

Article 1

THE PURPOSE OF THESE ARTICLES

Our church shall be known as Lockwood Community Church and these articles of association shall represent our legal interests, regulate our governing beliefs and church order. This constitution shall be considered a public document and be made available to all who seek to understand our normative principles. Because the Scriptures are our final authority in matters of faith and practice, and because our wisdom should increase with time, this constitution may be amended in accordance with the procedures set forth in Article 12.

Article 2

STATEMENT OF FAITH

- A. There is one **God**, eternally existing in three persons-the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (Deut.6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Heb. 9:14)
- B. **God** is sovereign in creation, revelation, redemption and final judgment. (Gen. 1:1; Deut. 29:29; 1 Cor. 1:30; Acts 17:31)
- C. The **Bible**, as originally given, is the inspired and infallible Word of God. The entire Bible is the supreme authority and is sufficient in all matters of belief and behavior. (2 Tim.3:16- 17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Ps. 19:7-11)
- D. **Man** was created in the image of God but sinned. Since the fall, the whole of mankind is sinful and guilty so that everyone is subject to God's wrath and condemnation. (Rom. 3:23; Rom. 1:18-20; Rom. 5:12)
- E. The **Lord Jesus Christ**, God's incarnate Son is fully God. He was born of a virgin; His humanity is real and sinless; He died on the cross, was raised bodily from death and now has authority over heaven and earth. (Col. 1:19-20, 2:9; Matt.1:23; Rom. 8:3; Heb. 7:26; I Cor. 15:1-7; Matt. 28:18-20)
- F. Because of God's love, sinful human beings are redeemed from the guilt, penalty and power of sin only through the sacrificial death of **Jesus Christ**. He is our representative substitute and the only mediator between God and us. (Rom. 5:8; Heb. 10:10; Isa. 53:6; 2 Cor. 5:21; I Tim. 2:5-6)
- G. Those who believe in Christ are pardoned all their sins and accepted in God's sight only because of the righteousness of Christ credited to them. This **justification** is God's act of undeserved mercy, received solely by trust in him and not by their own efforts. (Phil. 3:9; Rom. 3:21-26; Titus 3:5)
- H. It is the **Holy Spirit** who makes the work of Christ effective to individual sinners. He empowers them to turn to God from their sin and to trust in Jesus Christ. (Jn. 16:7-11)
- I. The **Holy Spirit** lives in all those He has given spiritual birth. He enables them to become increasingly Christ-like in character and behavior and gives them power and gifts for their witness in the world. (Gal. 5:22-25, Acts 1:8)
- J. The only holy, universal **church** is the Body of Christ to which all true believers belong. This universal church finds expression in local fellowships, who gather for worship, edification and proclamation of the gospel. (Eph. 4:4; Acts 2:41-42)

- K. The **Lord Jesus Christ** will return in person to judge everyone; to receive the redeemed into eternal glory and to execute God's just condemnation on those who have not repented. (Acts 1:11; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; Matt. 25)

Article 3

OUR VISION

A people committed: To Christ, to Christ-likeness, to each other, to the world.

Article 4

OUR CHURCH COVENANT

We believe that the church exists to bring God glory (Eph. 1:6) and that we may do so by EXALTING God in worship, by EDIFYING one another, by EVANGELIZING our community and world and by EQUIPPING ourselves for God's service. We covenant together:

- A. To regularly attend the worship gatherings at LCC (Heb. 10:24) and earnestly seek God's aid to **exalt** Him in worship in spirit and truth.
- B. To **edify** one another to live distinctively Christian lives (Eph. 1:4; 2 Cor. 7:1) by devoting ourselves to develop loving relationships with our Christian family (Ro.12:10), by accepting one another in the spirit of Christ (Ro. 15:7), by serving one another (Gal. 5:13), especially in times of need, by bearing with those with whom we have differences (Eph. 4:2), and by encouraging one another (1 Thess.5:11) to be true to God and His purpose in our lives.
- C. To **evangelize** our world by sharing God's love and forgiveness with those outside Christ (2 Cor. 5:19; 1 Jn. 3:17), and by supporting the church with prayers and contributions in its effort to advance the Gospel locally and internationally through its missionary outreach.
- D. To be **equipped** to serve God (Eph. 4:11-16) by regular Bible study (2 Tim. 3:16) and prayer (Eph. 6:18), and by developing the spiritual gifts God has given through involvement in church ministry. (Eph. 4:17)

Article 5

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

- A. Any person who gives satisfactory evidence of being a true believer and follower of Jesus Christ, gives relational indication that he/she desires to be a regular and responsible part of the life and ministry of Lockwood Community Church (LCC), and publicly declares this intention to the elders either verbally or in writing, shall be considered a covenant partner with the rest of the church family. This partnership shall be acknowledged through the normal channels of communication in the church.
- B. Covenant partners shall be expected to faithfully attend the regular meetings of the church, support its ministry with their prayers and resources and submit themselves in the Lord to its elders' oversight and direction. They shall maintain a life that brings praise and honor to Jesus Christ, engage in mutual edification with others in the church and participate from time to time in evangelistic/mission

opportunities among the unsaved.

