

# CONSTITUTION OF RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY CHAPEL

## ***Article I – Name***

The name of this church shall be “Riverwood Community Chapel” (Riverwood).

## ***Article II – Covenant***

Riverwood is a non-denominational church founded on September 15, 1991 and incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio.

Riverwood exists to glorify God by proclaiming Christ and developing lifelong followers of Him.

## ***Article III – Statement of Faith***

We accept and adopt the following as our Statement of Faith.

### ***Section 3.01 - Scriptures***

The Bible is fully inspired by God. We understand that both the Old and the New Testaments were without error in their original writings and are trustworthy as our supreme and final authority for matters of faith and life.

### ***Section 3.02 - God***

We believe in one God who is the holy and loving creator of all things seen and unseen. God exists eternally in three distinct and equal persons; the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### ***Section 3.03 - Jesus Christ***

Jesus is wholly God and wholly man. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, was born of the Virgin Mary, and lived a perfect sinless life. He died on the cross as the atonement for the sins of us all. He bodily rose from the dead and ascended into heaven where he is now our High Priest, Advocate, and King. It is through Jesus alone that we may find forgiveness and restoration with God.

### ***Section 3.04 - Holy Spirit***

The Holy Spirit is sent from God to live in all who believe in Jesus. He teaches, comforts, and empowers us; giving each follower of Jesus diverse gifts for serving in the church and serving others in the world. We believe that it is

through the Holy Spirit that we grow in faith, developing a holy life and Jesus-like character.

### ***Section 3.05 - People/Sin***

Each person is created with dignity and value in the image of God. Through sin we have lost our spiritual life and are separated from fellowship with our Creator. This separation has been transmitted to the entire human race and affects our relationships with God and each other.

### ***Section 3.06 - Salvation***

A perfect act of redemption was performed with the finished work of Jesus' death on the cross. Through the grace (free gift) of God we are rescued from the eternal consequences of sin and our broken relationship with God is restored. We receive the free gift of forgiveness and are spiritually reborn by placing faith in Jesus alone. We believe that the relationship that one enters into with God upon salvation is eternally secure.

### ***Section 3.07 - The Church***

We believe that all those, anywhere in the world, who have put their faith in Jesus Christ are members of the Church and are united together in the Body of Christ. This Church is universal and global in nature and extent while expressed in the local gatherings of believers. We believe the local church exists for the purpose of worship, teaching, community, and to serve and reach others by bringing them the hope and love of Jesus. The Church is the Body of Christ, made up of empowered believers to be part of the mission of God on earth.

### ***Section 3.08 - Future Things***

We believe in the personal return of Jesus Christ. He will judge the nations and restore all things to God's original intent. We believe in a literal Heaven and Hell, and in the bodily resurrection of all; the believer will be raised to everlasting life with the Lord and the unbeliever will be raised to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment apart from the presence of the Lord.

### ***Section 3.09 – Ordinances***

The Lord Jesus Christ gave two ordinances to the church: water baptism (by immersion) and the Lord's Supper (communion). Though these ordinances are not a means of salvation, they are a means of testimony and practice by the church for the church age.

## ***Article IV - Membership***

### ***Section 4.01 – Eligibility***

Any person upon professing saving faith in Jesus Christ is a member of the universal Church and therefore, eligible for membership in Riverwood.

### ***Section 4.02 – Covenant of Membership***

A Riverwood member agrees to the following covenant of membership:

Having professed faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior, as a member of Riverwood Community Chapel, I commit myself to the following attitudes and practices:

1. I will be supportive of the Statement of Faith of Riverwood, being careful not to be divisive about any area of disagreement.
2. I will pursue the peace and unity of the Church.
3. I will treat others in Christian love.
4. I will support Riverwood by giving regularly of my time, spiritual gifts and finances, in accord with biblical teaching.
5. I will pray for the ministries of Riverwood on a regular basis.
6. I will seek to develop my relationship with Jesus Christ, so that as I grow in maturity I may be able to minister to others.

### ***Section 4.03 – Procedure for Becoming a Member***

Those who desire membership at Riverwood must attend the necessary classes and fulfill the requirements provided for prospective members.

### ***Section 4.04 – Termination of Membership***

A Riverwood member may personally terminate his or her membership by sending written notice of this to the elder board.

The elder board may terminate the membership of any Riverwood member that fails to abide by the covenant of membership. This action requires a majority vote of the elders.

### ***Section 4.05 –Members Meetings***

- (a) **Suffrage** – All Riverwood members eighteen and older shall have the right to vote at any members' meeting.
- (b) **Notice** – Notice of the time, place, and purpose of any members' meeting shall be given publicly at least fourteen days prior to the meeting. The elder board must approve and preside over any members' meeting.
- (c) **Quorum** – Quorum constitutes members present at a members' meeting provided formal notice procedures were followed.

## **Article V - Government**

### **Section 5.01 – Elders**

Riverwood recognizes Christ as its Head and the Scriptures as its primary authority (Colossians 1:18, 2 Timothy 3:16). Under that authority, the oversight of this church is vested in a board of elders who operate in concert with the congregation.

