

# Bylaws of LifeWay Community Church

This document is an instrument to help the ministry of LifeWay Community Church not hinder it. As a people who follow Christ and live for the purposes of God, LifeWay Community Church is a ministry led by the Spirit of the living God and these Bylaws shall reflect this reality both in letter and practice. The Bylaws exist for the people and not the people for the Bylaws. This is the heart of this document. Mercy rules over mandate, compassion over canon. The policies hereof shall therefore by no means damage people, obstruct ministry, or supersede God's word. Instead they shall provide a framework of divine order and behavior that promotes freedom and healthy growth for all the people associated with this work. LifeWay Community Church lives for Christ not a code of regulations, because Christ alone is the fulfillment of the law through His substitutionary death on the cross for the sins of humankind (Hebrews 9:12; Romans 10:3-13). It is Christ and not the Bylaws that makes us right with God. It is God's Spirit and not mortal systems that revives our hearts as we yield to Him. With a mindset of awe and submission to the finished work of grace by the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary, we endeavor to faithfully and graciously observe the Articles in these Bylaws, which have been prayerfully drafted in order to:

- \* Preserve and secure the principles of the Christian faith.
- \* Ensure freedom of action and autonomy from any religious body or organization.
- \* Provide for orderly and God honoring conduct of internal ministry affairs, in dealing with others, and the governing of LifeWay Community Church.

## ARTICLE I. Name

The name of this Church is LifeWay Community Church. This corporation will be further referred to in these Bylaws as the "Church" and may also be referred to in these Bylaws by and may do business as "LifeWay," or "LifeWay Church."

## ARTICLE II. Principal Office

### 2.1 Principal Office

The mailing address of the principle office of the Church is P.O. Box 233, East Derry NH 03041. The principal office for business transactions is 39 W Broadway, Derry, NH 03038 in Rockingham county. The Elders shall have the power and authority to change the principal office from one

location to another. The Church Secretary shall record any change in the location of the principal office.

## **2.2 Other Offices**

The Elders of LifeWay shall have the power and authority to establish other offices, campuses, sites and locations at any place or places where the Church is qualified under applicable law to conduct its ministry.

## **ARTICLE III. Nonprofit Status**

The Church is a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the state of New Hampshire. Federal tax exemption is granted under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3). LifeWay's assets are irrevocably dedicated to public benefit purposes. No part of the net earnings, properties, or assets of the corporation, on dissolution or otherwise, shall inure to the benefit of any private person or individual, or to any director or officer of the corporation. On liquidation or dissolution, all properties and assets remaining after payment, or provision for payment, of all debts and liabilities of the corporation shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation, or corporation that is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes and that has established its exempt status under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3).

## **ARTICLE IV. Mission Statement**

LifeWay Church exists to love God wholeheartedly and love people unconditionally. This is at the center of the Church's calling and reason for being (Mat. 22:36-40). LifeWay accomplishes this Mission by making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20) through authentic worship, meaningful community, Christ-centered growth, passionate service, and bold outreach.

## **ARTICLE V. Purposes**

The Church is organized and shall be operated exclusively for religious, charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Church's purposes also include the limited participation of the Church in any other activities, including taxable activities, but only to the extent the activities would be permitted by a tax-exempt organization. More specifically, LifeWay Church seeks to glorify God by obeying the Great Commandment (Mat. 22:36-40) and

living out the Great Commission of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20) through the consistent practice of any and all things related and in connection with the five purposes outlined below.

### **5.1 Worship**

We *celebrate God's presence* by engaging in corporate worship services and developing a daily personal relationship with Jesus.

### **5.2 Community**

We *build God's family* by connecting believers to an experience of mutual love, support, and encouragement as Members of one body.

### **5.3 Growth**

We *restore God's people* by modeling, teaching, and imparting God's truth for the transformation of spirit, soul, and body.

### **5.4 Service**

We *demonstrate God's love* by using our God given gifts and resources to build up the body of Christ.

### **5.5. Outreach**

We *communicate God's story* by sharing the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ with our community, region, and the world.

## **ARTICLE VI. Powers And Restrictions of the Church**

The implementation of the above purposes shall allow the Church to:

- \* **Promote** the Christian faith by any appropriate form of expression, within any available medium, and in any location, through the Church's combined or separate formation, of a church, ministry, charity, school, or eleemosynary institution, without limitation.
- \* **Ordain, employ and discharge** ordained ministers of the gospel, and others, to conduct and carry on divine services at the place of worship of the Church, and elsewhere.

- \* **Collect and disburse** any and all necessary funds for the maintenance of the Church and the accomplishment of its purpose within the State of New Hampshire and elsewhere.
- \* **Make distributions** to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as amended.
- \* **Advance**, promote, encourage, and foster any other similar religious, charitable and educational activities; to accept, hold, invest, reinvest and administer any gifts, legacies, bequests, devises, funds and property of any sort or nature, and to use, expend, or donate the income or principal thereof for, and to devote the same to, the foregoing purposes of the Church; and to do any and all lawful acts and things which may be necessary, useful, suitable, or proper for the furtherance of accomplishment of the purposes of this Church; provided, however, no act may be performed which would violate Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as it now exists or as it may hereafter be amended.

