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**CONSTITUTION/BYLAWS**  
*of*  
**SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH<sup>1</sup>**  
**2015**

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<sup>1</sup> Presented to congregation 1/7/15

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**CONSTITUTION/BYLAWS**

*of*

**SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH**

**Table of Contents**

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
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31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46

**5 Article 1 – Name**  
**5 Article 2 – Purpose**  
**6 Article 3 – Statement of Faith**  
**11 Article 4 – Church Covenant**  
**12 Article 5 – Membership**  
    **12 Section 1 – General**  
    **12 Section 2 – Qualifications for Membership**  
    **12 Section 3 – Admission of Members**  
    **13 Section 4 – Duties & Privileges of Members**  
    **14 Section 5 – Change in Membership Status**  
**15 Article 6 – Church Discipline**  
**17 Article 7 – Officers**  
    **17 Section 1 – General**  
    **17 Section 2 – Elders**  
    **19 Section 3 – Pastor**  
    **20 Section 4 – Associate Pastor**  
    **20 Section 5 – Assistant Pastor**  
    **20 Section 6 – Deacons**  
    **21 Section 7 – Clerk**  
    **22 Section 8 – Treasurer**  
**22 Article 8 – Elections**  
    **22 Section 1 – Principles**  
    **22 Section 2 – Selection of Officers**  
    **23 Section 3 – Calling of the Pastor**  
    **23 Section 4 – Calling of the Associate Pastor**  
    **24 Section 5 – Calling of the Assistant Pastor**  
**24 Article 9 – Meetings**  
    **24 Section 1 – Worship Meetings**  
    **24 Section 2 – Member Meetings**  
**25 Article 10 – Church Property**  
**26 Article 11 – Amendments**  
**26 Article 12 – ADR**  
**27 Article 13 – Rules of Order**

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
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**CONSTITUTION/BYLAWS**

*of*

**SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH**

2015

*Adopted by the membership on January 1, 2015*

**Article 1 – Name**

The name of this Corporation is Salem Baptist Church, Inc. This Corporation may also be hereinafter referred to in the Constitution/Bylaws as “the Church” or “SBC.” This Constitution/Bylaws governs the affairs of Salem Baptist Church, a Wisconsin non-profit corporation. The Church is organized under Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 181, as amended (“the Act”), for Religious purposes, and as specifically relates to religious organizations.

**Article 2 – Purpose**

**Section 1.** This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands by making disciples of all nations and teaching them to observe His commands (Matthew 28:18-20), through:

- 1) Worshiping Him by the reading and teaching of His Word, by the exaltation of His name in praise, and by urging men to respond to God’s demand of obedience;
- 2) equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study;
- 3) proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy Scripture;
- 4) encouraging, supporting, and participating in the work of missions: local, domestic, and international;
- 5) administering the ordinances of baptism and communion;
- 6) encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers;
- 7) serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ; and
- 8) calling fellow churches to biblical faithfulness and purity through instruction and encouragement about the nature of the local church.

**Section 2.** Salem Baptist Church desires to be a group of people that 1) Serves God through worshipping Father, Son and Spirit; 2) Serves other believers in personal, spiritual,



1       **V.     God the Holy Spirit**  
2

3 We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of  
4 sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in  
5 Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an  
6 abiding helper, teacher, and guide.  
7

8       **VI.    Fall of Man**  
9

10 We believe that Man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary  
11 transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now  
12 sinners, not by constraint or choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the  
13 law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin,  
14 without defense or excuse.  
15

16       **VII.   Salvation**  
17

18 We believe that the blessings of salvation are freely offered in the gospel; that it is the immediate  
19 duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the  
20 salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection  
21 of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.  
22

23       **VIII.   Election**  
24

25 We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously  
26 regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of  
27 man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display  
28 of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly  
29 excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation  
30 of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be  
31 ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian  
32 assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost  
33 diligence.  
34

35       **IX.     Regeneration**  
36

37 We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that  
38 regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner  
39 above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as  
40 to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy  
41 fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.  
42

43       **X.     Repentance**  
44

45 We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in  
46 our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger

1 and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned  
2 contrition, confession and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord  
3 Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King, and relying on Him alone as the only and all  
4 sufficient Savior.

5  
6 **XI. Justification**  
7

8 We believe that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is  
9 Justification; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on  
10 principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of  
11 righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of  
12 which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state  
13 of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and  
14 eternity.

15  
16 **XII. Sanctification**  
17

18 We believe that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are  
19 made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and  
20 that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the  
21 Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means, especially the word of God,  
22 self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness and prayer.

23  
24 **XIII. Perseverance of the Saints**  
25

26 We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their preserving  
27 attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that  
28 a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through  
29 faith unto salvation.