- (a) **Authority and Responsibility** - The elders along with the pastors are responsible to guard the purity of church doctrine, to shepherd the flock, and to oversee church matters.
  - i. The elders and pastors will ensure that the truths of the Bible are accurately taught and applied.
  - ii. The elders and pastors are responsible for vision casting, leading by example, teaching, discipline and restoration, and the general oversight of all church ministries.
  - iii. The elders and pastors will oversee all church matters. In particular, the elders will act as the board of directors for the church corporation. They will be responsible for selecting the statutory agent and any other needed officers and for determining the functions of these officers.
- (b) **Qualifications** – An elder must meet the standards of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9; be an active member of Riverwood; and believe in, support, and agree to abide by its entire constitution. Riverwood interprets these passages to teach that only males will be called as elders.
- (c) **Appointment** – The elder board will identify qualified candidates to serve as elders, and Riverwood members may submit names of

candidates. The elders will evaluate each candidate to see that he meets the standards of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and to seek evidence of the Lord's calling to the office. The elders will present candidates to the congregation, who will be given fourteen days to show cause why any of the prospective elders would not be biblically qualified to serve. After considering any such congregational input, the elders will present the names of candidates to the members for approval. For approval of a candidate, at least two thirds (2/3) of the votes cast must be in the affirmative.

- (d) **Number** – The number of elders shall neither be fewer than seven nor greater than twelve. At no time will the number of elders who are staff pastors exceed the number of lay elders. Less than one half of the elders will be employees of Riverwood.
- (e) **Term** – The regular term of an elder shall be four years. The term of a staff pastor serving as an elder shall be two years. Upon completion of a term, a lay elder may not serve on the elder board for at least one year. An elder may take a sabbatical for a period of time for rest and renewal while continuing to be an elder. An elder may resign at any time by informing the elders. If an elder becomes unqualified or is unable to perform his elder duties satisfactorily, the elders may remove him. An elder being considered for removal will not vote on the motion to remove himself. The elders will inform the congregation when an elder resigns or is removed.
- (f) **Organization**
  - i. The elder board shall always include the Lead Pastor and at least one other staff pastor.
  - ii. The elder board will appoint boards which are aligned with the priorities of Riverwood as well as a fiduciary board. The elder board may appoint additional committees or boards as required and delegate to them appropriate authority and responsibility.
- (g) **Officers** – The Lead Pastor will serve as chairman of the elder board. Other officers will be the vice-chairman and the secretary. The vice-chairman may not be a staff pastor or other Riverwood employee.
  - i. The chairman will preside over meetings of the elder board.
  - ii. The vice-chairman will assume the duties of the chairman in his absence. He will preside over any discussions regarding the evaluation and performance of duties of the Lead Pastor and his annual review.

- iii. The secretary will keep faithful records of all proceedings of the elder board and members' meetings.

(h) **Meetings** – The elder board and other committees or boards appointed by the elder board will meet regularly as needed. A simple majority of the members of those bodies will constitute a quorum. All decisions of those bodies require majority consent but will seek to gain unanimous consent consistent with the spirit of mutual submission as in Philippians 2:2-8.

### ***Section 5.02 – Lead Pastor***

(a) **Call** – The process for calling a Lead Pastor is as follows:

- i. **Search Committee** – The elder board will convene a search committee composed of Riverwood members. More than half of the members of the search committee must not be currently serving as elders or staff pastors. The search committee will recommend a Lead Pastor candidate to the elder board.
- ii. **Elder Board Submission** – Upon the unanimous consent of the elder board, the elder board will submit the Lead Pastor candidate to the members for approval. If he is still in office, the existing Lead Pastor is not eligible to vote on his successor. A staff pastor may not serve on the elder board while he is a candidate for the position of lead pastor.
- iii. **Approval of Members** – To be approved, the Lead Pastor candidate must receive approval of at least two thirds (2/3) of members voting at a members' meeting called for this purpose.
- iv. **Confirmation of Call** – Final confirmation of the call of the Lead Pastor candidate requires a unanimous vote of the elders. Following this vote, the elders will offer the candidate the position of Lead Pastor.

(b) **Duties** – The Lead Pastor shall be the spiritual leader of the congregation who oversees all church ministries and staff.

(c) **Termination**

- i. The Lead Pastor shall give thirty (30) days written notice of resignation to the elders. The elders will notify the congregation when the Lead Pastor resigns.

- ii. Removal due to immorality requires a vote of three fourths (3/4) of the elders.
- iii. Removal due to infidelity to the Scriptures or Statement of Faith requires a vote of three fourths (3/4) of the elders and a vote of three fourths (3/4) of Riverwood members voting at a members' meeting called for this purpose.
- iv. The Lead Pastor may not vote on his own removal.

### ***Section 5.03 – Staff***

#### **(a) Call**

- i. Other pastors may be called by the Lead Pastor with the approval of the elder board.
- ii. Other staff members shall be selected at the discretion of the Lead Pastor.

(b) **Duties** – The duties of the church staff shall be determined by the Lead Pastor or by other pastors as directed by the Lead Pastor.

#### **(c) Termination**

- i. Pastors shall give thirty (30) days written notice of resignation to the Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor shall notify the elders when a pastor resigns.
- ii. Other staff members shall give fourteen (14) days notice of resignation to the Lead Pastor. The Lead Pastor shall notify the elders when a staff member resigns.
- iii. A staff pastor or other staff member may be removed by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the elder board.
- iv. A staff pastor who is also serving as an elder may not vote on his own removal.

## ***Article VI - Finances***

### ***Section 6.01 – Oversight***

The elder board is responsible for overseeing the finances, properties, and legal matters of Riverwood. Annual budget and regular financial reports shall be provided to the elder board by the fiduciary board.

### ***Section 6.02 – Real Property***

The purchase or sale of real property or programs for the construction of new buildings must be approved by a two thirds (2/3) vote of Riverwood members in a members' meeting called for this purpose.

### ***Section 6.03 – Annual Report***

The elder board shall provide an annual report to the congregation.

## ***Article VII – Settlement of Disputes***

Claims or disputes arising between church members, pastors, staff, and/or Riverwood shall be settled through mediation following scriptural example. A party seeking mediation shall request it from the elder board, and the mediation process shall proceed under the authority of the elder board.

## ***Article VIII – Amendments***

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote at a members meeting called for this purpose and after approval by the elder board.