

SPRING CREEK CHRISTIAN CHURCH: CONSTITUTION  
Pastor Jeffery Hayes  
25 May 2017; 7 February 2018

**ARTICLE I:  
DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF THIS CONSTITUTION**

This written document is a declaration of our beliefs and understanding of the Holy Scripture, as to our doctrinal beliefs, form of church government, organizational structure, and purposes as a body. It is vitally important for a church, if it is to glorify God and accomplish His purposes, that its people be in agreement with regard to doctrine, organizational structure and goals (1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3, 13).

This is thus designed to be a statement of these things that it might promote an oneness of mind within our own ranks, and that those interested in becoming a part of this ministry might have a clear concept of our beliefs and objectives.

This document is not a higher authority than the Word of God. Neither is it a higher authority than the authority that God Himself has invested in those believers He has appointed to lead in this local church (Heb. 13:17). It must be remembered that the local church itself is a living, growing, and flexible body subject ultimately to the authority of Jesus Christ alone as it is declared in the Word of God (Eph. 1:22; 4:12-16). As we grow in the Word, this document is therefore subject to amendment according to the provisions of Article XIV. This document is, however, to be followed in all its parts as a protection to all until part of all is amended according to its provisions.

**ARTICLE II: NAME**

The name of this local church shall be Spring Creek Christian Church, a corporation under the laws of the state of Indiana.

**ARTICLE III:  
VISION, MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**A. Our Vision**

The vision of Spring Creek Christian Church is to see peoples' lives flourish from being firmly planted in the Word of God (Jer. 17:5-8; Psalm 1; James 1:25; Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4).

**B. Our Mission**

The supreme mission of the church, and so also of every individual believer, is to glorify God by obeying His Word (Eph. 3:21; Rom. 11:36; 1 Pet. 4:11). Therefore, if what we do as a church, or as individuals, cannot serve the glory of God, it should not be done.

The mission of Spring Creek Christian Church is to bring the Word of God to all of life through our steadfast devotion to the Bible, biblical fellowship, unity through purity (the breaking of bread), prayer and evangelism (Mark 1:38; John 15:3, 17:7; Acts 2:42-47a).

## C. Our Goals

Our goals are to serve God and bring glory to Him. Certain God-ordained goals are established in Scripture for the local church. These are basically set forth in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20).

### 1. Equipping the Saints

Equipping the saints unto the work of the ministry in all its aspects along with their spiritual maturity in the Lord is the second great goal of this church (Eph. 4:12-16; Col. 1:28-29).

### 2. Evangelization of the Lost

Reaching the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ, both at home and abroad, is to be one of the goals of this church (Rom. 1:14-16; 1 Thess. 1:8; Acts 1:8).

## D. Our Objectives

### 1. Internal Objectives and Functions

**a. Instruction in the Word of God—Teaching:** To stand for the historic, fundamental truths of Scripture, and through Scripture, to equip the saints for service, and for the building up of the body of Christ for unity, knowledge of the Son of God, and maturity, measured by the stature of the fullness of Christ, and for protection against the deceitful scheming of Satan (Eph. 4:12-16).

**b. Fellowship:** To encourage and provide for means of developing meaningful relationships among believers so that they may complete their spiritual duty to stimulate one another to holiness and faithfulness to God's Word (Heb. 10:24-25; 13:1-2; Acts 2:42-47).

**c. Worship:** To provide the means for developing and expressing meaningful worship in prayer, songs of praise, adoration, admonishment, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord, and to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper (Heb. 13:15; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 11:23-34; Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:42).

**d. Ministry:** To provide the means for developing and exercising spiritual gifts for the edification of the body and the evangelization of the lost (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).

### 2. External Objectives and Functions

**a. Outreach:** To present the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who have never trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and to encourage them to trust in Him (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 1 Thess. 1:2-10).

**b. Holy Behavior:** To live holy lives in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation acting as salt and as lights in the world (Phil. 2:15; Matt. 5:13-14; 1 Pet. 2:11-15; Col. 4:5).

**c. Showing Mercy:** To do good to all men whenever there is the opportunity and the means to do so within biblical principles and precepts (Gal. 6:10; Luke 10:29-37).

Our **vision, mission, goals** and **objectives** set forth our philosophy of the local church and its ministry. This, in turn, must form the foundation for our thinking and activities as a body of people. It directs us in what we ought to be doing. Anything which does not contribute to this philosophy of our mission, goals and objectives should then be either corrected, rejected or alleviated from the activities of the church.

#### **ARTICLE IV: DOCTRINE**

Since the Word of God is foundational and absolutely essential to true spirituality, fellowship, spiritual sustenance, effectiveness in service and ministry, faith and doctrinal accuracy, we believe that the most important function of this local church, and its central thrust, is consistent teaching and study of the Word of God (1 Tim. 4:6-7).

The study of the Word of God is not **an end in itself**, but it is a high priority and a necessary channel for fellowship with God and thereby also of effective ministry to one another and to the world. It will not, therefore, be bypassed or made secondary in the interest of social concerns, actions, or activities, but must be so promoted that the Word, and the teaching of the Word, become the pulse and heartbeat behind all church and non-church related activities or concerns (Psa. 119:1ff; 138:2; Isa. 77:2b; Rom. 15:4; 16:25-26; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Tim. 1:5; 4:1-16; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 4:1-3).

This local church shall thus function as an independent, evangelical church, committed to the fundamental, historic truths recorded in God's inerrant revelation—the Holy Scriptures. To hold positions within Spring Creek Christian Church, all elders, ministerial staff, deacons and teachers must be active members in good standing who wholeheartedly agree with the Doctrinal Statement, Article V, of this church.

