

- 34 1. Scripture indicates that the early church relied upon a form of explicit church membership⁽⁴⁾.
- 35 2. An explicit approach to church membership follows Jude’s admonition⁽⁵⁾ to “contend
- 36 earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.” It helps to ensure
- 37 that authentic gospel conversion remains the defining mark of church membership among
- 38 us. While both believers and unbelievers are welcome in our services, the New Testament
- 39 clearly distinguishes as church members those whose lives bear evidence of authentic faith
- 40 and repentance⁽⁶⁾. Admitting someone into membership is an expression of the church’s
- 41 belief in the authenticity of the new member’s conversion. When understood in this light,
- 42 the mechanism of explicit church membership avoids the assumption that anyone who joins
- 43 with us in attendance is joined with us in faith. Moreover, it avoids the spiritual hazard of
- 44 unwittingly affirming the unregenerate as genuine saints – an action that will weaken, if not
- 45 outright destroy, the church’s testimony to the world; and one which may well ensnare
- 46 other believers with a double-minded picture of what walking by faith looks like.
- 47 3. An explicit approach to church membership helps each of us consciously identify and
- 48 confront our flesh’s propensity for self-rule⁽⁷⁾ – a tendency that is exacerbated by the sinful,
- 49 over-developed preoccupation with the extreme individualism, personal autonomy, and
- 50 contempt for authority that saturates the mindset of our contemporary culture.

51 Accordingly, we believe the Lord would have this church explicitly set forth Scripture’s expectations

52 regarding the relationship between the believer and the local, New Testament church by way of a

53 formal church covenant. Therefore, upon meeting the membership qualifications and completing

54 the admission process described in Section 2 and Section 3 below, membership with this church

55 shall be officially recognized upon each member’s signature of the church covenant immediately

56 following their vote of admission.

57 References:

58 ⁽¹⁾Acts 1:14, 2:41-42, 4:32; 5:12-14 ⁽²⁾John 13:34-35; 1 Corinthians 12:7, 12:25-26, 14:12, 14:26;

59 Ephesians 4:15; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Timothy 1:5; Hebrews 10:24; 1 Peter 1:22-23; 1 John 3:14,

60 4:7 ⁽³⁾1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-2; Acts 20:28 ⁽⁴⁾Acts 5:13; 1 Timothy

61 5:9; Hebrews 13:17; Revelation 21:27 ⁽⁵⁾Jude 3 ⁽⁶⁾Acts 2:37-38 ⁽⁷⁾Proverbs 18:1; Jeremiah 48:29-

62 30; Daniel 4:28-37; James 4:13-16

63 **Section 2 – Membership Qualifications**

64 To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who bears

65 evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized by immersion following their regeneration, and

66 who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must

67 agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the church’s Statement of Faith and

68 uphold the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant.

69 The elders shall assess each person’s qualification for membership and provide a recommendation

70 to the congregation. In assessing this recommendation, the elders shall explore whether an

71 individual demonstrates sufficient understanding of a biblically faithful gospel⁽¹⁾, and whether the
72 fruitfulness of their life is consistent with authentic conversion⁽²⁾. As may be appropriate, the elders
73 may seek input from the leadership of an applicant's prior church attendance

74 References:

75 ⁽¹⁾Romans 10:14-15 and 17; Acts 20:21 ⁽²⁾Matthew 7:21; Galatians 5:16-24; 1 John 2:3 and 15-17;
76 1 John 4:1,21

77 **Section 3 – Admission of Members**

78 To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for
79 admission and accepted by congregational vote during any regularly scheduled business meeting, or
80 during a business meeting specifically scheduled for this purpose. Upon ratification of membership,
81 the new member shall relinquish their membership in any other church (except for associate
82 members).

83 **Section 4 – Required Membership**

84 While it is our earnest desire that all who regularly fellowship with us join us in covenantal
85 membership, a person must be a member of this local assembly in order to vote during business
86 meeting proceedings, occupy any of the church offices established by this constitution, hold a
87 teaching position, or work in the church nursery ministry.

88 **Section 5 – Associate Membership**

89 Students, military personnel, or others temporarily residing in the Hillsboro area who are members
90 of a biblically faithful NT church may apply for associate membership. Qualifications are identical to
91 those for full or regular membership presented in Section 2, except that home church membership
92 shall be retained. The elders will seek verification from the applicant's home church that they are
93 members in good standing. The duties and privileges of associate members are the same as for
94 other members except that they will not be eligible to occupy any office or to vote.

95 Associate membership will normally terminate when the associate member's temporary residence
96 in the Hillsboro area ends. Termination of associate membership as a disciplinary measure is subject
97 to the same criteria as full or regular members, except that the elders shall notify the pastor or
98 elders of the home church of such termination.