30  
31 **XIV. The Church**  
32

33 We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by  
34 covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed  
35 by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His word; that its  
36 only scriptural officers are Elders or Pastors, and Deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and  
37 duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

38  
39 **XV. Baptism & The Lord's Supper**  
40

41 We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the  
42 Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in  
43 the crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new  
44 life; that it is pre-requisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord's Supper, in  
45 which the members of the church by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate  
46 together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

1       **XVI. The Lord's Day**  
2

3 We believe that the Lord's Day is a Christian institution for regular observance, and should be  
4 employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private, resting from  
5 worldly employments and amusements, works of necessity and mercy only excepted.  
6

7       **XVII. The Righteous and the Wicked**  
8

9 We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked;  
10 that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the  
11 Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence  
12 and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men  
13 both in and after death.  
14

15       **XVIII. The Resurrection**  
16

17 We believe that the bodies of men after death return to dust, but their spirits return immediately  
18 to God: the righteous to rest with Him; the wicked to be reserved under darkness to the  
19 judgment. At the last day, the bodies of all the dead, both just and unjust, will be raised.  
20

21       **XIX. The Judgment**  
22

23 We believe that God hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world by Jesus Christ,  
24 when every one shall receive according to his deeds; the wicked shall go into everlasting  
25 punishment; the righteous, into everlasting life.  
26

27       **XX. The World to Come**  
28

29 We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from  
30 heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then  
31 take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless  
32 joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles  
33 of righteousness.  
34

35       **XXI. Harmony of Law and Gospel**  
36

37 We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government;  
38 that it is holy, just and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to  
39 fulfill its precepts, arises entirely from their love of sin: to deliver them from which, and to  
40 restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the  
41 Gospel, and of the Means of Grace connected with the establishment of the visible church.  
42

43       **XXII. Civil Government**  
44

45 We believe that Civil Government is of Divine appointment, for the interests and good order of  
46 human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed;

1 except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the  
2 conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.

3  
4 **XXIII. Religious Liberty**

5  
6 God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and  
7 commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state  
8 should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of  
9 its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should  
10 be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty  
11 of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto, except when the civil authority demands the  
12 allegiance due to God alone, and except when it demands things contrary to the revealed will of  
13 God. The church should not resort to civil power to carry out its work. The gospel of Christ  
14 contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose  
15 penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support  
16 of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the  
17 right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and  
18 propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

19  
20 **XXIV. Christian Conduct**

21  
22 We believe that a Christian should live for the glory of God and the well being of his fellow  
23 men; that his conduct should be blameless before the world; that he should be a faithful steward  
24 of his possessions; and that he should seek to realize for himself and others the full stature of  
25 maturity in Christ.

26  
27 **XXV. The Family**

28  
29 God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society, the ideal of which  
30 is expressed as the union of one man, and one woman, for life, bearing biological children and  
31 exercising dominion over the earth. At present, given the Fall of man, it is composed of persons  
32 related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

33  
34 Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is  
35 God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man  
36 and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual  
37 expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

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**Article 4 – Church Covenant**

**Section 1.** *The church covenant is equal parts promise, summary of expectations, ethical statement, and biblical standard. We summarize how we promise to live together in the covenant. It forms the ethics, or the moral principles, of our worldview and holds out a biblical standard by which we live. Our acceptance of this multifaceted document follows the practice of believers throughout the centuries who have pledged to God and one another to live out the gospel in community.*

*We use our covenant in two key ways today. We require all new members to sign it before joining the church. We also reaffirm the commitment to the covenant at all members meetings and before taking communion, when we stand as a body and recommit ourselves to it. By featuring the covenant in our life together, we strive to protect ourselves from individual and corporate sin. Of equal importance, we spur one another on to live in light of a greater covenant, one initiated by love, sealed by sacrifice, and kept for eternity by our Savior, Jesus Christ.*

**Section 2.** Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give ourselves up to him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other:

- A. We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;
- B. We will gather weekly, not forsaking our assembling together, for the purpose of worshiping the Father through Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit, and learning from his Word in both large and small group settings;
- C. We will honor God with our stewardship, and cheerfully and regularly contribute to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations;
- D. We will seek, by the aid of God, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation to now lead a new and holy life, one that would not bring shame upon the name of Jesus Christ or violate the teachings of Scripture;
- E. We will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other, not neglecting to pray for ourselves and others, and we will faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require;
- F. We will endeavor to bring up such as may at any time be under our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example seek the salvation of our family and friends;
- G. We will rejoice at each others' happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows;

- H. We will work together for the continuance of a faithful and evangelical ministry in this church, both collective and individual, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; and
- I. We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other congregation in which we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

*May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.*

## **Article 5 – Membership**

**Section 1.** Membership in the church shall be open to all, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, subject to the qualification set forth below.