- C. We also recognize that there will always be people, both saved and unsaved among us who, though not covenant partners, come under our regular influence. To all such, whether children or adults, we shall extend our love, watch-care, and instruction as far and as long as they shall desire.
- D. The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. These are not prerequisites for salvation.
 - 1. Baptism is a public confession of one's faith in Jesus Christ and is to be administered only to those capable of making such a confession. We have chosen immersion as the mode of baptism because it best reflects the biblical pattern and meaning. Baptism at LCC is under the oversight of the elders.
 - 2. The Lord's Supper is a rich expression of fellowship between Christians and includes 1) a remembrance of the work of Christ on the cross as an atoning and substitutionary sacrifice for sins, 2) a symbolic celebration of participation in the benefits of his death, 3) a reminder of our common participation in the one body of Christ, and 4) a time of thanksgiving to God for His mercies on our behalf. The Lord's Supper (or communion) is open to all who confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The administration of the Lord's Supper is under the oversight of the elders. Our normal practice is to have the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of each month.
- E. Covenant partnership may be dissolved at the request of the covenant partner or at the discretion of the elders for behaviors inconsistent with discipleship to Jesus.

Article 6

GOVERNMENT

- A. LCC shall be governed by its covenant partners (a list of partners shall be maintained by the elders and provided to any in the church family upon request). They shall regulate its affairs under the authority of Christ, in keeping with the will of God as expressed in the New Testament.
- B. Certain authority will be given to the elders and deacons as God has directed (see below Article 7 and Article 8). Task authority shall be delegated to its servant leaders, but the final responsibility rests with the church family to fulfill and maintain the will of Christ in its corporate life.
- C. LCC is, and shall remain, independent but may from time to time voluntarily join itself to others for the purposes of fulfilling our ministry objectives. LCC shall not be subject to any governing body other than its own local corporate entity. LCC retains the right to terminate any associations with others at any time.

Article 7

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Under Christ as Head and Lord of His church, the New Testament recognizes elders and deacons to shepherd and serve the local church. They provide spiritual and practical ministry to the church family.

A. Elders

The Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the church and we at LCC are a local expression of His universal body. As members of His body, we desire to submit to His leadership in everything we do. We

therefore resolve never to knowingly contradict biblical principles when making decisions that affect His work in and through LCC. We will strive to discern God's plan for LCC through prayer and the study of Scripture, with watchful attention to God's activity in and around us.

1. Role and authority of elders

The New Testament teaches that the church is to be led by a plurality of godly leaders, men called "elders" or "overseers". They are called by God and affirmed by the covenant partners to shepherd, teach, pastor, and otherwise give leadership to the local church. This includes overseeing the work of the church (its worship, evangelism, edification, and equipping); protecting the church from error in doctrine (beliefs) and practice (lifestyle); and making sure God's people are being fed through accurate and insightful biblical teaching. God has invested the elders with the responsibility for the leadership of the local church. (Acts 20:28-31; 1 Pet. 5:1-4)

2. Qualifications of elders

All elders must be covenant partners at LCC. The biblical qualifications of elder are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

3. The LCC elder

At LCC, the elders work as a team to fulfill their responsibilities. Each elder will minister in the area(s) of his giftedness and calling while helping the other elders do the same. This work will include, but is not limited to: praying, teaching, planning, evaluating, setting ministry direction, delegating ministry responsibilities, modeling Christlikeness, and confronting those who oppose biblical truth or practice patterns of sinful behavior. The elders will meet regularly for prayer and counsel in the discharge of these duties.

4. Selection of elders

In September of each year, or in the case of special circumstances, the elders will determine if additional elders should be appointed. If so, they will initiate the following process:

- a) The elders will appoint a nominating committee consisting of at least three covenant partners of LCC and at least one elder.
- b) The nominating committee will receive instruction from the elders on the qualifications and responsibilities of elders and, with the elders, will determine what questions should be posed to potential candidates.
- c) The church family will be provided instruction on the biblical role and qualifications of elders.
- d) The church family will be given thirty days to prayerfully submit the names of covenant partners to the nominating committee for consideration.
- e) Men, whose names have been submitted, will be informed by the nominating committee which will urge them to engage in self-appraisal and personal evaluation in light of the scriptural qualifications. Any person may withdraw his name if he does not desire the office of elder or does not believe that he meets the qualifications.
- f) The nominating committee will then review the names and will interview each nominee.
- g) After prayerful consideration, the nominating committee will submit its recommendations to the elders for approval. After consulting with the elders, nominees whose names have not been recommended by the committee will be informed as to the reasons for their not being recommended.
- h) The nominating committee will submit the nominees to the elders who will make a final

selection. Any nominee not selected will be informed by the elders and given the reasons why he was not selected.