99 **Section 6 – Members Residing Out-of-Area**

100 Members of this local assembly who must reside outside of the Hillsboro area for a specific duration
101 of time, or for a fixed part of the calendar year, such as students or military personnel, retain all
102 privileges of membership except they cannot hold office. Out-of-area members may also be limited
103 from participating in such ministry functions that the elders judge impractical due to the limits of
104 their availability and proximity. Out-of-area members remain under the shepherding care of this
105 church's elders. Recognizing the practical limitations of shepherding under these circumstances,

106 college students and other members who will be out-of-area for an extended period of time are
107 encouraged to join themselves to a local, biblically faithful NT church in their area according to the
108 'associate member' terms described in Section 5 (if possible).

109 **Section 7 – Church Discipline**

110 Scripture's instruction to the local church regarding our mutual accountability and discipline is best
111 understood in the context of five important biblical truths:

- 112 1. Our Lord expects His church to live in a way that is distinct from the world. The Bible refers
113 to this distinction as holiness⁽¹⁾.
- 114 2. Though redeemed, justified, and imputed with the righteousness of Christ, our perfection is
115 not yet complete. Each of us is influenced by the presence of a sinful nature⁽²⁾.
- 116 3. God disciplines his children for our good, and the good of His church, that we may
117 progressively overcome sin and grow in His holiness⁽³⁾.
- 118 4. God often uses the community of the local church to admonish and discipline his children⁽⁴⁾.
- 119 5. The vast majority of our Father's intervening care happens in the context of mutually
120 transparent, mutually loving 1:1 relationships among the body⁽⁵⁾.

121 In light of these biblical observations, we recognize the inevitability of misunderstandings and
122 offenses within our relationships with one other. We also recognize that at times each of us may
123 need the admonition of others to expose sin in our life – either specific episodes of sin, sinful
124 attitudes, or habitual patterns of sinful behavior. As a local body committed to the building up of
125 one another for the glory of Jesus Christ, it is important that we understand how to graciously
126 resolve conflicts with each other, and how to graciously confront sin in each other's lives.

127 Scripture summarizes the process for addressing sin among the local church in Matthew 18:15-17:

128 First, we must be quick to overlook minor offenses⁽⁶⁾, taking care that our offense is not the product
129 of our own whim or preference. In cases where an offense cannot be overlooked, or we observe a
130 biblically clear issue of sin in another, we must go to that individual in private – seeking resolution
131 with a true sense of care, humility, and concern for their welfare⁽⁷⁾. We must not slander or gossip
132 with others about our offense or our perception of another's sin issue⁽⁸⁾. As we seek to obey
133 Scripture, deepen our understanding of the gospel, and rely more consistently upon the grace of the
134 Holy Spirit as the enabler of our sanctification, the vast majority of issues should be resolved in the
135 context of our one-on-one relationships with each another.

136 If the issue cannot be resolved in private, or if there is no expression of repentance in those issues
137 that are clear matters of sin, then we are to meet with the individual again, this time taking one or
138 two additional believers with us so that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or
139 three witnesses⁽⁹⁾.

140 If there is still no reconciliation or repentance, the matter must be brought to the attention of the
141 congregation through the facilitation of the elders. If they remain unrepentant, the congregation

142 shall remove the individual from membership and disassociate our fellowship with them in hopes
143 that such an extreme measure will awaken their conscience and elicit true, biblical repentance.
144 When biblically authentic repentance is evident, the church shall fully restore the individual into
145 membership and mutual fellowship⁽¹⁰⁾. The direction to remove someone from membership and
146 disassociate our fellowship with that individual shall be recommended by the elders and affirmed by
147 congregational vote. The direction to readmit and restore fellowship shall also be recommended by
148 the elders and affirmed by congregational vote.

149 While removing an individual from membership and disassociating our fellowship with them is a
150 serious matter, Scripture commands such action, as well as the overall process of church discipline,
151 for at least four reasons:

- 152 1. For the good of the person disciplined⁽¹¹⁾.
- 153 2. For our mutual edification, as an instruction in righteousness⁽¹²⁾.
- 154 3. To cleanse the church of sin and protect the witness of the local church⁽¹³⁾, and
- 155 4. To advance the glory of God by reflecting His holy character⁽¹⁴⁾.

156 While the presentation of an exhaustive list is impractical, members who resist biblically authentic
157 repentance amidst the following transgressions, despite the process presented above
158 (Matthew 18:15-17), shall be liable to the discipline of the church:

- 159 1. Any outward violation of Scripture's moral law⁽¹⁵⁾.
- 160 2. Actively seeking to advance doctrines opposed to those set forth in the church's Statement
161 of Faith⁽¹⁶⁾.
- 162 3. Willfully and consistently abandoning the commitments of mutual love and care presented
163 in the Church Covenant⁽¹⁷⁾.
- 164 4. Abandoning the church's weekly gathering (without legitimate reason) as indicated by
165 missing eight consecutive Sunday services or eight Sunday services within any three month
166 duration⁽¹⁸⁾.
- 167 5. Pursuing any course of action intended to produce discord⁽¹⁹⁾.
- 168 6. Marital infidelity, unbiblical divorce, or abandonment of one's family⁽²⁰⁾.
- 169 7. Pursuing any course of conduct, that in the judgment of the church, impugns the reputation
170 of the church and the name of Jesus Christ⁽²¹⁾.