#### **ARTICLE V: DOCTRINAL STATEMENT**

##### **A. The Holy Scriptures**

We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life, inerrant in the original writings, infallible and God-breathed (II Timothy 3:16,17; II Peter 1:20,21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12,13).

##### **B. The Godhead**

We believe in one Triune God, eternally existing in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – coeternal in being, co-identical in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and having the same attributes and perfections (Deuteronomy 6:4; II Corinthians 13:14).

##### **C. The Person and Work of Christ**

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God and redeem sinful men (John 1:1,2,14; Luke 1:35).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for all mankind as a representative, vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice, and that the sufficiency of this atoning sacrifice to accomplish the redemption and justification of all who trust in Him is assured by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead (Romans 3:24,25; 4:25; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Timothy 4:10; Hebrews 2:9; I Peter 1:3-5; 2:24; and II Peter 2:1).

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where as our High Priest, he fulfills the ministry of Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate (Acts 1:9,10; Hebrews 9:24; 7:25; Romans 8:34; I John 2:1,2).

#### D. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a person who convicts the works of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and, that He is the supernatural agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ, indwelling and sealing them unto the day of redemption (John 16:8-11; II Corinthians 3:6; I Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13,14).

We believe that He is the divine teacher who guides believers into all truth; and, that it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit (John 16:13; I John 2:20, 27; Ephesians 5:18).

#### E. The Total Depravity of Man

We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, but that in Adam's sin the race fell, inherited a sinful nature, and became alienated from God; and, that man is totally depraved, and, of himself, utterly unable to remedy his lost condition (Genesis 1:26,27; Romans 3:22,23; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3,12).

#### F. Salvation

We believe that salvation is the gift of God brought to man by grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose precious blood was shed on Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins (Ephesians 2:8-10; John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 1:18,19).

#### G. The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers

We believe that all the redeemed, once saved, are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (John 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Romans 8:1,38,39; I Corinthians 1:4-8; I Peter 1:5).

We believe that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word; which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh (Romans 13:13, 14; Galatians 5:13; Titus 2:11-15).

#### H. The Two Natures of the Believer

We believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit; and, that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural (Romans 6:13; 8:12, 13; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 3:5-9).

#### I. Separation

We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded of God (II Timothy 3:1-5; Romans 12:1-2; Romans 14:13; John 2:15-17; II John 1:9-11; II Corinthians 6:14-7:1).

We believe that God defines marriage as His joining together of one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6; Mark 10:6-9; Ephesians 5:31).

We believe that God offers the sexual act solely to a man and a woman within the bounds of marriage. We believe that any act of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, queerness, incest,

cohabitation, fornication, adultery, sexual abuse, polygamy, polyandry, pornography, masturbation, changing one's gender or appearance, etc., are sins against the Holy God (Genesis 2:23-24; 4:1; Genesis 19:5-7; 13; Genesis 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Proverbs 5:15-20; Romans 1:24-27; I Corinthians 5:1; 6:9-10; I Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

We believe that the indwelling Holy Spirit using the Word of God can change one's perverse desires so that all who trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior can live the holy life (Romans 13:14; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 6:16; Ephesians 2:3-7; I Peter 2:11).

#### J. Missions

We believe that it is the obligation of the saved to witness by life and by word to the truths of Holy Scripture and to seek to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind (Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; II Corinthians 5:19, 20).

#### K. The Ministry and Spiritual Gifts

We believe that God is sovereign in the bestowment of all His gifts; and, that the gifts of evangelists, pastors, and teachers are sufficient for the perfecting of the saints today; and, that speaking in tongues and the working of sign miracles gradually ceased as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established (I Corinthians 12:4-11; II Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12).

We believe that the biblical offices of pastor and elder in the church, or their equivalents, are restricted to biblically qualified men (I Timothy 2:12; 3:1-7; Titus 1:59).

We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will, for the sick and afflicted (John 15:7; I John 5:14-15).

#### L. The Church

We believe that the Church, which is the body and the espoused bride of Christ, is a spiritual organism made up of all born-again persons of this present age (Ephesians 1:22,23; 5:25-27; I Corinthians 12:12-14; II Corinthians 11:2).

We believe that the establishment and continuance of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:27; 20:17; 28-32; I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-11).

We believe in the autonomy of the local church free of any external authority or control (Acts 13:1-4; 15:19-31; 20:28; Romans 16:1-4; I Corinthians 3:9,16; 5:4-7; 13; I Peter 5:1-4).

We believe in the ordinances of believer's water baptism and the Lord's Supper as scriptural means of testimony for the church age (Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 2:41,42; 18:8; I Corinthians 11:23-26).

#### M. Dispensationalism

We believe that the Scriptures interpreted in their natural, literal sense reveal divinely determined dispensations or rules of life which define man's responsibilities in successive ages. These dispensations are not ways of salvation, but rather divinely ordered stewardships by which God directs man according to His purpose. Three of these – the age of law, the age of the Church, and the age of the millennial kingdom – are the subjects of detailed revelation in Scripture (John 1:17; I Corinthians 9:17; II

Corinthians 3:9-18; Galatians 3:13-25; Ephesians 1:10; Colossians 1:24-25; Hebrews 7:19; Revelation 20:2-6).

#### N. The Personality of Satan

We believe that Satan is a person, the author of sin and the cause of the fall; that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man; and, that he shall be eternally punished in the Lake of Fire (Job 1:6,7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

#### O. The Second Advent of Christ

We believe in that "Blessed Hope," the personal, imminent, pre-tribulation and premillennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and in His subsequent return to earth, with His saints, to establish His millennial kingdom (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Zechariah 14:4-11; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:16; I Thessalonians 1:10; 5:9; Revelation 3:10).