- i) The names of prospective elders will be announced to the church family, who will then be given thirty days to show cause in writing why any of the prospects would not be qualified to serve as elder. The elders will decide, after investigation, if sufficient evidence exists to disqualify the nominee.
- j) Following the thirty-day period, the recommended nominees will be presented to the church for affirmation, followed by a service of dedication.

5. Elder's term of service

Each elder will be appointed to a three-year term of service, subject to yearly evaluation by fellow elders. During the period of annual review, both the individual elder and the other elders will evaluate his continued service in office, considering the biblical qualifications as well as any personal factors that might affect the fulfillment of his charge. An individual's service as an elder may be discontinued by his own decision, or by the unanimous decision of the other elders. Leaving the eldership does not preclude future service in the position, subject to the regular elder selection process. Upon completion of a three year term, an elder's name shall be placed on the annual ballot for re-affirmation by the covenant partners.

6. Dismissal of elders

Any covenant partner may at any time show cause in writing why an elder should be disqualified from service. The elders will decide, after investigation, if sufficient evidence exists to disqualify the elder in question.

B. Deacons

Deacons are servant leaders who have accepted major areas of ministry responsibility in the church. The deacons are the church's ministers of mercy and, like the elders, are to attend to the people's practical care needs. On consultation with the elders, areas of ministry will be delegated to individual deacons according to their giftedness, calling and the particular needs of the church.

1. Qualifications of deacons

All deacons must be covenant partners at LCC. The biblical qualification for deacons are expressed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

2. Selection of deacons

In September of each year, or in the case of special circumstances, the elders will determine if additional deacons should be appointed. If so, they will initiate the following process:

- a) A nominating committee, consisting of at least three covenant partners and at least one elder will be appointed by the elders.
- b) The nominating committee will receive instruction from the elders on the qualifications and responsibilities of deacons and will determine what questions should be asked of potential candidates.
- c) The nominating committee will recommend and request interviews for each of the candidates.
- d) At the conclusion of the interview process, the nominating committee will submit its recommendations to the elders for final selection.
- e) Those recommended for the office of deacon will be announced to the church family who will be given thirty days to show cause in writing why any of the prospective deacons would not

be qualified to serve.

- f) At the Annual Meeting, the recommended deacon(s) will be presented to the church for affirmation by consensus of the covenant partners.

3. Deacon's term of service

Each deacon will serve the church for a three-year term subject to yearly evaluation by the elders. An individual's service as deacon may be discontinued by their own decision or by that of the elders. Leaving the position of deacon does not preclude future service subject to the regular deacon selection process outlined above. Upon completion of a three year term, a deacon's name shall be placed on the annual ballot for re-affirmation by the covenant partners.

4. Deacon's responsibilities and role

- a) A deacon shall serve in that capacity for which God has gifted and called him/her. Thus, they are responsible to maintain fellowship with the Lord, other leaders in the church, and the church family.
- b) At least one deacon shall provide written reports for the Church Council and thus ultimately to the church as to their ministries.
- c) The deacons shall oversee the Benevolent Fund.
- d) Deacons shall oversee the church visitation ministry.
- e) Deacons shall oversee the church's finances, communion supply and set-up, salaries of staff members, and other areas of ministry as designated by the elders for the well-being of the church.

C. Other Positions of Service

1. Trustees

The deacons will present trustees to the church for approval by a consensus of the covenant Partners at the Annual Meeting. Trustees will exercise maintenance and oversight of church property and LCC's non-profit legal status. Each trustee must be a covenant partner, and will be appointed for a three-year term of service.

2. Treasurer

The deacons will present the treasurer to the church for approval by a consensus of the covenant partners at the Annual Meeting. (See also Article 9) The treasurer must be a covenant partner, and will be appointed for a three- year term of service.

3. Global Ministries Team Leader

The Global Ministries Team Leader will give leadership to the church in its efforts to advance the gospel through its missionary outreach. The elders will present the Global Ministries Team Leader, who must be a covenant partner, to the church for approval by a consensus of the covenant partners at the Annual Meeting for a three-year term of service.

4. Christian Education Coordinator

CE: The Christian Education Coordinator will provide leadership to the church in its effort to build up the church and equip it for effective service. The elders will present the Christian Education Coordinator, who must be a covenant partner, to the church for approval by a consensus of the covenant partners at the Annual Meeting for a three-year term of service.

5. Council Clerk

The Council Clerk, who must be a covenant partner, will be appointed by the elders and approved by a consensus of the covenant partners at the Annual Meeting for a three-year term of service. (See also Article 8)

6. Other positions

Other positions of service will be directly appointed by the elders or deacons as needs arise or vacancies occur.