### **Section 2. Qualifications for Membership**

To qualify for membership in the Church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized in obedience to Christ following his regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Church Covenant & Statement of Faith. The Elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith and such other evidence as the Elders deem appropriate.

### **Section 3. Admission of Members**

A. Those desiring to join the church may indicate that desire privately, by contacting an Elder, or publicly, by responding to an invitation or by other announcement at a service of the church. In either event, before being approved for membership, those seeking to become members must then be assessed by the Elders, and complete such requirements as they may, in their discretion, deem appropriate. Procedures to be completed before proposed membership is presented for congregational approval include, but are not limited to:

1. Application for membership
2. Written testimony
3. Membership class;
4. Acknowledgment of receipt of the Constitution/Bylaws, statement of faith, and/or church covenant, and agreement to abide by them;
5. Completion of a Pastoral and/or Elder membership interview;
6. Satisfactory referral from a prior church, if applicable.

1 B. Should the Elders determine that membership is appropriate, they shall present the  
2 candidate for membership and recommend that the congregation approve the  
3 candidate's membership, which vote shall occur at a regular or special called member  
4 meeting. Congregational approval of membership requires a two-thirds (2/3)  
5 affirmative vote (see Art. 9, § 2(F)). Upon approval, the candidate shall become a  
6 member of the church and relinquish membership in other churches.  
7

8 **Section 4. Duties and Privileges of Members**  
9

10 A. In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member  
11 shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry  
12 and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time,  
13 and material resources each has received from God. Only those shall be  
14 entitled to serve in the ministry of the church who are members of this  
15 congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval  
16 of the Elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for  
17 purposes of administration and professional consultation.  
18

19 B. Under Jesus Christ, the church is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the  
20 privilege of members to attend member meetings and vote on matters that may  
21 be submitted to the congregation for vote. The usual matters for which there  
22 shall be a congregational vote include (*see also* Article 9):  
23

- 24 1. Admission of members, or removal from membership (except for  
25 matters of conscience);
- 26 2. Ratification of expenditures and/or approval of budgets;
- 27 3. Affirmation or Removal of Elders and Deacons;
- 28 4. Changes to the Constitution/Bylaws.  
29

30 C. Each member in good standing is entitled to one vote on each matter thus  
31 submitted. There shall be no proxy or cumulative voting. The Elders may, in  
32 their discretion, permit absentee voting and set terms thereof. To be in good  
33 standing, a member must meet the conditions and qualification of membership  
34 as described in this Constitution/Bylaws (specifically, Articles 2 through 6,  
35 inclusive), and must be eighteen (18) years of age.  
36

37 D. The responsibility of all members is to preserve the unity of the church, which  
38 includes holding their Pastors in esteem and praying for them regularly, as  
39 well as for the leadership and ministries of the church. Each member shall  
40 handle any grievance with another member pursuant to the directives of the  
41 Bible and the Church's discipline procedure. As appropriate, attempts at  
42 informal or private reconciliation should be exhausted before formal or public  
43 complaint is heard.  
44

45 E. The privilege of members is to add their opinions to church discussion, and to  
46 express their concerns, but decently and in good order, and with Christian

1 charity. If a member's opinion or concern is not received, his responsibility is  
2 not to cause disruption of fellowship, but to respect the decision of the Elders  
3 and congregation. If a disagreement with leadership or the congregation is one  
4 of conscience, then the member may withdraw from membership, pursuant to  
5 Section 5(F) of this Article.  
6

7 F. The responsibility and privilege of members is to serve each other, in part by  
8 taking on roles and responsibilities in the life of the church that correspond to  
9 each member's gifts and desires, but also in other areas in which the church  
10 might have need.

11  
12 G. It is NOT a privilege of membership to teach or otherwise serve in leadership  
13 roles in the Church. In accord with Scripture, the teaching and leading  
14 responsibility of the Church is reserved to the Elders, and to those whom they  
15 approve and to whom they may from time to time delegate the teaching and  
16 leading responsibilities.  
17

18 H. Members are entitled to access to public records of the church, including  
19 minutes and financial records. Members are not entitled to inspect confidential  
20 records, such as personnel files, donor records, disciplinary records, or  
21 counseling records.  
22

## 23 **Section 5. Change in Membership Status**

24

25 Membership in the church is a privilege, not a right, and may be classified or changed in  
26 the following ways:  
27

28 A. **Transfer of Letter.** A member in good standing who wishes to withdraw from  
29 membership in order to unite to another congregation may request that the Pastor  
30 send a letter affirming that member's good standing, and recommending a transfer of  
31 membership.  
32

33 B. **Discipline.** A member may lose certain privileges of membership, such as (but not  
34 limited to) voting and serving, if the member is not in good standing and/or as a result  
35 of church discipline.  
36

37 C. **Inactivity.** To be absent from the life of the church includes neglecting for three  
38 months attendance at worship, giving, or discipleship.  
39

40 Should a member become absent from the life of the church, without justifiable  
41 cause, that member will be designated as inactive, shall forfeit his voting privilege,  
42 and shall be removed from membership unless he is restored to active status. Such  
43 restoration shall be under such terms and conditions as the Elders deem appropriate.  
44

45 D. **Administrative Removal.** Should a member join another congregation without  
46 notice to the church, he shall be removed from the membership roll. Additionally,

1 those members who choose not to re-affirm membership annually, bi-annually, or on  
2 such other frequency as the Elders schedule, shall be removed from the membership  
3 roll.