171 References:

172 ⁽¹⁾Ephesians 4:17-24; 1 Peter 1:14-16 ⁽²⁾Romans 7:21-25; 1 Peter 2:11; Hebrews 12:1-2 ⁽³⁾Hebrews
173 12:5-11; Ephesians 5:26-27; Revelation 3:19 ⁽⁴⁾Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:19-20; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8
174 ⁽⁵⁾Proverbs 27:17; ⁽⁶⁾Proverbs 19:11; Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 3:13 ⁽⁷⁾Matthew 18:15, 21-35;
175 ⁽⁸⁾Proverbs 25:9-10; 2 Corinthians 12:20; Colossians 3:8; 1 Peter 2:1 ⁽⁹⁾Matthew 18:16
176 ⁽¹⁰⁾Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Corinthians 7:10 ⁽¹¹⁾Luke 17:3; 1 Corinthians 5:5 and 2
177 Corinthians 2:6-8; Galatians 6:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:13-15 ⁽¹²⁾Acts 5:11; Ephesians 5:3-21; 1
178 Timothy 5:20 ⁽¹³⁾Ezekiel 36:22-23; Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 1 Timothy 3:7;
179 Titus 3:9-11 (compare with Proverbs 6:16-19); 1 Peter 2:12 ⁽¹⁴⁾Nehemiah 9:2; John 15:8,18;

180 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Ephesians 5:27; 1 Peter 1:14-16 ⁽¹⁵⁾1 Corinthians 5:9-13 ⁽¹⁶⁾Titus 1:11; 2
181 Peter 3:14-17; 2 John 10 ⁽¹⁷⁾1 John 3:10 ⁽¹⁸⁾Hebrews 10:24-25 ⁽¹⁹⁾Proverbs 6:16-19; Titus 3:10-11
182 ⁽²⁰⁾Matthew 19:9; 1 Timothy 5:8 ⁽²¹⁾Ezekiel 20:9,14,22; Ephesians 5:27

183 **Section 8 – Termination of Membership**

184 The elders shall be responsible for ensuring that the church’s membership rolls are an accurate list
185 of those who are faithfully and presently joined with us in covenant. Members who abandon the
186 congregation, or who fail to participate in the gathering of our assembly (medical or other just
187 causes exempted, of course), shall not be permitted to continue in membership. “Invisible”
188 members will not be permitted to retain their membership for sentimental reasons, family
189 relationships, tradition, or for our own fear of offense.

190 As necessary, the church membership rolls shall be updated at any regular or special business
191 meeting. Each termination of membership shall be recommended by the elders and affirmed by
192 congregational vote. A person shall be removed from the church rolls for any of the following
193 reasons:

- 194 1. They have passed into glory.
- 195 2. They have voluntarily resigned their membership or they have joined another church.
- 196 3. They are being removed from the church as an act of church discipline as described in
197 Section 7. (Note that in matters of church discipline, the vote to remove a member from the
198 church and the vote to terminate membership required in this section is one and the same
199 vote.)
- 200 4. As a special case of the previous item, members who have ceased attending Sunday services
201 for eight consecutive weeks without any communication with the church elders or deacons
202 are considered to have abandoned the church and shall be removed from membership.

203 The date an individual is removed from membership and the reason they were removed shall be
204 documented and archived according to the operating procedures of the church. For those
205 individuals whose membership was removed due to any of the negative scenarios described above,
206 the elders shall be free to communicate their circumstances to the leadership of any inquiring
207 church of like faith and practice.

208 **Article IV**
209 **GOVERNMENT**

210 **Section 1 – Congregationalism & Plurality of Eldership**

211 As head of the universal church, this church is ultimately led by and accountable to the headship of
212 Jesus Christ⁽¹⁾. Under Christ’s headship, and in submission to His word and the Holy Spirit, this local
213 congregation shall be governed exclusively by its members who shall be the final earthly authority in
214 all matters relating to this local church⁽²⁾. We also recognize that even though we are equal before
215 God as ministers, priests, and saints⁽³⁾ – God calls some among us (not all) to serve as servant leaders

216 of the congregation⁽⁴⁾. According to biblical instruction and example⁽⁵⁾, the congregation shall use its
217 authority to recognize and affirm elders whom God has called, and voluntarily support their
218 leadership by learning from their teaching, and following their leadership and initiative for the good
219 of our individual and collective sanctification⁽⁶⁾.