These powers shall be limited and restricted in the following manner:

- \* **The Church shall not pay dividends** and no part of the net earnings of the Church shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its organizers, officers or other private persons, except that the Church shall be authorized and empowered to make payments and distributions (including reasonable compensation for services rendered to or for the Church) in furtherance of its purposes as set forth in the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws.
- \* **The Church shall not carry on political propaganda** as part of its substantial work or otherwise attempt to influence legislation by publishing or distributing partisan statements, participate in, or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.
- \* **The Church shall not accept conditional gifts or grants** where such awards would restrict or violate any of the Church's ministry, charitable, or educational purposes or require serving a private as opposed to a public interest.

## **ARTICLE VII. Affiliations**

LifeWay Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control. Recognizing however the benefits of cooperation with other churches

in the fulfillment of its purposes, LifeWay sustains willful affiliation with the New Hampshire Baptist Association, Baptist Convention of New England, and Southern Baptist Convention, and may voluntarily affiliate with other churches and conventions as determined by the Elders from time to time in order to accomplish the Church's mission and purpose.

## **ARTICLE VIII. Meetings**

### **8.1 Public Worship**

Meetings for public worship shall be held at such times and places as may be provided for under the direction of the Elders. Ministry meetings for worship and personal growth may also be held at such times and places as may be provided for under the direction of the Elders.

### **8.2 Church Meetings**

The Elders shall have the authority to call other Church meetings as needed for the progress of the Church's mission and ministry purposes.

## **ARTICLE IX. Articles of Faith**

### **9.1 Statement of Biblical Authority**

At the center of Christian faith and practice stands the belief that God has spoken to the world in the person and work of Jesus Christ, which is accurately and authoritatively revealed in the Christian Bible ("the Bible," "Scripture" or "Scriptures"). The Bible is a lamp unto our feet (Psalm 119:105), a fire and hammer to our hearts (Jeremiah 23:29), a sword to our souls (Hebrews 4:12). It is the inspired, inerrant, and sufficient Word of God, and therefore the ultimate authority for life, faith and morals. Even though the various doctrinal statements of the Church are condensed summaries of biblical truth, it is the Bible itself to which we are in ultimate submission, for it reveals the will of God through the Holy Spirit.

### **9.2 Statement of Core Beliefs**

The following Statement represents the core orthodox beliefs of the Church from a Biblical and historical perspective. Any revisions to the Statement of Core Beliefs for the sake of Biblical accuracy shall be at the sole discretion of the Elders, with the understanding that such changes will be communicated to the Members of the Church.

***We believe...***

- \* The **Scriptures** are true, authoritative, and sufficient for all matters of faith, doctrine and Christian living (Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).
- \* There is only one **God** (Deut. 6:4; Is. 46:9-10; John 17:3, 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 1 Tim. 2:5).
- \* God is one in essence Who eternally exists in **three distinct persons**, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 45:6-7; Psalm 110:1; Matthew 3: 13-17; Matthew 28: 17-20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6).
- \* I am, along with all humanity (Christ excluded), by birth and action a **sinner** (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 5:8, 12-21, 7:18; Ephesians 2:1-3).
- \* The deserved penalty for sin is **death**, both physical and spiritual (Genesis 2:15-17; Genesis 3:19, Romans 5:12; 6:23, James 1:14-15).
- \* Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, was born of a **virgin** and is both fully God and fully human (Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:52; John 1:1-4, 14; Col. 1:15-20; Heb.1:1-3).
- \* Jesus Christ died as my **substitute** to pay the penalty for my sin (John 1:29; 10:1-18, Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18).
- \* Jesus Christ physically **rose** from the dead (Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-53; John 1:20-21:25; 1 Corinthians 15:12-34).
- \* Jesus Christ physically **ascended** into heaven and will one day physically **return** (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thes. 4:16; Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 1:7).
- \* There will be a future physical **resurrection** of the dead. Those who trust in Jesus Christ alone will be raised to eternal **reward**. Those who have not will be raised to eternal **punishment** (Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24-15).
- \* Only by trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone can I be **reconciled** to God and experience true life and joy. This miracle of salvation from God's judgment is an act of divine grace orchestrated by the Holy Spirit when we **turn** from our sins in humble repentance and **surrender** our lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (John 3:18, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Tim. 2: 5-6).

### 9.3 Statement About Marriage and Sexuality

God's word declares that marriage involves the union of one man and one woman in permanent sacred fidelity. Though various cultures and customs have evolving definitions of

marriage, it is God alone who has ultimate authority to prescribe and describe the marital relationship (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:1-9, Mark 10:1-12).