#### P. The Eternal State

We believe in the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life, and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46; John 5:28, 29; 11:25, 26; Revelation 20:5, 6, 12, 13).

We believe that the souls of the redeemed are, at death, absent from the body and present with the Lord, where in conscious bliss they await the first resurrection, when spirit, soul and body are reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (Luke 23:43; Revelation 20:4-6; II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 3:21; I Thessalonians 4:16,17).

We believe that the souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery until the second resurrection, when with soul and body reunited they shall appear at the Great White Throne Judgment, and shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to suffer everlasting conscious punishment (Luke 16:19-26; Matthew 25:41-46; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude vv. 6,7; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 20:11-15).

### **ARTICLE VI:**

#### **GENERAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The local church body is composed of one body with many members all of whom are in vital relationship with Jesus Christ, but the body also has "joints of supply," units of control, and unity, i.e., church leaders (Eph. 4:16). This together suggests body participation under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ with leadership direction, submission and an authority in a two-directional manner.

First, the local government is invested in the body of believers who compose the local body under the headship of Jesus Christ according to the Word of God and the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 18:20; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:16; 5:21; Col. 1:18; 2:19).

Second, executive authority or leadership, however, is invested by the congregation, as authorized by Scripture, in a Board of Elders who lead the church and to whom the congregation is to submit under the headship of Christ. These men have the authority and responsibility to delegate to individuals, committees or other boards (such as a Board of Deacons) authority and responsibility to carry out the business or ministry of the church in spiritual and physical (material) matters (Acts 20:28; 15:6; Eph. 4:11-12; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17).

In using its delegated authority, and in making its decisions, the Board of Elders must seek to be guided by the Scripture, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and by input from the congregation (Acts 20:32; 6:2-5a; 11:22; 15:22; 2 Cor. 8:19).

In the event of the misuse of the delegated authority, the church has recourse to the principles as set forth in Articles VII, XI, and XIII.

## **ARTICLE VII: ELDERS**

### **A. Qualifications**

Elders shall be men whose lives are characterized by the qualities set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. These qualities can be categorized as:

- (1) They must **desire** the office of elder and demonstrate spiritual leadership abilities among the flock.
- (2) They must be **able to teach** and use the Word of God with wisdom and patience.
- (3) They must be **lovers of God**. Men who take God and His Word seriously.
- (4) They must be **able to manage their household** in a biblical manner.
- (5) They must be able to spiritually manage their interpersonal relationships.
- (6) They must be men who are seeking to be controlled by Christ and His Word rather than by worldly and fleshly desires.
- (7) These men shall hold to the doctrinal statement of this Constitution in accord with the statements of Article V, and be supportive of the entire Constitution.

### **B. Authority**

The ministry of Spring Creek Christian Church shall be under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ working in and through the Board of Elders. The elders will be the primary decision-making body within the church. However, it is critical that the elders make decisions based on carefully assembled facts, scriptural insight, the individual and corporate leading by the Holy Spirit, and input from the body (Acts 6:5; 15:6, 22; Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13).

The church is not a democracy or a government where the majority rules. Jesus Christ Himself is the Head and Ruler of the church. However, as seen in Article VI, the Lord Jesus leads and directs through both the body and the elders. Since the Lord Jesus dwells in each member of the body of Christ, and so leads and directs through the body as to needs, desires, and responsibilities for each local body, it is important and necessary for the elders to seek input, information and guidance from the body, especially on practical matters of church life. As a result of these biblical facts, in major decisions of church life, the congregation will be given a time for prayer and then consultation with the Board of Elders in order to show a unified movement toward the direction in question and to show a sense of God's leading. The elders will not move forward with a decision until the body of Christ has been given an opportunity to pray and consult with them. The following illustrates major decisions of church life: adding or removing paid staff members, adding to or removing elders from the Board of Elders, or adding new members to the church body.

### C. Duties

Because of external and internal Christian testimony to be promoted with the local body, the elder must first and foremost exercise a personal spiritual walk which promotes self-examination, maintain a servant-like quality in life, and serve with gentleness and humility in all that he does. Out of this biblical perspective, the elder is to joyfully undertake the following duties:

- (1) Teach the Word of God.
- (2) Model Christ like behavior.
- (3) Maintain pure doctrine.
- (4) Discipline unruly members and attendees (See Article XI).
- (5) Manage finances (See Article XII).
- (6) Pray for the ill.
- (7) Guard and protect the flock from theological error.
- (8) Oversee and provide spiritual direction for the activities and growth of the flock.
- (9) Aid in finding and developing gifted teachers of the Word (2 Tim. 2:2).
- (10) Support, encourage, counsel and lead in humility.
- (11) See to the appointment of deacons as per Article IX.
- (12) Provide guidance to the deacons as needed.
- (13) Seek the Lord's will to interpret the Articles and provisions of this Constitution in the light of Scripture.
- (14) Make decisions and perform any other duties as situations within the church dictate, either directly or through proper and orderly delegation of committees or persons as necessary.

The elders shall strive to maintain open communication with the flock, both to discern needs, concerns and viewpoints, and to communicate information and decisions. This may be done through the Sunday bulletin, pulpit announcements, group or congregational meetings and discussions, and one-on-one personal contact (Acts 6:1-5; 11:22; 15:1, 6, 22; 16:2).

### D. Appointment (General Principles)

The Scriptures emphasize that elders in the church are not appointed by men, but by God (Acts 20:28). The task of the people in the church then, should be to seek and discover God's direction and leading within the church body in the appointment of elders.

The need for an additional elder may be recognized by either the elders or other members of the church body. The elders, in consultation with or in response to the request of body members, shall seek to discern the nature of the need and to follow God's leading in deciding if the need justifies the appointment of an elder. Upon a decision by the Board of Elders that a need does exist, the church along

with the Board of Elders will prayerfully and carefully seek God's direction in choosing the right man or men.