220 References:

221 ⁽¹⁾Ephesians 4:15-16, 5:23; Colossians 1:18 ⁽²⁾Matthew 18:15-17 (the church is the final court of
222 appeal); See also 1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Inferences regarding accountability to the congregation:
223 Acts 14:27, 15:4,22; Congregational accountability for selection of unbiblical leaders:
224 2 Timothy 4:3-4 ⁽³⁾Ephesians 4:12; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:5-6 ⁽⁴⁾Mark 10:42-45; Acts 20:28;
225 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-2 ⁽⁵⁾ See references under Article V, Section 2,
226 Parts 1 and 2. ⁽⁶⁾Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 1:5; Hebrews 10:24, 13:17

227 **Section 2 – Ecclesiastical Independence**

228 This church is not subject to the control or authority of any other ecclesiastical body. This local
229 assembly shall rely upon the inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God as the sole rule of
230 faith and practice.

231 **Section 3 – Associations & Partnerships**

232 This church recognizes the liberty to join or withdraw from any association or ecclesiastical
233 organization of like faith and practice, where doing so would enhance this church’s ability to
234 advance the gospel of Jesus Christ, or where withdrawing from such partnerships is necessary to
235 preserve the church’s obedience to the Word of God, or where maintaining such associations or
236 partnerships may impede this church’s ability to bear witness to a biblically complete gospel. The
237 creation or dissolution of any such associations or partnerships will be upon recommendation of the
238 elders, and confirmed by congregational vote in accordance with this constitution’s provision for
239 elections.

240 **Article V**
241 **OFFICERS**

242 **Section 1 – Introduction**

243 The Biblical offices of the church are elders and deacons⁽¹⁾. Elders are responsible for shepherding
244 the body, whereas deacons are responsible for meeting the church’s practical needs⁽¹⁾. In addition
245 to the biblical offices of elder and deacon, this church recognizes the administrative office of Church
246 Treasurer. All officers must be members of this church for at least six months prior to assuming
247 their responsibilities.

248 In addition to the specific qualifications associated with each office below, church officers shall be
249 individuals whose lives consistently bear evidence of biblical fruitfulness and ongoing growth in
250 Christlikeness⁽²⁾.

251 References:

252 ⁽¹⁾See references in Sections 2 and 3 below. ⁽²⁾Galatians 5:16-24; Ephesians 6:10-18;
253 Philipians 2:3-8; Colossians 3:1-17; 2 Peter 1:5-8

254 **Section 2 – Elders**

255 Part 1 – Description & Qualifications

256 The terms “pastor” or “shepherd” (ποιμήν), “elder” or “presbyter” (πρεσβύτερος), and “overseer”
257 or “bishop” (ἐπίσκοπος) all refer to the same office, as evidenced by the interchangeability with
258 which the NT applies these terms⁽¹⁾. Therefore, “elder” is another name for “pastor”, and “pastor” is
259 another name for “elder.”

260 As under shepherds of Jesus Christ, elders are responsible for leading, overseeing, and caring for the
261 local body⁽²⁾. Elders are to preach and teach the word⁽³⁾, protect the church from false teachers⁽⁴⁾,
262 exhort and admonish the saints in sound doctrine⁽⁵⁾, visit the sick and pray⁽⁶⁾, and judge doctrinal
263 issues⁽⁷⁾. In addition, an elder’s life is to be an example to the congregation⁽⁸⁾.

264 The qualifications for elders are set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

265 References:

266 ⁽¹⁾Compare: Acts 20:17 and 28; Titus 1:5 and 7; See also: 1 Peter 5:1-2; Ephesians 4:11
267 ⁽²⁾Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 5:17; 2 Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4 ⁽³⁾Acts 6:4;
268 1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9 ⁽⁴⁾Acts 20:17,28-31; ⁽⁵⁾1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 3:13-17;
269 Titus 1:9 ⁽⁶⁾James 5:14; Acts 6:4 ⁽⁷⁾Acts 15:6 ⁽⁸⁾1 Peter 5:3

270 Part 2 – Plurality & Equality

271 Based upon the instruction and example of Scripture⁽¹⁾, this church shall be lead by a plurality of
272 elders. This means that the position, authority, and responsibility of the pastor-elder office shall not
273 be vested in only one pastor or elder, but shall be shared across multiple pastor-elders, as the Lord
274 provides. While we recognize that elders will vary greatly in their formal training, personal
275 giftedness, life experience, and even the scope of time available to the ministry (ie, bi-vocational
276 elders vs. full-time elders), the elders shall collectively share the position, authority, and
277 responsibility of the pastor-elder office. This recognition of shared leadership has the advantage of
278 offsetting individual weaknesses, balancing the workload, and providing mutual accountability
279 among the leadership.

280 Although no one elder has greater formal authority than any of the others, certain elders will
281 emerge as natural leaders in particular areas and thus provide helpful leadership that the other
282 elders will generally respect. It is also expected that the elders of the church will focus on differing
283 tasks. For example, one elder may be primarily responsible for Sunday morning preaching, while
284 another elder may be primarily responsible for evangelism or small groups, etc.