Furthermore, sexual intimacy is only properly exercised and pursued within the confines of this marital relationship. Sexual immorality, defined as any sexual activity outside of the boundaries of the sacred marital relationship between one man and one woman, is clearly and expressly prohibited by the Lord (Matthew 15:19, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Hebrews 13:4). Therefore, LifeWay Church regards any and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or even lustful intent toward such, as sinful and ultimately unsatisfying. Moreover, the Church also regards as sinful any attempt or desire to surgically alter one's biological sex to a different sex. Since the body is a creation of God, the Church holds sexual identity to be biologically determined, and associated gender norms are to be observed as appropriate to biblical standards. Disagreement with one's biological sex only leads to spiritual confusion and emotional chaos (Genesis 1:27, Romans 1:26-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

In order to preserve the function and integrity of the Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical example to the Church Members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the Church in any capacity or united to the Church in membership should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

Though sinful sexual expression is egregious (as is all sin), the gospel provides redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Ephesians 2:1-10, Titus 3:3-7). Furthermore, there is a difference between temptation and unrepented sin. Jesus was tempted in all ways as we are, yet He never sinned. Members, employees, volunteers and attendees of LifeWay wrestling with different kinds of sexual temptation will find a Church ready to point them to Jesus and join with them to fight for their obedience to Christ. Jesus called the weary and heavy-laden to Himself. As a church desiring to follow Christ fully, the Church will be a safe place for men and women fighting sexual temptations of all kinds. For those fighting temptation and displaying a repentant attitude towards their sin, the Church will provide love, care and direction (Matthew 11:28-30, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 2:17-18, Hebrews 4:14-16).

It is imperative to note that the Church's Statement on Marriage and Sexuality does not provide grounds for bigotry, bullying or hate, as we fully believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity, regardless of his or her lifestyle. Hateful and

harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated as sinful and are not in accordance with the Scriptures nor the doctrines of the Church.

It also must be noted the Elders of the Church have the right and authority to prohibit any use of Church assets, property, or facilities by any person, organization, corporation, or group that would use such resources to convey, intentionally or by implication, what might be perceived to be inconsistent with this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality.

Finally, the Church's Statement on Marriage and Sexuality is anchored in the truth of God's word and His perfect will for human life and shall not be revoked or subject to change through popular vote, referendum, prevailing opinion of Members or the general public, influence of or interpretation by any government authority, agency, or official action, or legal developments on the local, state, or federal level.

## **ARTICLE X. Membership**

### **10.1 Definition**

Church membership at LifeWay is how believers get involved and demonstrate their commitment to others in the church. Christ is the head of the church, which is His body (Colossians 1:18). Just as a human body relies upon joint dependence of individual members for proper functioning, so the body of Christ requires mutual cooperation and sacrifice by its individual members. Membership implies that believers in a local church are connected to each other for the purpose of *giving to* and *receiving from* the body so it can accomplish its divine purpose on earth.

Even though the Bible does not use the term *membership* to describe the association of Christians to a specific church, it is clear throughout the New Testament that *involvement in*, and *commitment to* a local church was the norm for believers and essential for healthy spiritual growth. The pattern seen in the Bible shows that Christians met regularly for worship in visible, local congregations (Acts 2:46; 1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 4:16; 1 Tim. 3:15). God even commands believers not to forsake assembling together as a body (Heb. 10:25). His desire is to see the church functioning like a family unit, where its members pursue individual and corporate health by persevering in the truth, mutual accountability, serving one another, and building each other up through prayer and tangible acts of Christian love.

### **10.2 Requirements for Membership Recognition**

#### **10.2.1 A genuine commitment to follow Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.**

**10.2.2 Baptism by immersion as a public testimony of salvation.****10.2.3 Completion of LifeWay's membership class.****10.2.4 A signed commitment to abide by LifeWay's Membership Covenant (summarized in §10.5).****10.3 Application**

Believers desiring to make LifeWay their home Church initiate the process by registering for an upcoming membership class via the church website or available forms.

**10.4 Welcoming Members From Other Churches**

LifeWay opens its doors to believers coming from other Churches who seek to become Members of LifeWay, but will be careful to honor their former leadership. If there is an indication of unresolved conflict or improper departure from a previous Church, the Elders will encourage Biblical resolution of any lingering issues first. They will also offer assistance as needed to ensure a transition that glorifies Christ. We believe God calls us to cultivate unity among churches and preserve the bond of love among fellow believers within the larger body of Christ.

**10.5 Responsibilities of Membership**

Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). Therefore, every responsibility of membership is nothing more than an opportunity to be blessed. Whether it's helping in a ministry of the Church or telling someone about Jesus on a mission trip overseas, the Biblical duties of membership to a local church shall always be viewed as benefits not burdens.

At LifeWay, we expect of our members nothing beyond what the Bible clearly expects of all followers of Christ. These expectations are detailed in our Membership Covenant, which upon signing it, believers demonstrate they have read the Membership Covenant, finished the membership process, and are willingly committing to:

**10.5.1 Pursue an intimate relationship with God**

- \* By seeking God regularly through prayer, Bible reading, and worship [Luke 18:1; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; Acts 17:11; Ps. 27:4-8; John 4:23-24].
- \* By learning to hear God's voice through the ministry of the Holy Spirit [Psalm 32:8-9; Jer. 33:3; John 10:27; John 16:13; 1 Cor. 2; Rev. 3:22].
- \* By obeying the ordinance of baptism and communion given by Jesus

[Acts 2:41; Matt 18:19; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor.11:24].