It is the purpose of Spring Creek Christian Church to base the selection process upon an orderly, proper sequence of events which will most easily facilitate the recognition of God's appointment of men to this ministry. The church along with the Board of Elders should be on the alert for men whose lives characterize the qualifications laid out in Scripture. Only qualified men will be appointed. If no qualified men are available, or if men are unwilling to serve, who would otherwise be qualified, no appointment will be made. The church should wait on the Lord either to remove the need or to provide qualified men.

The Scriptures speak of two categories of elders within a church body: non-paid elders and paid elders (1 Tim. 5:17-18). The following procedures outline the steps necessary to appoint elders:

#### E. Appointment of Non-Paid Elders

When the need arises for a new non-paid elder (either for a new position or to replace an elder who has left the Board), the existing Board of Elders should assume a guiding and directing role in the search for the right man. The specific nature of the need and the decision to seek a new elder should be announced to the flock. The flock will be asked to suggest qualified men for the position based on the biblical criteria for elders (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:6-9; Acts 14:23; 6:1f).

After a period of time and prayerful consideration, the elders will meet to consider all the nominees as to their qualifications for the position. If the Board of Elders believes a man to be biblically qualified, then a member of the Board will be appointed to approach each nominee to explain the specific nature of the need and to determine his willingness to serve (1 Tim. 5:22).

If the elder nominee(s) signifies his understanding of the specific nature of the need and his willingness to serve, the Board will announce this to the flock. He will then undergo an eldership training process which includes, but is not limited to training in the areas of theology, Christian character and ministry skills. After the successful completion of this training process, and with the unanimous approval of the Board of Elders, the Board will recommend the nominee(s) to the church as a qualified candidate for eldership. A period of one week will be given to the flock for prayer and then consultation with the Board of Elders to discuss any concerns church members may have about the elder nominee(s). The Board of Elders will then vote as outlined in Article X, Section F.

After the above steps are successfully completed, the appointment of the man as a non-paid elder will be announced to the flock. The new elder will be ordained by the Board of Elders.

#### F. Tenure

Elders are appointed to an indefinite tenure consistent with their continued desire and ability to serve in this capacity. This must be evaluated and recognized by themselves, by the other elders, and by the church body (Rom. 12:3-8). The removal of elders from office shall be effected by personal resignation or by disciplinary actions in accordance with the following:

## G. Voluntary Resignation

An elder may step down at any time he so chooses. The Elder should prayerfully reflect on his decision and seek counsel from the Board before making a final decision.

## H. Involuntary Dismissal

Involuntary dismissal of any elder, paid or non-paid, will be a disciplinary action of the Board of Elders in accordance with the instruction of 1 Timothy 5:19-20; Galatians 6:1 and Matthew 18:15-18. The specific procedures for this are spelled out in Article XI with the following differences:

(1) If the situation is such that it necessitates dismissal from office, the Board may suggest voluntary resignation by the person involved. If he refuses, or believes he has been unfairly treated, then it is to be formally brought before the elders, with the deacons there to assist the reconciliation process. A biblical compromise based upon biblical truth, biblical love, and biblical forgiveness with documented steps for both parties toward correcting the issue at hand are the objectives of this meeting. If a compromise cannot be reached within a broad period of time, the congregation will be notified of the situation and will be given one week for prayer and consultation with the Board of Elders. It will then be decided by a majority vote of the Board of Elders.

(2) If members of the body believe they are not being properly and biblically represented by the Board of Elders, or any elder on the board, they are to follow the procedures of Matthew 18:15-16 and first discuss the issues with the individual elder(s). If, after following the above procedures, the issue is not resolved, then they have the right and may call for a meeting with all the elders, (or exclusively with the deacons if all the elders are involved), (Matt. 18:17) where the issues may be presented. A meeting will then be held with the Board of Elders, deacons and party with the grievance. A biblical compromise based upon biblical truth, biblical love, and biblical forgiveness with documented steps for both parties toward correcting the issue are the objectives of the meeting. If a compromise cannot be reached after a broad period of time, then the issue will be decided and ruled on by a simple majority vote of the active members in good standing of the church at a meeting. A two-week announcement period will be necessary before the meeting can be held. The active members in good standing of the church, at such time, may remove any or all members of the Board.

## **ARTICLE VIII:**

### **PAID ELDERS AND STAFF**

#### A. Paid Elder(s): Pastor-Teacher

The paid elder(s) plays a critical role in the growth, maturity, spirituality and effectiveness of the church. He is responsible for the quality and content of the teaching and counseling within the flock (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 4:6-16). Spring Creek Christian Church recognizes that the Lord has given spiritual gifts to all believers and therefore does not expect the paid elder(s) to provide all the teaching, evangelism and counseling, etc., within the body (Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 1 Pet. 4:10-11). Rather they are to equip the saints "for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-12).

#### B. Paid Elder(s): Duties, Qualifications and Authority

The duties, qualifications and authority of the paid elder(s) shall be the same as for non-paid elders (Article VII), with the following additional duties:

- (1) Provide the majority of the teaching during worship services (1 Tim. 4:13).
- (2) Provide guidance, as needed, to the Board of Elders concerning church business and spiritual concerns within the body.
- (3) The senior paid elder shall supervise the paid church staff (secretaries, assistant pastors, youth pastors, etc.).
- (4) Administer or supervise the administration of the ordinances (baptism and the Lord's Supper).

#### C. Paid Elder(s): Selection

Upon recognition of the need for a new senior paid elder, the Board of Elders will guide and direct the selection process. The attitude of the Board should be one of submission to the Lord, waiting on Him to fill the need with the right man. They should also be expectant, knowing that God will provide a person to fill the need.