4  
5 E. **Death.** Death of a member shall result in his removal from the membership roll.  
6

7 F. **Matters of Conscience.** A member in good standing may quietly withdraw from  
8 membership by written request to the Elders that expresses as grounds therefore a  
9 violation of conscience. A violation of conscience may include a doctrinal  
10 disagreement with the church's statement of faith, or the member's unwillingness or  
11 inability to abide by the terms of this Constitution/Bylaws. Whether a member's  
12 withdrawal is permitted in this circumstance shall be in the discretion of the Elders.  
13 Should such withdrawal be permitted, that fact shall be announced to the  
14 congregation.  
15

16 G. **Not in Good Standing.** Any member under discipline becomes a member not in good  
17 standing, forfeits voting privileges and leadership responsibilities, and in the  
18 discretion of the Elders would not be eligible for a transfer of letter to another  
19 congregation.  
20

21 H. **Examination of Membership Rolls.** The Elders shall review the membership roll  
22 annually, and determine whether action regarding the membership status of any  
23 individual is needed, and announce such action to the church or present such  
24 recommendation to the church for approval, as appropriate.  
25

## 26 **Article 6 – Church Discipline<sup>2</sup>**

27  
28  
29 **Section 1.** The Bible teaches that discipline is a normal experience of following Jesus Christ,  
30 an expected practice of the church, and along with the proclamation of the Word  
31 and administration of the Ordinances, one of the marks of a healthy church.  
32 Church discipline typically takes two forms: formative and corrective.  
33

34 **Section 2.** Formative church discipline is set forth through the teaching of God's Word, the  
35 example of Christian living, and the mutual ministry of the members of the body  
36 of Jesus Christ. It has as its goal the instruction of disciples, the transformation of  
37 their lives, and their edification in love (Eph 4:11-13; Rom 12:1-16; 1Co 12:4-  
38 27). Formative discipline is God's tool for growing believers in sanctification, and  
39 enabling the church to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ  
40 (1Pe 4:7-12). It is expected that the ministry of the church will be such that the  
41 image of Jesus Christ will be formed in the members.  
42

---

<sup>2</sup> In overseeing the discipline of the church, the Elders may, and should, consider and apply the entire teaching of the Bible including, but not limited to, the following passages: Heb 12:1-14; Mat 5:21-26; Mat 7:3-5; Mat 16:19; Mat 18:15-20; 1Co 5:1-13; 1Co 6:1-8; Gal 2:11-14; Gal 6:1; Eph 5:11; 2Jo 9-10; 1Th 1:20; 2Th 3:6-15; 1Ti 5:19-20; Tit 1:10-14; Tit 3:9-11; Rev 3:19

1 **Section 3.** Corrective church discipline is called for by disorderly conduct or heretical  
2 doctrine which is contrary to the church's standard of life and doctrine as  
3 expressed in the articles of incorporation, the church covenant, the  
4 Constitution/Bylaws, and/or the Bible itself. Reasonable efforts shall be made  
5 through counsel and admonition to resolve difficulties, correct errors, and remove  
6 offenses before any further action is taken. No offense shall be brought before the  
7 church until the Elders determine that appropriate preliminary attempts at  
8 reconciliation have failed, or that circumstances dictate immediate church action,  
9 according to the principles set forth in Scripture. Corrective discipline always has  
10 for its aim the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the church, the witness of  
11 the gospel, and the restoration and spiritual growth of the offender.  
12

13 **Section 4.** Any member consistently neglectful of his duties or guilty of conduct by which  
14 the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the  
15 welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the Elders and/or the  
16 discipline of the church. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be  
17 contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.  
18

19 **Section 5.** Church discipline can include private and public admonition by the Elders and/or  
20 congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from  
21 office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1  
22 Timothy 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5). The purpose of such discipline should be:

23  
24 For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual  
25 disciplined (see Proverbs 15:5, 29:15; 1 Corinthians 4:14, Ephesians 6:4; 1  
26 Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115, 141:5; Proverbs 17:10,  
27 25:2, 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26-27, 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts  
28 2:40; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 1  
29 Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13-14; James 1:22);

30  
31 For instruction in righteousness and the good of other Christians, as an example to  
32 them (see Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11, 15:33;  
33 Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11;  
34 Hebrews 10:24-25);

35  
36 For the purity of the church as a whole (see 1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 2 Corinthians  
37 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2);

38  
39 For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28:7;  
40 Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1-14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy  
41 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John 3, 10); and

42  
43 Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see  
44 Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah  
45 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8, 18:17, 25;

Romans 2:24, 15:5-6; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; Ephesians 1:4, 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12).