- \* By engaging in corporate times of worship, prayer, and fasting [Joel 1:14; Acts 1:14, 2:42, 4:24-31; 12:5; 2 Cor. 1:11].

### **10.5.2 Protect the unity of the church family**

- \* By acting in Christ-like love towards others in the church [John 13:34-35; 1 Peter 1:22, 3:8; Rom. 12:10; Rom. 15:19, Gal. 5:26].
- \* By praying for and humbly obeying church leaders [1 Tim. 2:1-3; Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Peter 5:5; Rom. 13:1-2].
- \* By refusing to gossip, slander, or entertain malicious talk about others [Exodus 23:1; Psalm 34:13; Eph. 4:29-31; James 4:11].
- \* By addressing and resolving conflict Biblically in humility and love [Rom. 16:17; Matt. 7:15-20, 18:15-35; 1 Thess. 5:14-15; Eph. 4:25-27; Gal. 6:1].

### **10.5.3 Develop Christ-like character in all areas of life**

- \* By submitting to the authority of Scripture on all matters of life [Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21].
- \* By endeavoring to walk a Spirit led life both privately and publicly [1 Pet. 1:13-16; Gal. 5:16-26; Eph. 5:1-21; 1 Thess. 5:19-22; Phil. 1:27].
- \* By faithfully attending church service and member meetings [Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:25; Col. 3:16; Heb. 3:13; Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:4].
- \* By participating in opportunities for spiritual growth and development [2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Acts 19:8-10; Hebrews 12:1].

### **10.5.4 Contribute to the ministry of the church**

- \* By developing a selfless, faithful, and generous heart [Phi. 2:3-4, 7; 1 Cor. 10:24; Matt. 20:26; Matt. 23:11].
- \* By using my gifts and talents for the strengthening of the church [Ex. 31:3-4; Eph. 4:16; 1 Peter 4:10; Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:7].
- \* By being equipped to offer my best service to God and His people [Ephesians 4:11-12; Col. 3:23-24; Ecclesiastes 9:10].

- \* By giving regularly and sacrificially of my resources  
[1 Cor. 16:2; Lev. 27:30; Malachi 3:8-12; 2 Cor. 8:3,11].

### **10.5.5 Expand the testimony of Jesus**

- \* By sharing Jesus regularly with others  
[Prov. 11:30; 1 Cor. 9:19; James 5:20; 2 Cor. 4:5].
- \* By inviting non believers to attend weekly gatherings and Bible studies  
[Luke 14:23; 2 Sam. 9:3-6; Acts 2:41; Acts 9:31].
- \* By being unconditionally loving and friendly to newcomers  
[Rom. 14:1; Rom. 15:7; Hebrews 13:2; Luke 14:13].
- \* By getting involved in church outreach efforts  
[Acts 2:37-38; Acts 3:19; Acts 8:4; Acts 8:12; Luke 3:10].

## **10.6 Member Meetings**

### **10.6.1 Weekend Meetings**

Members meet once a week for corporate worship in a place, time, and date determined by the Elders. These weekly meetings constitute the axis for the relational and ministerial development of church members, in accordance to the consistent practice of the early church, where believers persevered together in prayer, instruction, communion, and ministry to each other (Acts 2:42-47), which resulted in the Lord adding to the Church those who were being saved.

### **10.6.2 Monthly Gatherings**

Since Biblical Membership is not a name on a church roster but a commitment motivated by love to interact and grow with other Members of the Church in their service to the Lord, Monthly Gatherings provide the right atmosphere for the Holy Spirit to build up Christ centered unity and align the heart of the Church to the will of God and His specific assignments for LifeWay. Like burning coals pulled together to make a bigger fire, Monthly Meetings bring together the embers of faith from individual Members and ignite a stronger flame of service and devotion to God.

Monthly Gatherings shall be set at times and locations as determined by the Elders. They shall include the following ministry practices:

- \* Prayer [2 Chr. 7:17; Eph. 6:18; James 1:5; Col. 4:2; Rom. 12:12].

- \* Worship [Acts 13:1-3; Col 3:16; Matt. 26:30; Eph. 5:19-20].
- \* Encouragement and motivation [1 Thess. 5:11; Jude 1:20; Rom. 15:2].
- \* Accountability and ministry [James 5:16; Heb. 3:13; Matt. 18:15-17; Eph. 4:25].
- \* Ministry Updates and Praises [Acts 14:27, 15:3-4; 21:19; Rom. 1:12].
- \* Leadership Training [Ex. 18:17-23; Luke 8:9-10, 19:17-18; Mark 7:17-18].

### **10.6.3 Extraordinary Meetings**

Extraordinary meetings address Sensitive Circumstances that require special prayer and attention from church Elders and Members. They ensure that LifeWay remains accountable and above reproach in areas of morality, financial stewardship, power and governance. An Extraordinary Meeting will replace a regular Monthly Gathering when called for, and therefore will fall within the regular monthly schedule established by the Elders. A two week notice will be given to Members prior to an Extraordinary Meeting, indicating the place, time, date, and nature of the meeting as determined by the Elders. Notice for any such meeting may only be made by the Elders via e-mail, or facsimile with each form of communication requesting delivery confirmation. If an Extraordinary Meeting must be called for within a time frame shorter than a two week period, communication of such meeting will be made as soon as it is practically possible, but in no less than forty-eight (48) hours before the meeting.