The following procedure outlines the method Spring Creek Christian Church will follow in selecting a new senior paid elder:

- (1) The selection committee shall be appointed with a member of the Board of Elders as the head of the committee. The committee shall consist of the non-paid elders, and may also include an equal number of the deacons, small group leaders, and any other active members in good standing, if so desired by the non-paid elders.
- (2) The committee shall seek the names and resumes from any qualified and interested men by any means at their disposal. This may include contacting doctrinally sound seminaries to assist in finding qualified men for the position and seeking information from the congregation about possible candidates.
- (3) The committee will carefully and prayerfully consider any resumes submitted. The resumes will be evaluated in light of the man's experience, interests, doctrinal beliefs, philosophy of ministry and in light of the needs of the flock.
- (4) The committee will contact one or more men who appear to fill the needs of the church based on the resumes and other gathered information. The men may be invited to visit the church one or more times. These visits should include time for the committee and flock to evaluate the man and his family, time for him to present the Word and time for him to evaluate the church and the community. Attendance of a man's family is not required on the first visit, but if he progresses as a candidate, then he must make his family available to meet the church on a subsequent visit.
- (5) After each visit, the committee will prayerfully consider the candidate. During the process, they will seek input from the flock concerning the individual. The deacons, along with the non-paid elders, should meet with the candidate(s) to provide input to the non-paid elders. After evaluation of the candidate(s), the committee will announce their recommendation to the flock. A period of one week will be given to the church for prayer and then consultation with the Board of Elders regarding the nominee.
- (6) An elder meeting will be called to vote on the candidate. The decision must be unanimous. If it is, then the Board of Elders will offer the position to the man.

(7) If the man turns down the offer, or if the vote of the Board is not unanimous, then the above procedure will be repeated until a qualified man is hired.

#### D. Paid Elder(s): Tenure and Removal

Tenure and removal of a paid elder will follow the same guidelines as outlined in Article VII.

#### E. Associate Pastoral Staff

The need for paid associate pastoral staff to assist in meeting the needs of the flock may be recognized by any member of the church body or leadership. Such need must be agreed to by the senior paid elder (in consultation with the Board of Elders) before action is taken. The need for this expenditure should be discussed with the flock.

The procedure for hiring associate pastoral staff members shall be the same as for a senior paid elder. The senior paid elder will automatically head the selection committee for any associate staff.

All paid pastoral staff will look to the senior paid elder for supervision of their duties and for periodic reviews of their performance. A written job description will be prepared for all paid staff members. This description will be prepared by the senior paid elder in consultation with the Board of Elders.

After appropriate consultation with the church leadership, a recommendation by the senior paid elder will be sufficient for modifying the duties or redirecting the efforts of any paid staff member. Removal of any associate pastoral staff member shall follow the same guidelines as outlined in Article VIII.

#### F. Non-Pastoral Staff

The hiring of baby sitters, janitorial services, secretary, etc., will be planned for and directed by the Board of Elders.

Since the secretary will be working primarily for the senior paid elder, he will make the final decision, in consultation with the Board of Elders, on who will fill the position.

### **ARTICLE IX: DEACONS**

#### A. Qualifications

Deacons shall be men who desire to be servants of the local church body, who are able to serve, who meet all the qualifications of Scripture set forth in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-12, and who are conscientiously and wholeheartedly in agreement with the Constitution of this church.

#### B. Duties

In Acts 6:1-4, certain men were appointed to minister to the physical needs of the flock, to relieve the elders so they would have more time to concentrate on prayer and on the Word. These were undoubtedly the first deacons and functioned as helpers to the leaders of the Jerusalem church. (These leaders were forerunners of the elders in the New Testament church.)

Deacons shall be helpers of the elders in ministering to the needs of the body, especially the physical needs (such as caring for the building and property), though they may serve in other capacities as their gifts and training allow.

Their specific duties will be designated by the elders according to the need of the church and a deacon's particular gifts, capacities and talents.

### C. Appointment

Deacons shall be appointed to serve as long as they are qualified and willing to serve and as long as a need for their ministry exists.

First Timothy 3:10 teaches that potential deacons are to be tested. The primary means of testing is time; time for the Board of Elders to evaluate a man's commitment to the Lord, his qualifications according to 1 Timothy 3:8-12, his doctrinal understanding and his willingness to serve the local body. The Board of Elders should be on the alert to those men who demonstrate the qualifications of a deacon.

Deacons will be appointed as the need arises. However, only qualified and willing men will be appointed. If no qualified men are available, or if those qualified are unable or unwilling to serve, no appointment will be made. The church shall wait on the Lord to provide a qualified man or men to meet the need.

The following outlines the procedure Spring Creek Christian Church will follow in selecting deacons:

- (1) The Board of Elders shall decide if the need for a deacon(s) exists.
- (2) When there is a need, then the Board shall notify the congregation of the need and ask them to recommend to the Board those men whom they believe meet the qualifications.
- (3) The Board of Elders will review the names submitted to them along with any additional names of men they believed to be qualified.
- (4) Each name submitted will be carefully and prayerfully considered and reviewed according to their qualifications, gifts, the need, and the individual's willingness to serve. The Board of Elders will validate the qualifications of the nominees. The qualified men will then undergo a deaconship training process which includes, but is not limited to, training in the areas of theology, Christian character and ministry skills. Upon the successful completion of this training process, the Board of Elders will announce to the flock that the deacon candidate(s) has completed his training and that the flock has one week to pray and then consult with the Board of Elders about any issues or questions that they may have regarding the candidate.
- (5) The elders will then appoint that man (men) whom they believe to be the most qualified to serve according to the specific needs and the qualifications.