285 References:

286 ⁽¹⁾Acts 20:17 (there was only one Ephesian church); Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; James 5:14;
287 1 Peter 5:1-2; See also: 1 Timothy 4:14; Hebrews 13:17; Regarding the church in Jerusalem: See
288 Acts 11:30, 15:2, and 16:4

289 Part 3 – Calling & Installation of Elders

290 Subpart 3.1 – Elders Called from Within the Church

291 The church shall recognize men from within the body who are called to serve as pastor-elders.
292 There is no fixed schedule or frequency by which elders shall be installed; rather, they shall be
293 affirmed to the office of elder as God provides. An elder’s biblical qualification and calling shall be
294 recognized by the presiding elders through diligent examination and prayer, and affirmed by
295 congregational vote according to the following procedure:

- 296 • Though a man’s calling will most likely first be recognized by the current elders, members of
297 the congregation are free to voice their observation of a man’s calling to one or more of the
298 existing elders at any time.
- 299 • Upon recognition of a man’s calling as pastor-elder among the existing elders, the existing
300 elders shall present the elder nomination to the body at least four weeks prior to a
301 scheduled vote.
- 302 • The elders shall not nominate more men than the number of elders they believe God is
303 calling forth.
- 304 • Any member with reason to believe that a nominated elder is unqualified for office should
305 express such concern to the existing elders prior to the election meeting.
- 306 • A congregational vote for eldership shall occur during any regularly scheduled business
307 meeting, or during a business meeting specifically scheduled for this purpose, provided all
308 other constitutional stipulations for meetings and elections are met.
- 309 • If multiple nominations are presented, each man’s qualification and calling shall be voted
310 upon individually, though each vote may occur at the same meeting.
- 311 • Only those nominees affirmed by the congregation shall be installed as pastor-elders.

312 Subpart 3.2 – Elders Called from Outside the Church

313 From time to time it may be necessary to call a pastor-elder from outside the church to be an elder
314 of the congregation. Such direction may be proposed by the existing elders, or may be proposed by
315 the congregation, but in either case such direction shall not be pursued until the decision to call a
316 pastor-elder from outside the church is approved by congregational vote.

317 Once approved, the existing elders shall be responsible for convening a committee to identify and
318 recommend elder candidates to the existing elders. The existing elders shall either decline the
319 committee’s recommendation, or present the recommendation to the congregation. The current
320 elders or committee members may interact with the candidate before a recommendation to the
321 congregation is presented, but a formal candidating visit shall only proceed upon approval by

322 congregational vote. The decision to invite a candidate to join the church as an elder-pastor shall
323 also be by congregational vote.

324 The committee shall be lead by one of the existing elders. All congregational votes referred to in
325 this subpart shall be by secret ballot. Additional committee details and working procedures shall be
326 defined by the elders. If there are no standing elders in the church, the process described by this
327 subpart shall be facilitated by the Deaconate.

328 Part 4 – Duration of Term

329 An elder shall remain in office until terminated by resignation or dismissal.

330 Part 5 – Paid Elders

331 The church reserves the right to provide full or part-time compensation to one or more elders, in
332 order for such men to dedicate a greater proportion of their time and energy to the ministry. Under
333 such an arrangement, the elder shall be considered an employee of the church and shall be subject
334 to the church’s Employment Policy.

335 This constitution does not mandate that any elder of the church be compensated on either a full-
336 time or part-time basis, nor does it set limits upon the number of paid elders serving the church.
337 Such decisions will be based upon the church’s financial resources and the will of the members.
338 Elder compensation shall be managed as part of the budget process described in Article VII.

339 At no time shall the church eliminate or decrease an elder’s compensation as a statement of the
340 church’s loss of confidence in an elder’s qualification or calling. (The terms for addressing the
341 dismissal of an elder from the eldership are addressed in Section 4 of this Article.) However, a paid
342 elder is subject to any performance management and review procedures (and subsequent salary
343 implications) as may be outlined in the church’s Employment Policy.

344 Elders may move between paid and non-paid status (or vice versa) based upon the mutual consent
345 of the elder and the congregation, or as may be constrained by the congregation’s financial
346 resources, subject to the terms and requirements of the church’s Employment Policy.

347 Part 6 – Sabbatical Benefit

348 Elders serving as full-time, paid staff members shall be awarded a sabbatical after every six years of
349 service, according to the details set forth in the church’s Employment Policy. During this time, they
350 will remain an employee of the church and receive all compensation and benefits provided as part
351 of their employment. This is designed to be a time of refreshment, to be used at the sole discretion
352 of the elder and his family. The church shall not impose any expectations or conditions upon this
353 sabbatical period.

354 Part 7 – Additional Clarifications

355 An elder cannot concurrently serve as deacon or Church Treasurer.

356 **Section 2 – Deacons**

357 **Part 1 – Description & Qualifications of Deacons**

358 The word ‘deacon’ is a translation of the Greek word δίακονος, which is the ordinary word for
359 ‘servant’ in the NT. The NT clearly differentiates the office of deacon from the office of elder⁽¹⁾.
360 Nowhere in the NT do deacons have ruling authority over the church as elders do, nor are deacons
361 ever required to be able to teach Scripture or sound doctrine. Rather, deacons are responsible for
362 ensuring that the practical needs of the local body are met, thereby freeing the elders to dedicate
363 their time and attention to preaching, teaching, and shepherding⁽²⁾.