Extraordinary Meetings are not places for political maneuvers or the advancement of personal agendas, but experiences of reverent and prayerful participation to gain corporate insight into God's direction concerning the unique ministry circumstance at hand. Members must cultivate a focused practice of prayer permeated with the meditation of God's word weeks or days prior to an Extraordinary Meeting. This preparation is crucial in order to grasp God's heart for the advancement of His work.

Extraordinary Meetings shall address the following Sensitive Circumstances:

- \* Annual Operating Budget.
- \* Major unexpected Ministry Opportunities to advance the Gospel.
- \* Selection and Ordination of Elders and Ministry Leaders.
- \* Purchase of land and related indebtedness.
- \* Resignation, removal, or restoration of Church Leaders or Members.

- \* The calling and appointment of the Senior Pastor.
- \* Amendment of Church Bylaws.
- \* Merger or dissolution of the church.
- \* Disposition of all or substantially all the assets of the church.
- \* Other actions deemed extraordinary by the Elders.

## **10.7 Benefits of Membership**

Members at LifeWay enjoy the benefit of serving and being served by others. This dual interaction guarantees healthy growth for every Church Member. Members help in the ministries of the church and also receive appropriate care by leaders and church family on a regular basis, including critical moments of life, in accordance to God's admonition to do good to everyone and especially to those in the family of faith (Galatians 6:10).

Membership benefits include yet are not limited to the following:

- \* Weekly Biblical instruction for all ages promoting wise and Godly living.
- \* Discipleship programs for spiritual growth for all seasons of life.
- \* Wholesome Christian friendships and support from the Church body.
- \* Personal prayer, ministry, and counseling during critical times.
- \* Proper help for members who are widows, poor, abandoned, or disabled.
- \* Water baptism preparation and celebration service.
- \* Pre-marital counseling.
- \* Wedding ceremony officiation.
- \* Baby dedication ceremony.
- \* Opportune support to extended family and friends in crisis.
- \* Pastoral ministry and outreach during funeral services.

Another important benefit of Membership is the ability for Members to participate and collaborate in the ministries of the Church locally and abroad under the guidance of Church leaderships. Scripture shows that Members were not passive observers of ministry but intricately

involved in the many aspects of its implementation, as in the nomination of Judas' replacement (Acts 1:15-26), the selection of 7 church servants (Acts 6:1-7), the restoration of a Church Member (2 Cor. 2:5-7), the support of needy believers in Jerusalem (Romans 15:25-28), the earnest pleading in prayer for Peter's release from prison (Acts 12:5), the input offered to Church leaders as they prepared a letter to the Gentile believers in Antioch (Acts 15:4-21), the selection of men who would accompany Paul and Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 15:22), and many other instances. This benefit of ministry involvement and participation is continually expressed at LifeWay in two specific ways:

### **10.7.1 Delegation of Ministry Responsibility**

Church Members who have been equipped and empowered to lead a ministry within the Church as indicated by Ephesians 4:11-12, are given the freedom to make the necessary spiritual, logistical, and financial decisions to execute their ministry successfully, provided that these decisions are not in conflict with the beliefs, mission, purpose, and vision of the Church as prescribed in these Bylaws, or negate in any way the responsibilities of Membership described in the Membership Covenant. This delegation of authority stimulates creativity, ownership, involvement, and reliability among Church Members, protects the Church from becoming stiff and ministerially clumsy, and ultimately develops unity, maturity, and love (Ephesians 4:13-16).

### **10.7.2 Input During Sensitive Circumstances**

Whenever an Extraordinary Meeting is called for according to §10.6.3, Members are asked to seek God with prayer, fasting, and the word prior to the meeting, in an effort to gain sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's leading in a critical ministry action. This is the practice of God's people who would seek Him earnestly for direction in the face of perilous and defining situations (2 Chr. 20:18; Esther 4:16; Joel 1:14; Acts 12:5, Acts 13:1-5; Acts 14:23).

Elders have the authority and responsibility to make a final decision on a Sensitive Circumstance, yet will prayerfully and diligently receive input from Church Membership for the discernment of God's will as indicated in §10.9.

## **10.8 Member Voting**

Scripture is strikingly silent on the issue of congregational voting. It was not a part of the cultures of the Old or New Testament and was never taught by Jesus or practiced by the Apostles in any of the churches. Voting was so foreign to Jesus' first disciples that they were more likely to cast lots than they were to take a vote when choosing between two potential candidates to replace Judas (Acts 1:23-26). The process many churches follow today for conducting meetings and making decisions as a group is based on the parliamentary procedure described in

"Robert's Rules of Order," a book inspired by the voting model used in the United States House of Representatives. Church voting comes from western tradition, not Scripture.