### D. Removal of Deacons

#### 1. Voluntary

A deacon may voluntarily step down from his position at any time he so chooses. The deacon should prayerfully reflect on his decision and seek counsel from the Board of Elders before making a final decision.

#### 2. Involuntary Dismissal

Involuntary dismissal of a deacon shall be in accord with the procedures for church discipline outlined in Article XI. If the situation is such that it necessitates dismissal from office, the Board may suggest voluntary resignation by the person involved. If he refuses, the Board may remove him from office, but only after the principles for church discipline have been prayerfully considered and followed (Matt. 18:15-18).

## **ARTICLE X: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

### **A. Union in the Universal Body of Christ**

At the time of personal faith in Jesus Christ, the believer is called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:2, 9; 12:12-13, 20; Col. 1:18), and joined into union with the universal body of Christ, the church, by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col. 1:18).

### **B. Union with a Local Assembly of Believers**

There is another aspect of this fellowship into which the believer is joined. He is brought into the fellowship of fellow members of that body, other living believers on earth, so that he might share and participate in the various blessings and ministries of the body of Christ. For this to occur properly, believers are to seek the fellowship of one another in a local body or assembly of believers to which they are to become responsible, a mini-flock, so to speak, of the greater and universal flock of God (1 Pet. 5:2-3; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1).

Believers in isolation, operating independently of other believers of a local assembly, is an idea contrary to Scripture. Scripture teaches that there are to be local assemblies of believers, united together by a common faith, by union in Christ, and the universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, by common purposes, commitments and responsibilities, and with a common leadership of that specific body, independent in government from other local assemblies (Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Pet. 5:1-3; 1 Cor. 1:2; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13). The local church is to be a body of people allotted to the charge of elders (1 Pet. 5:1-3; 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:14-15; 1 Pet. 4:8-10; 1 Cor. 12:20-27), and subject to the discipline of that body or assembly (1 Cor. 5:2; 1 Thess. 5:14 [admonish the unruly], 2 Thess. 3:6, 14; 1 Tim. 5:20).

This of necessity implies more than a loose relationship of a believer or believers to a particular body or assembly. It involves a tie, an involvement, a commitment, responsibility and submission to both the leadership and to each other.

### **C. Church Membership**

The Scriptures contain neither a mandate for nor a command against an official membership roll. In Acts, we see that believers were added to the church in Jerusalem, however, this serves primarily to show the growth in the early church (Acts 2:47; 9:31; 16:5). These people were devoting themselves to a local assembly and its leadership for teaching, leadership, fellowship and worship (Acts 2:42). There were also letters of commendation or acceptance written on behalf of both men and women to be welcomed and accepted into the fellowship or various assemblies. These letters commended believers to other assemblies regarding their faithfulness and ministry and thus they were not a transfer of membership by letter (Rom. 16:1-2; 1 Cor. 16:10; Col. 4:10; 2 Cor. 3:1; 8:16-24).

The emphasis of these Scriptures is that every believer become identified and committed to a specific local assembly of believers following the leading and direction of God. This commitment is revealed by their attitude, faith, attendance, involvement, giving and submission to that assembly. Thus a membership roll cannot, in and of itself, serve as the sole means of commitment a believer has to a local body.

Spring Creek Christian Church does have a membership roll to aid in conducting business in an orderly manner and to provide legal protection in important, yet potentially controversial church decisions (such as discipline, Article XI). An individual's decision to be placed on the membership roll should flow from their commitment to the church. The individual should remember that being on the membership roll has no merit or value so far as his spiritual maturity or growth is concerned. It is, however, an important tool in helping the church function smoothly. The membership roll must be housed at the church building.

#### D. Procedure for Membership

Any individual 18 years or older who confesses the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior and who is in agreement with this Constitution and who has completed the Pathway to Discipleship and Church Membership Class, including the steps for membership listed therein, is qualified and eligible for membership in Spring Creek Christian Church. Anyone who desires to become a member should contact one of the elders and request membership. Once the individual meets the qualifications for membership, then the Board of Elders will announce the candidate's membership request to the congregation. The members of the congregation will be given one week for prayer and then consultation with the Board of Elders regarding the membership of the candidate. After this period is successfully completed and any issues are resolved, the Board of Elders will vote on the candidate's membership request. Upon a unanimous decision, the candidate will be placed on the roll and will be acknowledged before the flock as a new member.

#### E. Membership Roll

The elders will review the membership roll annually. Members may be removed from the roll by the member's choice, by church discipline (Article XI), or by noninvolvement with the body. If an individual appears to no longer be involved with the church, an elder will contact the person to verify their membership status. No individual will be removed from the roll without being contacted by an elder or deacon.

#### F. Voting and Elder Meetings

The purpose of voting is not to simply obtain a "majority-rules" consensus. Rather, all voting in this church's Board of Elders is designed to show God's leading on an issue. Unless specifically indicated differently within the Constitution, a unanimous vote in favor of an issue shall signify to the Board of Elders that God is leading favorably in the decision being voted on.

For purposes of voting by the congregation, only active members in good standing may vote. An active member in good standing is one who has established a healthy pattern of attendance rather than absence at the weekly worship gathering, has a strong devotion to the Word of God, serves the church body, seeks to unify the church body through living a life of holiness, and prayer, and has generally, a godly attitude about the Christian life. Exceptions can be made regarding attendance for those who are home bound or attending school or military responsibilities.

## **ARTICLE XI: CORRECTIVE CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

We believe in the responsibility and necessity of church discipline as clearly outlined in Scripture. It is a very difficult area and hard to practice. Nevertheless, church discipline has the divine authority of Scripture and is vital to the purity of the church. In church discipline, the following matters must be carefully understood and applied.

