elders must approve reallocation of funds by a majority vote.

3. Reallocation of funds which exceeds 5% of the annual budget requires both approval by the elders and a majority vote of the congregation. In this case, the amendment to the budget must be presented in writing to the congregation and approved by a majority vote at a members' meeting. 50% of the members shall be considered a quorum for this vote.

B. Adjustment for growth

1. The budget may be amended if giving exceeds the amount estimated in the annual budget. Adjustment for growth allows the elders to expand the budget so that what is given can be distributed to various budget items in proportion to the excess giving.

2. Elders must approve adjustment for growth by majority vote.

3. Adjustment for growth does not require congregational approval.

C. Expansion

1. The budget may be amended for the expansion of ministry need. This includes but is not limited to:

a. Expansion of a budget for a ministry that has grown in its need for resources.

b. Addition of a new budget item, such as a new ministry or staff member.

2. Expansion for budget items less than 5% of the annual budget may be approved by a majority vote of the elders and does not require congregational approval.

3. Expansion for budget items greater than 5% of the annual budget may be approved by a majority vote of the elders and a majority vote of the congregation. In this case, the amendment to the budget must be presented in writing to the congregation and approved by a majority vote at a members' meeting. 50% of the members shall be considered a quorum for this vote.

VII – VOTING

Those admitted to church membership do not constitute a legislative body, nor do they constitute members of the Corporation, and they cannot vote, pass resolutions binding upon the Corporation, nor shall they have any equity in the real property of the Corporation, or rights to vote on its disposal, except any vote specifically provided in these Bylaws or as specifically provided by the Council of Elders. Said property of the Corporation is dedicated to religious and charitable purposes as outlined in the Articles of Incorporation. Congregational voting shall occur in the following instances:

1. Affirmation of the annual budget and significant changes in the budget exceeding 5% of the annual budget.
2. Affirmation of elder candidates for installation.
3. Purchases of land and real estate.
4. Amendments to the constitution and by-laws