LifeWay is fearfully conscious of the consequences of discarding God's wisdom for human tradition and therefore endeavors to embrace God's Word with tender sensitivity in the area of decision making through congregational voting. When God's Church is ruled by men (democracy) rather than God (theocracy), God can be voted right out of His church by His own people. Such was the case when the Lutheran denomination debated and voted at their 2009 convention to ordain openly homosexual men and women to the office of elder. They claimed to follow the Bible in their Constitution, yet they voted against the Bible. The majority is often horribly wrong. Ancient Israel's history is proof of this time and time again (Gen. 18:20-33; Ex. 32; Num. 13-14,16; Judges 7:1-7; 1 Sam. 8:4-7; 1 Kings 18, 22; Daniel 3; Acts 7:9). Majority rule simply cannot bear the test of a careful study of Scripture. It is a system which stands in opposition to God's design regarding church leadership and function. God expects qualified and tested leaders to lead the flock with humility and holiness (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1) and the Church body to accept their leadership graciously (Heb. 13:17; 1 Tim. 2:1-3; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Peter 5:5; Rom. 13:1-2). LifeWay leaders and members are commanded by God to have one mind (Phil. 1:27-28), to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3), and to concentrate on the things that make for harmony and help strengthen the fellowship of the church (Rom. 4:19). Voting never accomplishes this because every time a vote is called for on a specific issue, Members are being forced to take sides. This splits the harmony God commands us to protect, promoting differences rather than unity within the fellowship. The more a church votes, the more people lose. The more people lose, the greater the sense of failure they have. This increases disappointment and decreases love. Paul warned the Corinthians by saying, "*Often your meetings do more harm than good.*" (1 Cor. 11:17). This is certainly the case when the Church is led by the desires of men and not God's.

The only case where Church Membership shall vote is during the permanent appointment of the Senior Pastor when there are no other Elders in the Church. This shall be done by a supermajority vote of seventy five percent (75% or more) of Members present at an Extraordinary Meeting (see §12.2.4).

### **10.9 Member Ratification Process**

Since congregational voting is not the conventional practice followed in Scripture, LifeWay shall alternatively call for Member Ratification for sensitive ministry situations as described in §10.6.3. In order to increase corporate awareness to the leading of God's Spirit and gain discernment on how to move forward, the Elders shall lead Members through the Member Ratification Process below:

- \* **Mention** extraordinary ministry situation to Members as outlined in §10.6.3
- \* **Open** a time of prayer, fasting, and open discussion, encouraging Members to prepare their hearts spiritually in fervent devotion to God prior to the meeting, submit questions, share insights, and express concerns if any. All inquiries will be addressed by the Elders on a case-by-case basis.
- \* **Voice** the leading of God's Spirit during an Extraordinary Meeting, inviting Members to provide their input as appropriate to the situation at hand. Members shall write down on a Ratification Card their response to the Elder's recommendation. Elders shall diligently consider the prayerful input of the Church and may call an extended time of prayer, fasting, and discussion if they believe there is uncertainty and doubt in the direction to follow.
- \* **Execute** respective course of action faithfully as ultimately determined by the Elders (§12.1.9), with a unified heart and mind. Final decision on a specific Sensitive Circumstance will be communicated by Elders to Church Members no later than twenty-one (21) days following an Extraordinary Meeting.

## 10.10 Renewal and Termination of Membership

All Members are asked to annually review the Membership Covenant and renew their commitment to live by it during LifeWay's corporate time of prayer and fasting taking place on the first three weeks of each year. This renewal of commitment to Membership may be expressed in multiple ways according to the guidelines indicated by the Elders at the time, and shall be an annual opportunity for the Church to revitalize its dedication and commitment to one another in the love of Christ.

Termination of Membership can take place for the following reasons:

### 10.10.1 Death

### 10.10.2 Failure to renew commitment to Membership

### 10.10.3 Voluntary request by member in good standing

### 10.10.4 Dismissal by the Elders as a result of a disciplinary process

- \* Procedure for member dismissal shall be according to Matt. 18:15-17.
- \* A disciplinary process begins when there is clear evidence of unrepentant sin or a divisive conduct by a Member of the church.

- \* Membership removal occurs when after a disciplinary process, a Member's life and conduct continues to negate the living testimony of Christ as outlined in the Membership Covenant.
- \* Church Members must adopt a posture of prayer and loving concern towards members removed by a disciplinary process, in hope that their hearts are healed and restored.
- \* Members shall abstain from resigning their membership when undergoing a formal disciplinary process in order to protect the unity of the Church according to Ephesians 4:3-4 and John 13:34.

### **10.11 Restoration of a Member**

Members dismissed by the Elders who have demonstrated repentance and a willingness to be restored shall be embraced by the Church family according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8 and Galatians 6:1. They shall be treated with gentleness, in all humility and love, and reinstated to Membership once again if their life-style is determined by the Elders and the witness of the Church, to be in accordance with the Membership Covenant as summarized in the Responsibilities of Membership in §10.5.