364 The qualifications for deacons are set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8-12.

365 Though not meant to be a comprehensive list of duties, examples of specific responsibilities
366 pertaining to the deacons include:

- 367 • Administrative oversight of church ministries and departments.
- 368 • Coordinating service and care for members in need.
- 369 • Overseeing the church’s property and buildings, as well as assisting the elders’ in planning
370 and coordinating future building needs.
- 371 • Maintaining the church’s technology capabilities and internet presence.
- 372 • Assisting in the management of the church’s financial operations, including the preparation
373 of an annual budget in collaboration with the elders and the Treasurer, tracking the church’s
374 performance to budget, and overseeing the receipt and distribution of funds as the elders
375 may request.
- 376 • Planning and coordinating special events.
- 377 • Assisting the elders in the administration of the ordinances of the church.
- 378 • Overseeing the usher and greeting ministries during worship services.
- 379 • Providing any administrative assistance the elders may request.

380 **References:**

381 ⁽¹⁾Philippians 1:1; Compare 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and 3:8-13 ⁽²⁾Acts 6:1-6

382 **Part 2 – Election to Office**

383 The church shall recognize men who are particularly gifted for service among the church. The
384 nomination and election of deacons shall not be managed by an annual schedule; instead, the
385 number of deacons serving the church and the timing of their selection shall be determined at the
386 discretion of the elders based upon the needs of the body, term completions, and the Lord’s
387 provision of qualified men.

388 Deacons shall be elected by congregational vote according to the following procedure:

- 389 • The elders shall provide the congregation with at least a six week notice of any intended
390 deacon election, announcing the date and time of the election as well as the number of
391 deacons to be elected.
- 392 • At least six weeks prior to a scheduled deacon election, the elders shall announce a call for
393 deacon nominations. Only church members shall be eligible to nominate deacons.
- 394 • Church members may nominate as many biblically qualified men as they desire. Members
395 shall submit their nominations no later than four weeks prior to the scheduled election.
- 396 • The elders shall choose a number of men from among the submitted nominations equal to
397 the number of deacons to be elected, based upon the biblical qualifications listed in Part 1
398 above as well as each qualified nominee's availability and willingness to serve.
- 399 • The elders shall announce a final list of nominees to the congregation no later than two
400 weeks prior to the scheduled election.
- 401 • Any member with reason to believe that a nominated deacon is unqualified for office should
402 express such concern to the elders prior to the election meeting.
- 403 • The congregation shall vote to either affirm or decline each deacon nomination submitted
404 by the elders. Deacon elections shall occur during any regularly scheduled business
405 meeting, or during a business meeting specifically scheduled for this purpose, provided all
406 other constitutional stipulations for meetings and elections are met.
- 407 • If multiple nominations are presented, each man's qualification and calling shall be voted
408 upon individually, though each vote may occur at the same meeting.
- 409 • Only those nominees affirmed by the congregation shall serve as deacons.

410 Part 3 – Duration of Term

411 Deacons shall be elected to a maximum term of three years. Deacons may serve consecutive terms,
412 without limit, as long as the provisions set forth in this constitution regarding their qualification,
413 nomination, and election are met.

414 Part 4 – Vacancy of Office

415 In the event of a deacon's resignation, dismissal, or incapacity to serve, the elders shall ensure that
416 their responsibilities are distributed among the remaining deacons, or temporarily assigned to other
417 members within the body. The elders shall determine whether or not to proceed with the election
418 of a new deacon based upon the needs of the body and God's provision of qualified and willing men.
419 If a deacon election is prompted by vacancy, the elders shall determine whether the elected term of
420 office shall be for a full three years or for the remainder of the original term.

421 Part 5 – Deacon Chairman

422 The deacons shall elect annually from their own number a Deacon Chairman, subject to the
423 ratification of the elders. The Deacon Chairman shall be responsible for distributing responsibilities
424 and tasks among the deacons, chairing deacon meetings, ensuring that decisions and proceedings of

425 the deacon ministry are properly documented, and representing the deacons when invited to attend
426 select portions of elder meetings.

427 Part 6 – Additional Clarifications

428 A deacon may not be compensated as an employee of the church for their service as deacon.

429 **Section 3 – Church Treasurer**

430 Part 1 – Description & Qualifications

431 The Church Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring that a full and accurate account of revenues
432 and expenditures are documented in hardcopy or maintained electronically in a system of record
433 owned by the church, and for summarizing the church’s financial condition and activity during each
434 Quarterly Business Meeting of the church, or to the elders directly as the elders may request. The
435 Church Treasurer shall also assist with the development of an annual budget in collaboration with
436 the deacons and elders.