**Section 6.** The types of offenses for which corrective church discipline may proceed include, but are not limited to, the following:

Theological sins, in which a member holds to and promotes doctrinal error in the church;

Sexual sins, in which a member openly practices fornication, adultery, homosexual conduct, or any other sexual sin prohibited by Scripture;

Family sins, in which a member is found to be abusive, destructive or rebellious within his family, or in which a husband or wife seeks divorce without biblical grounds;

Moral sins, in which it becomes publicly known that a member is involved in drunkenness, addiction, abortion, criminal activity, or any other moral category specified in Scripture;

Church family sins, in which a member is divisive towards the church, slanderous of the leadership, or negligent of covenant responsibilities.

**Section 7.** The Church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

## Article 7 – Officers

**Section 1.** The biblical offices in the church are Elders and Deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions under this constitution of Clerk and Treasurer. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

### Section 2. Elders

- A. The Elders shall be comprised of not less than three men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of Elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. A majority of the active Eldership shall be composed of church members not in the regular pay of the church, and no Elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.
- B. The Elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, the Elders shall devote their time

1 to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine),  
2 and shepherding God's flock.  
3

- 4 C. The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in  
5 accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be  
6 received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as Elders. This recognition shall  
7 be reaffirmed by the church biennially, by seventy-five percent (75%) vote (see Art.  
8 9, § 2(F)).  
9
- 10 D. The Elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective  
11 members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and  
12 positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and  
13 committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and  
14 communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound  
15 doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church  
16 discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the  
17 church for world missions. The Elders are further to ensure that all who minister the  
18 Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental  
19 convictions.  
20
- 21 E. The Elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling  
22 their responsibilities. The Elders may also propose funding for new paid staff  
23 positions. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall  
24 reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.  
25
- 26 F. The Elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and  
27 evaluation of staff members, including staff Elders (the Pastors). This responsibility  
28 may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated. The Elders, led by the Pastor, shall  
29 additionally evaluate themselves regularly.  
30
- 31 G. Each year the Elders, after consultation with the deacons and the membership, shall  
32 present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for  
33 discussion at a specially-called budget meeting and called up for a vote at the  
34 following members' meeting. This responsibility may, as the Elders deem fit, be  
35 delegated to the Deacons. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church  
36 or any of its ministries without the approval of the Elders.  
37
- 38 H. The Elders shall elect a chairman of Elders' meetings, and designate one of their  
39 number to serve as moderator of member meetings. For purposes of compliance with  
40 the nonprofit corporation laws of Wisconsin, the Elders shall elect one of their  
41 number to serve as Chairman of the corporation. These designations may overlap.  
42  
43  
44  
45

1 I. **Removal:** An Elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by  
2 **grievance.**

3  
4 **1. Grievance to or by Elders:** Any two members with reason to believe that an  
5 Elder should be dismissed should express such **grievance** to the Elders. If the  
6 remaining Elders, after thorough investigation and consideration, reach  
7 consensus that the **grievance** is true and substantial, then the Elders may, by  
8 not less than two-thirds (2/3) vote, recommend his removal to the  
9 congregation. The congregation, at a duly noticed meeting, may affirm that  
10 Elder's removal by two-thirds (2/3) vote (see Art. 9, § 2(F)). The Elders may  
11 themselves initiate Removal pursuant to this section.  
12

13 **2. Grievance to Congregation:** In the extreme event that the **grievance** of any  
14 two members should not be made first to the Elders, or has been made first to  
15 the Elders without satisfactory resolution, the grievance may be expressed to  
16 the congregation in duly noticed meeting. Any such action must be taken in  
17 accordance with the Scripture's teaching (see Article 6). The congregation at a  
18 duly noticed meeting to hear such a grievance may remove an Elder by three-  
19 fourths (3/4) vote (see Art. 9, § 2(F)).  
20

21 **3. Restoration.** Removal of any Elder, including Pastor, from his responsibilities  
22 must be accompanied by restorative church discipline pursuant to Article 6, as  
23 appropriate.  
24

25 **Section 3. The Pastor.**

26  
27 A. The Pastor (Lead Pastor, Preaching Pastor) shall be an Elder. He shall perform the  
28 duties of an Elder described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the  
29 church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and  
30 teaching.  
31

32 B. His call shall not be subject to the biennial reaffirmation set out in Article 7, Section  
33 2, for Elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 8, Section 3.  
34