### **10.12 Dispute Resolution**

In keeping with 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, all members shall refrain from filing lawsuits against the Church, its leaders, or any of its members. A dispute is a disagreement between Members and Church leaders that generates conflict and can lead to sinful behavior. All formal disputes related to ministry activities or church administration that may arise between any church member and an Elder, staff, volunteer, agent, or the Church itself, shall be handled with absolute regard to the reprove of Scripture, which commands believers to have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind (1 Peter 3:8), doing nothing out of selfish ambition or empty pride (Philippians 2:3). All parties involved shall cooperate in good faith to resolve the dispute and adhere at all times to the Biblical command of settling issues of potential sin among Members as summarized in Article XVI. If the disagreement persists, the dispute shall be dealt with by an appeal to the Alternate Resolution Procedures listed below.

#### **10.12.1 LifeWay's Pastoral Council**

The first appeal is made to LifeWay's Pastoral Council by contacting the chairmen of the council and notifying him of an irresolvable dispute (see §12.1.16). The Pastoral Council will hear the

complaint and work with the parties involved towards resolving the dispute by means of prayer, wise counsel, discernment, and Biblical truth.

### **10.12.2 Mediation**

If the parties can't resolve a dispute through LifeWay's Pastoral Council, they shall settle the matter through mediation in accordance to the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, or a similar faith-based peace making group.

### **10.12.3 Arbitration**

If mediation fails to resolve a dispute, all parties involved shall settle the matter by legally binding arbitration in accordance to the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, or a similar faith-based peace making group. Judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction.

The parties understand that these Alternate Resolution Procedures shall be the sole remedy for controversy, claim, or dispute arising between members relating to the congregations activities, and they expressly waive their rights to file a lawsuit in any civil court against one another for such controversies, claims or disputes, except to enforce an arbitration decision.

The parties each agree to bear their own costs related to any mediation or arbitration proceeding including payment of their own attorneys' fees. If a dispute may result in an award of monetary damages that could be paid under a Church insurance policy, then use of the conciliation, mediation, and arbitration procedure is conditioned on acceptance of the procedure by the liability insurer of the Church and the insurer's agreement to honor any mediation or arbitration award up to any applicable policy limits.

The mediation and arbitration process is not a substitute for any Biblical disciplinary process set forth in these Bylaws, and shall in no way affect the authority of the Church to investigate reports of misconduct, to conduct hearings, or to administer discipline of Members.

## **10.13 Departure of Church Members**

Members leaving the Church for righteous reasons shall follow the process below:

**10.13.1 Notify the leader(s) to whom they are immediately accountable to**

**10.13.2 Meet with leader(s) to share their heart and pray for God's direction**

**10.13.3 Complete Church Departure process as God's will is confirmed**

\* By planning a responsible transition that minimizes ministry disruption.

- \* By finding a Church where they can fulfill their Biblical calling as believers and providing contact information of new Church and pastor to Elders.
- \* By receiving prayer and a farewell blessing from Leaders and Members as deemed appropriate by the Elders.

## **ARTICLE XI. Leadership Structure and Sentiment**

LifeWay is an Elder governed (1 Peter 5:1-2), Senior Pastor led (Titus 1:5), Member empowered (Eph. 4:12), and ministry based Church (Rom. 12:4-6). These functional distinctions constitute the three Leadership Teams that conform LifeWay's Leadership Structure: Pastoral Team, Administrative Team, and Ministerial Team. These Leadership Teams cooperate together to enable Church Members find their place within the body and develop their unique calling, as providentially prepared by God in advance for the fulfillment of His good plan (Eph. 2:10).

### **11.1 Leadership Structure**

Each layer of our Leadership Structure includes key roles that complement the others in order to strengthen the Church and make it a vigorous redemptive force in the world. The terms for certain roles in our Leadership Structure, such as Directors, Officers, President, Vice-President, and the like, are used in accordance to the language prescribed in the New Hampshire Non-Profit Corporation Act from the Corporate Division of the Secretary of State. Despite the institutional nature of these terms, each one will be identified in these Bylaws with an alternate name that better describes the strategic ministerial function it represents within the Church.

#### **11.1.1 Pastoral Leadership Team [Elder Governed, Senior Pastor Led]**

The Pastoral Leadership Team includes the Church Directors which shall consist of the Senior Pastor and ordained Elders, all of which serve under the calling of God, the authority of His word, and the direction of the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28). The Pastoral Leadership Team shall endeavor to focus in the ministry of prayer and the Word in order to shepherd well the flock of God (Acts 6:3-4). They shall refrain from being consumed with ministry logistics, business details, public relations, minor financial matters, and other particulars of the day-to-day operation of the Church.

#### **11.1.2 Administrative Leadership Team [Member Empowered]**

The Administrative Leadership Team includes the Church Officers (namely the President, Vice-President, Stand-In Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Trustees, and Assistant Officers), Staff,

and Ministry Leaders, all of which serve under the spiritual direction of the Pastoral Leadership Team. They shall function as a support to the Elders body in the daily execution and implementation of ministry. Even though the term 'Deacon' is not commonly used to describe a ministry function at LifeWay, we consider it doctrinally accurate that all who serve in the Administrative Leadership Team, fulfill the Biblical role of a Deacon and must therefore meet the Biblical requirements of that office as stipulated in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

The Deacon's role is one of administration, nurturing, and caring for the needs of the flock. Although their primary function is not to teach, they are no less spiritually qualified, honored, or respected. They relieve those who have been called and gifted to preach and teach to be free to pray and study God's word. In a special sense, the Deacon's task sums up the essence of spiritual greatness. Our Lord said, *"Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve"* (Matthew 20:26-28).