437 In order to manage the church’s financial operations above reproach, the Church Treasurer shall not
438 be directly involved in the mechanics of counting and depositing revenues. The Church Treasurer
439 shall not be vested with any authority to approve or decline expenses, but instead shall report to the
440 elders, deacons, and the congregation whether the church is tracking to its forecasted budget. This
441 clarification does not prohibit the inclusion of the Treasurer’s signature on expense reports as a
442 method of notification necessary to track and categorize expenses and issue reimbursement checks.

443 The Church Treasurer shall be a male member of the church who demonstrates the Christian
444 maturity and character exhorted in 1 Timothy 6:6-11, in addition to the biblical qualifications cited in
445 Section 1 of this article.

446 Part 2 – Election to Office

447 The terms of election for the position of Church Treasurer shall be identical to the terms stipulated
448 for deacons in Section 2 Part 2 of this Article.

449 Part 3 – Duration of Term

450 The Church Treasurer shall be elected to a maximum term of three years. Individuals may serve
451 consecutive terms as Treasurer, without limit, as long as the provisions set forth in this constitution
452 regarding their qualification, nomination, and election are met.

453 Part 4 – Vacancy of Office

454 In the event of the Church Treasurer’s resignation, dismissal, or incapacity to serve, the elders shall
455 appoint a deacon or another member of the church to perform temporarily the duties of Church
456 Treasurer. If the election of a Church Treasurer is prompted by vacancy, the elders shall determine

457 whether the elected term of office shall be for a full three years or for the remainder of the original
458 term.

459 **Section 4 – Dismissal of Church Officers**

460 Any two members (who are not related to each other) with reason to believe that an officer of the
461 church should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the
462 congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in
463 Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:19. Any officer may be dismissed by congregational vote in
464 accordance with this constitution’s provision for elections at any business meeting of the church.

465 In the event of gross misconduct by a church officer, the elders shall immediately suspend from
466 office the church officer in question until the matter of dismissal is formally ratified by
467 congregational vote.

468 **Section 5 – Corporate Officers**

469 For the purpose of compliance with any state or federal non-profit corporation laws, the elders shall
470 elect one of their number to serve as President of the Corporation. The Church Treasurer shall be
471 the Financial Officer of the Corporation, and the Chairman of the Deacons shall be the Secretary of
472 the Corporation.

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474

Article VI
MEETINGS & ELECTIONS

475 **Section 1 – Worship Meetings**

476 The church shall meet each Lord’s Day for worship. Additional worship meetings may be held
477 throughout the week as the church determines.

478 **Section 2 – Business Meetings**

479 The elders shall ensure that each business meeting is moderated by a facilitator appropriate to the
480 agenda. There shall be four regularly scheduled Quarterly Business Meetings held throughout the
481 year, each meeting corresponding to a calendar quarter (Jan-Mar, Apr-Jun, Jul-Sep, and Oct-Dec).
482 Additional meetings (itemized in Table VI.2.1 below) may be convened by at the discretion of the
483 elders as circumstances require. Additional meetings may also be convened upon the written
484 request of at least 10% of the membership, submitted to the elders. Any meeting requested in
485 writing must be convened within four weeks of the submitted request. Non-members are welcome
486 to attend any meetings of the church, but they cannot vote. The opportunity for non-members to
487 participate in discussion or address the congregation shall be managed at the discretion of the
488 elders.

489 The date and time of any church business meeting shall be communicated to the congregation
490 according to the minimum notification requirements specified in Table VI.2.1. Additional

491 notification requirements or other details regarding church business meetings may be specified as
 492 part of a documented collection of church procedures.

493 Table VI.2.1: Business Meeting Notification Requirements

Meeting Type	Minimum Notification ⁽¹⁾
Quarterly Business Meeting	6 weeks
Deacon or Treasurer Election	6 weeks
Elder Election	4 weeks (with nomination(s))
Constitutional amendment	4 weeks (with proposed amendment(s))
Ad-hoc meeting: Written request from membership	2 weeks (with clarification of agenda)
Ad-hoc meeting: With item(s) for vote ⁽²⁾	1 week (with clarification of vote)
Ad-hoc meeting: Without item(s) for vote	Day of meeting
Ad-hoc meeting: Church Discipline	Day of meeting
Admission of New Members	Day of meeting

494 ⁽¹⁾ Meeting notifications shall be as timely as possible and thus may be earlier.

495 ⁽²⁾ Except a meeting to admit new members, or address a matter of church discipline.