35 C. He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and  
36 communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set  
37 forth in the Constitution/Bylaws.  
38

39 D. In the absence or incapacity of the Pastor the Elders shall assume responsibility for  
40 his duties, any of which can be delegated.  
41

42 E. **Removal:** the Pastor shall be subject to the same removal standards as Elders above.  
43 However, he may appeal removal utilizing Christian Alternative Dispute Resolution  
44 set forth in Article 12.  
45  
46

1 **Section 4. Associate Pastors**

- 2
- 3 A. The church may call additional Pastors whose relationship to the Pastor is that of
- 4 associate.
- 5
- 6 B. An associate Pastor shall be an Elder. He shall perform the duties of an Elder
- 7 described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly
- 8 gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.
- 9
- 10 C. His call shall not be subject to the biennial reaffirmation set out in Article 7, Section
- 11 2, for Elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 8, Section 4.
- 12
- 13 D. He shall assist the Pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform
- 14 any other duties as usually pertain to the office of Pastor, or as set forth in the
- 15 Constitution/Bylaws, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the Elders.
- 16
- 17 E. In the absence or incapacity of the Pastor for defined periods of time (such as
- 18 sabbatical or illness), the associate Pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his
- 19 duties under the oversight of the Elders.
- 20

21 **Section 5. Assistant Pastors**

- 22
- 23 A. The church may call additional Pastors, from within the congregation only, whose
- 24 relationship to the Pastor is that of assistant.
- 25
- 26 B. An assistant Pastor need not be an Elder. His call shall be subject to biennial
- 27 reaffirmation, and his call shall be defined as per Article 8, Section 5.
- 28
- 29 C. He shall assist the Pastor and associate Pastor(s) in the performance of their regular
- 30 duties, and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of Pastor.
- 31 The Elders shall define the responsibilities of the assistant Pastor(s).
- 32

33 **Section 6. Deacons**

- 34
- 35 A. The office of deacon is described in 1 Timothy 3: 8–13 and Acts 6: 1–7. The church
- 36 shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men
- 37 who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular
- 38 gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and
- 39 set apart as deacons.
- 40
- 41 B. They shall be elected to terms of two years, subject to biennial reaffirmation by
- 42 majority vote of the congregation.
- 43
- 44 C. The number of deacons and their respective positions shall be determined by the
- 45 Elders according to the needs of the church and by the call and qualification of men in

1 the church. The Elders may more specifically describe the roles and duties of  
2 Deacons.

- 3
- 4 D. Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations  
5 for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others.  
6
- 7 E. Deacon service may include: administering aid to help the poor and needy in times of  
8 crisis and distress; assisting in the distribution of funds for the mission of the church;  
9 overseeing the greeting and welcoming ministries of the church; assisting in  
10 administering the ordinances of the Gospel; overseeing the care and maintenance of  
11 the church properties; and/or administering the business affairs of the church.  
12
- 13 F. The deacons shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its  
14 use to the Elders at their request, and reporting to the church its receipts and  
15 disbursements.  
16
- 17 G. The deacons, with the agreement of the Elders, may establish unpaid administrative  
18 positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in  
19 the church.  
20
- 21 H. **Removal:** A deacon is subject to removal by a consensus of the Elder council, but by  
22 no less than a majority vote, and affirmation by majority vote of the congregation (see  
23 Art. 9, § 2(F)).  
24

25 **Section 7. Clerk**

- 26
- 27 A. It shall be the duty of the Clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special  
28 members' meetings of the church and make them available to the congregation, to  
29 preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports as requested by the  
30 Pastor, the Elders, the deacons, or the church. The Clerk shall take roll at each  
31 member meeting.  
32
- 33 B. The Clerk shall be nominated by the Elders and elected by the congregation to serve a  
34 term of one year (see Art. 9, § 2(F)).  
35
- 36 C. In the absence or incapacity of the Clerk the Elders shall appoint a member to  
37 perform the duties of the church Clerk.  
38
- 39 D. For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of Wisconsin, the  
40 Clerk shall serve as the Secretary of the corporation.  
41
- 42 E. The church Clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this  
43 constitution shall be available for all church members.  
44  
45  
46

1 **Section 8. Treasurer**

- 2
- 3 A. The Treasurer, who shall not be an active Elder, deacon, or paid church staff member,
- 4 shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in such
- 5 banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The Treasurer shall also
- 6 be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and
- 7 expenses of the church at each member meeting. This responsibility may be
- 8 delegated with the approval of the Elders. The Treasurer shall also ensure that full
- 9 and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to
- 10 the church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds
- 11 belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent
- 12 of the church. The Treasurer shall render to the Elders annually, or at such other
- 13 times as they may require it, an account of all transactions as Treasurer and of the
- 14 financial condition of the church.
- 15
- 16 B. The Treasurer shall be nominated by the Elders and elected by the congregation to
- 17 serve a term of one year (see Art. 9, § 2(F)).
- 18
- 19