7. Paid Ministry Staff

- a) The elders are responsible for the process of hiring paid ministry staff. The church family will be included in both the process of selection and affirmation.
- b) The teaching pastor shall serve as an elder.
- c) Paid ministry staff shall be under the oversight of the elders.
- d) When just cause is evident, paid ministry staff may be dismissed at the discretion of the elders. The process of dismissal, shall be supervised by the elders and shall require consensus of the covenant partners.
- e) Other Paid Staff members will ultimately be responsible to the elders. However, the elders may assign oversight responsibilities to appropriate church leaders. Creation of additional positions shall be done by the elders with the approval of the covenant partners.

Article 8

THE CHURCH COUNCIL

- A. The Church Council shall serve as the coordination and communication arm of LCC. The Church Council shall meet at least six times a year at a time agreeable to its participants for the purposes of informing, encouraging, setting calendar, and general discussion of the various ministries of the church. A written summary of its proceedings will be made available by the Council Clerk.
- B. Composition of the Church Council will include at least one elder, one deacon, one trustee, the Council Clerk, the church treasurer, a representative from global ministries and Christian education, all pastoral staff, and anyone else the elders request to ensure a full and public disclosure of the church's interests. At any given time, a representative from ad hoc or standing committees may also be asked to attend the Church Council meeting. An agenda will be prepared and given to representatives on the Council one Sunday prior to the regular meeting. The meetings shall be open to any from the church family and provision will be made for remarks/questions concerning the business of the church.
- C. The Church Council shall operate in the best spirit of shared leadership and mutual submission. Since the covenant partners have vested participants on the Council with their trust and affirmation, they may make decisions by consensus but shall not authorize expenditure of church funds exceeding an amount set by the church at the Annual Meeting.

Article 9

FINANCES

- A. The church shall rely on the Lord through the voluntary gifts of its people for its financial maintenance. Each person shall decide in his heart before the Lord what amount he wants to give. An annual statement of his giving will be provided for tax purposes. The privacy of individual giving records shall be respected.
- B. Using regular and accepted accounting practices, the church shall maintain a financial system that is blameless, above suspicion and accessible to any in the church family. A budget shall be drawn up annually and presented to the church for approval at the Annual Meeting. The church shall select a church treasurer, as recommended by the deacons. The church treasurer will not have independent decision making authority, but shall serve the church and report regularly to it through the Church Council and the Annual Meeting.
- C. The deacons will select an assistant to the church treasurer who will oversee the weekly collection, counting, and depositing of funds. Together, the church treasurer and assistant will exercise diligent watchfulness over the financial affairs of the church. Collections and expenditures at year's end shall be part of the treasurer's report at the Annual Meeting. The financial officers of the church will be under the oversight of the deacons.
- D. The property of Lockwood Community Church shall not be mortgaged without the approval of the covenant partners. Upon approval, the elders will be empowered to sign legal documents of indebtedness.

Article 10

MAKING DECISIONS

Decisions of the church shall be made by "consensus"- that sense of accord, harmony, and unity of mind that indicates our essential agreement on a matter. Though voice vote, hand vote, or secret balloting may be used to finalize consensus, it will often require the wise and godly evaluation of the thoughts and concerns of the people during church family interaction. The elders, with the help of the deacons and Church Council as needed, are charged with the responsibility of determining when there is consensus. A guiding principle in the decision-making process is the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Article 11

BUSINESS MEETINGS AND QUORUM

- A. An annual meeting of the church, presided over by the elders, shall be held on the third Tuesday in January to focus our direction, vision, and priorities for the coming year. Also the church will recognize and affirm its leadership, adopt a new budget and conduct other business the elders shall bring before it. Additional business meetings may be called by the elders as needed.
- B. The church may convene a meeting of itself by approval of the Church Council. Any such meeting and its purpose must be announced two weeks prior to the event through normal channels of communication.
- C. A quorum shall be the covenant partners in attendance, unless the elders, in consultation with the deacons and Church Council, do not think that a sufficient representation is present. If it is determined that a quorum is not present, no official business may be conducted.

Article 12

AMENDMENTS

These articles may be amended through alteration, addition, or subtraction by consensus of the covenant partners present at any business meeting of the church. The church shall be apprised, in writing, of the proposed change at least 2 weeks prior to formal consideration of the proposed amendment(s).

Article 13

OUR LEGAL COMMITMENT TO BE A NON-PROFIT ECCLESIASTICAL CORPORATION UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, director, or officer of the corporation, nor shall any private individual be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporate assets. Upon dissolution, the properties, personal, real, and mixed, of this organization will be given, by consensus of the remaining covenant partners, to a non-profit organization of compatible vision.

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