496 **Section 3 – Voting & Election Procedures**

497 A member must be a minimum of 18yrs of age in order to vote. Provided all provisions for
 498 notification required by this constitution as well as any documented church procedures have been
 499 met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. The voting procedure and
 500 the definition of a passing majority are presented in Table VI.3.1 below:

501 Table VI.3.1: Voting Procedure & Majority Approval Requirements

Type of Vote	Voting Procedure	Required to Pass
Election of Church Officers	Ballot	75%
Constitutional Amendment	Ballot	75%
Commissioning an Elder Search Committee	Ballot	75%
Annual Budget Approval or Ad-Hoc Budget Changes	Ballot	75%
Removal or Readmission of Membership (Art.III Sect.7)	Ballot	75%
All Other Items	Verbal ⁽¹⁾	60% ⁽¹⁾

502 ⁽¹⁾ At the discretion of the elders, or at the desire of a simply majority of the congregation, any
 503 congregational vote may be managed by secret ballot and/or require a 75% majority to pass. If
 504 the latter, the modified criteria must be clarified prior to the execution of the vote.
 505

506 For all scheduled ballot votes, the elders shall provide a means for members to vote via absentee
 507 ballot for those members who know in advance that they will be hindered from attending a
 508 scheduled vote. (Absentee ballots are not required for a vote that was scheduled as a verbal vote,
 509 but was changed to a ballot vote during the meeting.) Absentee votes must be returned prior to the
 510 start of the respective business meeting. A member’s absentee vote is forfeited if they fail to return
 511 the absentee ballot within the required timeframe.

512 All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present plus any absentee
513 ballots (if applicable). Abstentions shall not be counted as votes cast. (For example, if 50 members
514 are present for a ballot vote, and 5 members abstain, the percentage required to pass shall be based
515 on 45, not 50.)

516 Persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been
517 specifically designated.

518 **Article VII**
519 **CHURCH OPERATIONS**

520 **Section 1 – Administrative Delegation & Appointments**

521 The elders are ultimately responsible for ensuring that every aspect of the church’s operation are
522 above reproach, though the elders may delegate specific responsibilities to the deacons or other
523 administrative positions within the body. The elders may identify additional roles or positions as
524 may be necessary to assist the deacons with their scope of responsibility. Such roles shall not be
525 considered officers of the church. The duration of such roles may be temporary or last until such
526 time that the elders no longer deem the additional service necessary. The elders shall identify
527 members of the congregation appropriate to such role(s), and upon their willingness to serve
528 appoint them to service. The elders may reassign such appointments at their discretion.

529 **Section 2 – Documented Operating Procedures**

530 The elders are responsible for ensuring that critical policies and practices are documented in a set of
531 operating procedures, and that these operating procedures are (1) consistently applied, (2) updated
532 as changing circumstances or continuous improvement requires, and (3) accessible to the
533 congregation. Examples of church operations whose policies and procedures may require specific
534 documentation include: financial operations, nursery operations, children’s teaching ministry,
535 church employment, etc.

536 **Section 3 – Fiscal Planning**

537 The church’s fiscal year shall coincide with the calendar year. An annual church budget shall be
538 approved by congregational vote no later than the final Quarterly Business Meeting of the preceding
539 year. If the congregation is hindered from approving a budget prior to year’s end, expenditures may
540 continue in the new year according to the prior year’s budget.

541 All expenses require pre-approval by the overseeing deacon. In the event that a proposed
542 expenditure in excess of \$50 is not forecasted in the church’s annual budget, the item may be
543 approved for expense in collaboration with the elders without congregational vote as long as the
544 expense does not exceed 2% of the church’s annual budget. Unbudgeted expenses in excess of this
545 limit require congregational approval.

546 Provided all other stipulations for meetings and voting procedures set forth in Article VI of this
547 constitution have been met, the church's budget may be amended at any business meeting of the
548 church.

549 **Article VIII**
550 **DISPOSITION OF CHURCH PROPERTY**

551 **Section 1 – Division**

552 In the case of organic division of the church membership, the church property shall belong to those
553 members who abide by this constitution and subscribe to the church's Statement of Faith. If both
554 sides meet these requirements, those members in the majority shall retain the property.

555 **Section 2 – Dissolution**

556 Should a condition arise where, for any reason, the work of this church cannot continue, after all its
557 debts have been satisfied, the church property shall be transferred to such nonprofit organizations
558 that are in agreement with the church's Statement of Faith. This action will be determined by
559 majority vote of the remaining members. If the church is involved in an association or partnership
560 as described in Article IV Section 3, these organizations may be considered as possible recipients of
561 the church's property. None of the assets shall be given to any individual member.

562 **Article IX**
563 **INDEMNIFICATION**

564 **Section 1 – Optional Indemnification**

565 If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer,
566 employee, or agent of the church, the church may optionally provide indemnification against liability
567 and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in
568 good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in similar position would exercise under
569 similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest
570 of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

571 **Section 2 – Procedure**

572 Any decision to optionally indemnify a member of the church as described in Section 1 above
573 requires a majority approval among the elders of the church. Any of the elders who are the subject
574 of the indemnification shall recuse themselves from any vote of indemnification. Any such majority
575 must consist of at least three elders. If three elders are not available, a determination of
576 indemnification may be made by the membership or by special counsel appointed by the
577 membership.

578

Article X

579

AMENDMENTS

580

Provided all other stipulations for meetings and voting procedures set forth in Article VI of this

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constitution have been met, this constitution may be amended at any business meeting of the

582

church.