### **A. The Pattern and Basis for Discipline**

The discipline of the church is first patterned after the fact that the Lord Himself disciplines His children (Heb. 12:6) and, as a father delegates part of the discipline of the children to the wife, so the Lord has delegated the discipline of the church family to the church itself.

Discipline is further based on the holy character of God (1 Pet. 1:16; Heb. 12:11). The pattern of God's holiness, his desire for the church to be holy, set apart unto Him, is an important reason for the necessity of church discipline. The church is therefore to clean out the leaven of malice and wickedness from its ranks (1 Cor. 5:6-8). A failure to discipline in a church today evidences a lack of awareness of the holiness of God.

Church discipline must be patterned after and based on the divine commands of Scripture. We have numerous passages which both command and give us biblical directives on the how, when and where of church discipline. Again, a failure to exercise this responsibility demonstrates a lack of obedience to and belief in the authority of the Bible (1 Cor. 5:1-13; Matt. 18:17-18; Titus 3:10; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 5:20; Gal. 6:1).

A final basis for the necessity of church discipline is the testimony of the church in the world. The world observes the behavior and life of the church. When the church acts no differently than the world it loses its credibility and authenticity (1 Pet. 2:11-18; 3:8-16; 4:1-4).

### **B. The Purposes of Church Discipline**

- (1) Concern for the glory of God and the testimony of the flock.
- (2) The restoration and building up of the sinning believer.
- (3) The winning of a soul to Christ (if only a professing Christian).
- (4) The purity of the local body and its protection from moral and doctrinally impure influences, knowing a little leaven can leaven the entire lump (1 Cor. 5:6-7).

Such goals automatically govern the spirit in which all disciplinary action is to be given. Thus:

- (1) It must be done in the spirit of humility, gentleness and patience, looking to yourself lest you too be tempted (Gal. 6:1-2; 2 Tim. 2:24-25).
- (2) Those who walk disorderly are to be admonished, warned, and appealed to in love (1 Thess 5:14-15; 1 Tim. 5:1-2; Eph. 4:15; 2 Tim. 4:2). This admonishing, etc., is not restricted to the leaders but may be done by any member (1 Thess. 5:14).

(3) If there is no response in repentance and obedience, then members are to withhold intimate fellowship until there is obedience (2 Thess. 3:6, 14). This is to indicate to the offender that his action has caused a rupture in the harmony of the body. Its goal is restoration and the person is still to be counted as a brother (2 Thess. 3:14-15).

(4) If the person persists after admonition and withdrawal of intimate fellowship, the final step is rejection or excommunication (Titus 3:10; Matt. 18:17b), accompanied by public rebuke before all (1 Tim. 5:20). Examples of church discipline are found in Scripture. The Corinthian believers were to be "gathered together" in order to take action against the offending brother (1 Cor. 2:6). We also find that it was the whole church in Rome and in Thessalonica who were to take action with regard to the unruly and schismatic and not just a few (2 Thess. 3:6-15; Rom. 16:17).

(5) Finally, discipline in the name of our Lord always includes a readiness to forgive. The many or majority who discipline must also be ready and eager to forgive, comfort, and reaffirm their love to the sinning person (2 Cor. 2:6-8).

### C. The Practice of Church Discipline

#### 1. When it is to be Practiced

Great care must be exercised here. Scripture does not warrant the exercise of church discipline for an individual or a church's pet taboos or peeves. According to Scripture, there are five categories which warrant church discipline. These are:

- a. Difficulties between members (Matt. 18:15-17).
- b. Divisiveness. People causing divisions in the church (Rom. 16:17-18; Titus 3:9-11).
- c. Disorderly conduct. Conduct clearly out of line with the prescribed commands of Scripture (2 Thess. 3:6-15).
- d. Sins of the type mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5: incest, immorality, covetousness, idolatry, abusive speech, drunkenness, and swindling (1 Cor. 5:1, 11).
- e. False teaching. Erroneous teaching and views which concern the fundamentals of the faith, not lesser differences of interpretation (1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18; also implied in Rev. 2:14—16; Phil. 3:2-3, 15-19; Rom. 16:17-18).

The key concerns here are: (a) the holy character of God, (b) the testimony of the flock, (c) the effect upon the unity and purity of the flock, and (d) the edification and restoration of the individual.

#### 2. How it is to be Practiced

Scriptural procedure here is clear and specific steps are prescribed. They are as follows:

- a. Recognize the offense. Caution—one must be sure it is an offense which calls for discipline. Again, the Word is our criterion.
- b. Seek private correction and/or reconciliation with the offender (Matt. 18:15). This is when the problem involves two believers. The one offended or the one who recognizes the offense is to go privately and try to rectify the problem. If this fails, he is to take witnesses, preferably spiritual leaders,

so that if it has to be brought before the whole church or a part of the whole church it can be firmly proven or established (Matt. 18:16-17).

c. Seek reconciliation through the spiritual leadership if the problem involves an offense that is against the whole body, or is a threat to its unity. Initiatory action following the concept of Galatians 6:1 should be taken by the mature spiritual leaders of the church rather than by just one person. "You who are spiritual" in Galatians 6:1 is plural meaning literally, "you, the spiritual ones ..." These initial contacts provide opportunity for loving admonition, correction and forgiveness. On the other hand, if these first steps are not heeded, it constitutes a warning that further action will be taken and gives occasion for serious rebuke (2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:12-14; Titus 2:15; 3:10).

d. Seek reconciliation through the active members who are in good standing. If further action is necessary, it is to be taken before the active members who are in good standing (Matt. 18:17). This action would consist of a minimum of loss of privileges and service responsibilities, and prohibition against participating in the Lord's Supper, but may result in more severe action, such as an elder mandated absence from gathering with the flock.

e. In the case of false teaching, or the presence of an immediate, physical threat, the Board of Elders has the right to ask the false teacher, or any person or member to remove himself immediately from the body of Christ and from all church property.