20 **Article 8 – Elections**

21

22 **Section 1. Principles**

23

24 The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the

25 following principles:

26

27 Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of

28 the election process;

29

30 All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and

31 honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;

32

33 The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving

34 consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

35

36 **Section 2. Selection of Officers**

- 37
- 38 A. The election of Elders, Deacons, Clerk, and/or Treasurer shall be held at a duly
- 39 noticed member meeting of the church, provided that the names of nominees were
- 40 presented by the Elders at the previous members' meeting at least eight weeks prior.
- 41 The election shall proceed as directed by the moderator pursuant to provisions in this
- 42 Constitution/Bylaws.
- 43
- 44 B. The Elders shall identify, cultivate, and nominate prospective officers, approve their
- 45 affirmation by the congregation, and ordain them as appropriate (1 Timothy 4:14, 1

1 Timothy 5:22). While Elders are responsible for the nomination of officers, the  
2 reasonable recommendations and opinions of the members should be considered.  
3

- 4 C. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an  
5 office should express such concern to the Elders. Members intending to speak in  
6 opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the Elders as far in  
7 advance as possible before the relevant member meeting. No vote against a  
8 recommendation of the Elders may be made without prior discussion with Elders as  
9 described herein.  
10
- 11 D. Should a member have reason not to affirm or reaffirm an Elder, such must be made  
12 known to the Elders at least one (1) month prior to casting a ballot at the  
13 congregational vote, and should not be discussed with other members, except as  
14 pursuant to provisions for Removal below. No vote against a recommendation of the  
15 Elders may be made without prior discussion with Elders as described herein.  
16
- 17 E. The Moderator shall declare affirmed or reaffirmed as Elder each man who receives a  
18 seventy-five percent (75%) affirmative vote (see Art. 9, § 2(F)). For all other offices,  
19 the Moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority  
20 affirmative vote (see Art. 9, § 2(F)).  
21
- 22 F. The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless  
23 another date has been specifically designated.  
24

25 **Section 3. Calling of the Pastor**  
26

27 In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an Elder must  
28 be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to  
29 assess the preaching gifts of any potential Pastor and, before being asked to express its  
30 judgment, must receive assurance from the Elders that, having interviewed the man  
31 concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith  
32 and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership  
33 and called as Pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife  
34 if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services following the  
35 nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.  
36

37 **Section 4. Calling of Associate Pastor**  
38

39 In the calling of any man to the position of associate Pastor, the same basic process of  
40 calling an Elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given  
41 adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential associate Pastor and,  
42 before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the Elders that,  
43 having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent  
44 to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be  
45 called as associate Pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of

1 him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning services  
2 following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.  
3

4 **Section 5. Calling of Assistant Pastor**

5  
6 The calling of any man to the position of assistant Pastor should be made according to the  
7 process described in Article 7, Section 5. Such a man may then be called by the Elders to  
8 serve as assistant Pastor with defined duties for a fixed period of time specified by the  
9 Elders in the terms of his call.  
10

11  
12 **Article 9 -- Meetings**

13  
14 **Section 1. Worship Meetings.**

15  
16 Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as  
17 needed. The failure to conduct services shall not affect the continued operation of the  
18 Church.  
19

20 **Section 2. Member Meetings**

- 21  
22 A. In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness,  
23 and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus  
24 Christ.  
25  
26 B. There shall be a regular members' meeting ("ministry meeting" or "business  
27 meeting") at least twice per year, at some time apart from a public worship service  
28 agreed upon by the membership. Failure to hold the bi-annual meeting at the  
29 designated time shall not affect the continued operation of the Church.  
30  
31 C. An Elder designated by the Elders shall preside as moderator at all members'  
32 meetings of the Church. The Elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church  
33 are held regularly and that required reports are submitted to the church by the  
34 responsible members.  
35  
36 D. Notification. Unless longer and/or more specific notice provisions are called for in  
37 this Constitution/Bylaws, notice of member meetings shall be written and not less  
38 than seven (7) days prior to the proposed meeting. Written notice is not required for  
39 those meetings made part of the church's published calendar.  
40  
41 E. Quorum. Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a  
42 quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present.  
43  
44 F. Member Meetings shall be held on those occasions in which members shall vote on  
45 any of the following matters: the annual church budget (or ratification of  
46 expenditures), the calling of Elders, amendments to the Articles of Incorporation or

1 Constitution/Bylaws, the affirming of Officers, the merger or dissolution of the  
2 Church, the disposition of all or substantially all the assets of the Church, and the  
3 purchase, sale or encumbrance of real estate. Other matters of concern to the Church  
4 may, from time to time, be brought before the Church for a vote, as may be  
5 determined by the Elders and this Constitution/Bylaws. Before any matter is brought  
6 before the Church for open discussion and a vote it must first be addressed by the  
7 Elders. Any new item brought up will be referred to the Elders, who shall act upon  
8 the matter within a reasonable time. Any such new matter that is not addressed by the  
9 Elders in a reasonable time is then a proper subject for transaction at a regular or  
10 specially called Member Meeting.  
11

12 G. Voting. Changes to the Constitution/Bylaws, selection and affirmation of Elders,  
13 calling of the Pastor and Associate Pastors, approval of budgets, and Article 10  
14 property matters shall be by ballot vote. All other votes shall be by Rule (Article 13).  
15 All votes shall be tallied, and percentages calculated, based on the number of votes  
16 cast by members present (including absentee ballots, if any). Abstentions shall not be  
17 considered in the vote tally and shall not affect percentage calculations.  
18

19 H. A budget shall be approved by the congregation at a members' meeting no more than  
20 three months after the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the  
21 Elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level.  
22

23 I. At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions  
24 filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.  
25

26 J. Special members' meetings (those not included on the church's published calendar)  
27 may be called by the Elders, or at the written request a majority of voting members.  
28 The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting called by Elders shall be  
29 published and announced at all public services of the church at least two weeks prior  
30 the meeting. A request by members for a special meeting must state the reason for the  
31 meeting, and the Elders shall schedule the meeting to be held within one month of  
32 their receipt of the request.  
33  
34

## 35 **Article 10 – Church Property**

### 36 **Section 1. Acquisition, Disposition and Encumbrance of Property**

37 Acquisition, disposition or encumbrance of real property, or the construction of buildings,  
38 may occur upon the recommendation of the Elder with approval of the congregation.  
39  
40

### 41 **Section 2. Consolidation**

42 Should the church ever merge or consolidate with another congregation, disposition of  
43 church property should proceed according to the recommendation of the Elders with  
44 approval of the congregation.  
45  
46

1 **Section 3. Division**

2  
3 Should the membership separate, either through church planting or other division, church  
4 property shall remain under the control and authority of that group which continues to  
5 adhere to this Constitution/Bylaws, regardless of the relative size of such group or  
6 groups.  
7

8 **Section 4. Dissolution**

9  
10 No part of the contributions to this church shall ever accrue to the benefit of any donor,  
11 member, or officer of the church, or to any private individual. In the event of dissolution,  
12 any and all assets of the corporation must be distributed to one or more non-profit  
13 organizations so recognized by the Internal Revenue Service of the United States  
14 government, and who are in general harmony with the Purpose and Statement of Faith of  
15 this church. Such a distribution shall be made by decision of the Elders, after advice and  
16 counsel from the members.  
17  
18

19 **Article 11 – Process for Changing Legal Documentation**

20  
21 Changes in these Constitution/Bylaws or the Articles of Incorporation shall be made by a two-  
22 thirds (2/3) affirmative vote (see Art. 9, § 2(F)), with the following additional provisions: the  
23 proposed change(s) shall be published and distributed to the membership at least fourteen (14)  
24 days prior to the Member Meeting at which a vote is to be held.  
25  
26

27 **Article 12 – Christian Alternative Dispute Resolution**

28  
29 The Church believes that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace  
30 and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian church. Therefore, the  
31 Church strongly encourages that any claim or dispute by or against the Elders, Deacons, Clerk,  
32 Treasurer, Ministers, Staff, employees, agents of the Church, volunteers, church members or  
33 their families, or vendors be resolved by biblically-based conciliation, and, if necessary,  
34 arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute  
35 for Christian Conciliation (a complete text of the Rules is available at  
36 <http://www.hispeace.org/html/geticrul.htm>), or any similar Christian based dispute resolution  
37 program adopted by the Elders. The mediation, conciliation and arbitration process is not a  
38 substitute for any disciplinary process set forth in the Constitution/Bylaws, and shall in no way  
39 affect the authority of the Church to investigate reports of misconduct, conduct hearing, or  
40 administer discipline of members.  
41  
42  
43  
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46

**Article 13 – Rules of Order**

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12

Except where the Constitution/Bylaws state otherwise, Robert’s Rules of Order, Revised, shall be the accepted pattern for the transaction of the business of the Church. The spirit of God’s laws and the attitude of Christ’s love will always supersede and have right of way to the technicality or formalities so long as the ethical integrity and spiritual harmony of God’s Holy Word is neither in jeopardy nor compromised. Should it appear to the Moderator that the technicalities of Robert’s Rules are being used to violate the direct or indirect principles of Scripture, or to otherwise cause harm to the body assembled in member meeting or to the name of Christ, he may, after announcing the same, suspend business and refer the matter to the Elder Council.

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