In essence then, this is the action of the Lord carrying out discipline through the leadership of the elders or the spiritually mature (1 Cor. 5:4 "in the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled,... with the power of our Lord Jesus ..."). Similar heavenly authority is seen in the ratification of this disciplinary action as spelled out in Matthew 18:18-19).

## **ARTICLE XII: FINANCES**

Believers are to give financially from an attitude of commitment to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:1-6). It is the policy of Spring Creek Christian Church to keep the congregation informed of financial needs by means of the weekly bulletin, announcements from the pulpit, individual meetings with members in good standing, or other means as necessary. The purpose of this information is not to coerce or pressure anyone into giving, but rather to provide avenues for giving as the Lord provides.

This body does not believe that the New Testament believer is required to tithe as was the Old Testament Jew, but that the tithe is a good goal for giving for New Testament believers. Each believer is to give as God provides from an attitude of cheerfulness and commitment to the Lord (2 Cor. 8:12-15; 9:7), recognizing that we are only stewards of what God already owns.

Because giving is done unto the Lord, it is critical that the local church handle the finances given with care and wisdom both for the glory of the Lord and for the testimony of the church (2 Cor. 8:20-21). With this view in mind, the following outlines the policies of handling financial decisions:

(1) All paid staff shall be paid a salary commensurate to their duties and abilities (1 Tim. 5:17-18; Gal. 6:6-7; 1 Cor. 9:6-11).

(2) All gifts given as a designated gift will be used as determined by the Board of Elders. If any special gifts are given with the directions to use it in whatever area has the greatest need, the Board of Elders will decide how that gift will be used. All other gifts will go into the general fund.

(3) The local church has the privilege and responsibility to provide financial support for those in service for the Lord (missionaries, seminary students, etc. [Phil. 4:14-17; 2 Cor. 8:1-5]). Spring Creek Christian Church will support certain of those in service as the Lord leads and provides. All of these supported must hold a doctrinal view in agreement with the doctrinal statement presented in this Constitution. The Board of Elders will recommend to the congregation which people and ministries Spring Creek Christian Church will support.

(4) Depending on the amount of money involved, the senior paid elder may make a financial decision by himself, or the Board of Elders may make the decision.

(5) On an annual basis, during the first quarter of the year, the Board of Elders, along with the treasurer, will examine the salaries of all paid salary members, the amount of support given to the persons and ministries supported in number 3 above, the expenditure limits for the paid elder(s), any honorariums the Board of Elders wants to distribute. The elders will vote for approval as outlined in Article X, Section F.

(6) On an annual basis, during the fourth quarter of the year, the Board of Elders will propose and approve the annual budget for the FY which begins 1 January of the following year. The budget will be approved by a unanimous vote by the Board of Elders.

(7) In order to keep orderly records, a treasurer shall be appointed by the Board of Elders. The treasurer shall keep all necessary books, write necessary checks to pay bills, prepare monthly financial statements and any other duties as prescribed by the Board of Elders.

### **ARTICLE XIII: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Suggestions and proposals from the flock can be a vital and healthy avenue by which the leadership may minister to the rest of the flock. When handled scripturally, this type of communication edifies the body, ministers to the needs of the flock, helps preserve and promote unity within the church and brings glory to God.

Following the principles outlined above, any member of the flock who harbors a disagreement about any policy or procedure promoted by the church or its leadership, should as a first step, prayerfully and privately approach the leadership. This may be done through informal consultation with an elder, by means of a signed letter to the Board, or meeting with the Board at the church member's request. It is recognized that these steps should be taken prior to public discussion of any issue so as to help the leadership minister to the body more effectively and to help avoid discord and disunity within the flock (Prov. 13:3; 16:27-28; 17:4).

The church leadership should seek to prayerfully accept and address any complaint thus presented and seek to resolve all problems in a manner which best promotes those benefits mentioned above (Prov. 16:21-24).

When these policies are not followed, causing factions and strife, it will be necessary to exercise church discipline to deal with the offending member as per Article XI (Titus 2:10-11).

#### **ARTICLE XIV: AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended or replaced when the need for change is recognized by the elders and the active members of the church body who are in good standing. At the time such need is believed to be present, the elders shall make provisional modification in light of Scripture and all essential information on this matter shall be communicated to the congregation in written form, providing adequate time for study and response. A period of one week will be given to the flock for prayer and then consultation with the Board of Elders regarding any concerns or questions. The Board of Elders will then vote to see if there is a unity of acceptance and understanding of the amendments according to Article X, Section F. The vote must be unanimous. If so, the amendments to the Constitution will become effective.

#### **ARTICLE XI:**

##### **DISSOLUTION OF PROPERTY**

In the event this church body is dissolved, disbands or ceases to function as a church for any reason, the title to all property both real and personal shall pass to and be vested in another Corporation(s) with similar purposes to Spring Creek Christian Church's Doctrinal Statement as determined by the Board of Elders. In such an event, the Corporation(s) is hereby authorized and directed by the Board of Elders of Spring Creek Christian Church, (3573 N. Country Road 450 E., Logansport, IN), to take possession of all property, both real and personal, belonging to Spring Creek Christian Church and shall pay out of such properties and assets all indebtedness of said church as quickly as reasonably possible. After the payment of all debts of the church, the remaining assets may be managed or disposed of to the best interest of the Corporation(s) according to the sole discretion of the Board of that Corporation.

The decision to dissolve or disband must be approved by a unanimous vote of the Board of Elders by means of the procedure outlined in Article X, Section F.