### **11.1.3 Ministerial Leadership Team [Ministry Based]**

The Ministerial Leadership Team includes all *Servants* or *Helpers* who use their Spiritual gifts and talents within the Church under the leadership and guidance of the Administrative Leadership Team (1 Peter 4:10). As each servant does his or her own special work, the body grows and builds itself up in love (Ephesians 4:16).

## **11.2 Leadership Sentiment**

Church Members who serve in any of the above Leadership Teams must understand and embrace two vital truths about Biblical Leadership:

### **11.2.1 Christ is the Head of the Church**

The head of LifeWay is Jesus Christ (Col. 1:18). This takes the pressure off everybody's shoulder. We are led leaders who ultimately rely on our Chief Shepherd's wisdom, strength, and provision. We don't have to do this alone and the health of the Church depends on who we put at the top. As His body, we seek to promote and reflect His priorities in all we do and the way we do it. No decision is ever made that would knowingly contradict God's word, and through the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we endeavor to discern His will for the Church in every day ministry. Whenever we execute a plan, we prayerfully monitor our progress to ensure our steps are indeed following God's directive thoroughly and effectively.

### **11.2.2 Leaders are Servants**

A great leader according to Jesus is humble and servant-like in spirit (Mark 10:42-45). The world honors prominence and ability but God honors meekness and availability. Christ-like leaders do not see themselves as “being in authority” over those in their charge but as servants who faithfully release God’s gifts to build a functioning Christian community. They are not preoccupied with position but with the condition and well-being of those under their care. This servant-leadership mindset creates an atmosphere of mutual respect and cordial interaction among leaders and followers at every level in the Church, and leaves no room for selfish ambition, jealousy, and vain conceit to grow and reproduce. In humility and love, Church Directors, Officers, Staff, Ministry Leaders, Advisors, and Helpers shall esteem others as better than themselves (Phil. 2:3). Leadership is a fine but fragile gift, and any believer desiring to serve at LifeWay should value and protect it.

## **ARTICLE XII. Pastoral Leadership Team**

Includes the Church Directors, specifically ordained Elders and Senior Pastor.

### **12.1 Elders**

The Elders are a group of specially called and ordained men with a great desire to lead and feed the flock of God. They are initiated by the Holy Spirit, confirmed by prayer, and qualified through the consistent testimony of a pure life in the eyes of all. They shall oversee the vision and direction of the church on a continual basis through the Senior Pastor and his Administrative Leadership Team. The Senior Pastor is a member of the Elder Board of which he is the chair. As those who rule in the church, Elders are not subject to any higher earthly authority outside the local Church. Their authority over the assembly is not by force or autocratic power, but by precept and example (Hebrews 13:7). The Elders act as caring and loving shepherds over the flock, which is always spoken of as the “flock of God” (1 Peter 5:2). The Elders are merely stewards—caretakers for the possession of God.

#### **12.1.1 Qualifications**

The minimum qualifications for Elders shall not be less than those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, including the requirement that Elders be men. The consistent use of male pronouns and terminology in these passages strongly implies for the office of Elder/Overseer being restricted to men only. The question of women not serving as elders is not a matter of chauvinism where men are considered superior to women, but rather God’s choice of how He desires the church to function. Godly men are to serve as Elders under which women shall

flourish in the crucially important supporting ministry roles within the Administrative and Ministerial Leadership Teams of the Church.

The Elders may at any time create, alter, amend, repeal or restate resolutions establishing additional qualifications outside of those listed in the above Scriptures in order to translate Elder Biblical qualifications into healthy and functional ministry practice within the Church. More specifically, Elders shall fulfill the following qualifications:

#### **a) Biblical Character Qualifications**

The overarching moral qualification for an Elder gleaned from the Bible references above is that he must be above reproach. This means he must be a leader who cannot be accused of anything sinful. All other qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, except for teaching and management skill, simply reinforce this idea. The Elder must therefore be above reproach in his marital life, his family life, his social life, his business life, and his spiritual life. He must be a man who is utterly single-minded in his devotion to his wife and if he is not married, he is not to be lustful and flirtatious. He must have a balanced and moderate life, be wise, sensible, discrete, self-controlled, have dignity and respect for his peers, love strangers, open his home for the edification of others, and be a devout seeker of God's presence. He must not be cliquish, self-willed, quick tempered, addicted to wine, pick fights, or be physically abusive. On the contrary, he must be gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money, and filled with the Holy Spirit.

#### **b) Biblical Competence Qualifications**

An Elder must demonstrate skill in handling the Word of God so that he can both *exhort in sound doctrine* and *refute those who contradict* it. He must also be a good manager of his household, keeping his children under control with dignity, leading his wife with love and confidence. If he is in debt, if his children are rebellious and licentious, if his wife is unruly, contentious, and given to gossip, and if anything in his handling of business affairs is not above reproach, he cannot be an Elder. The word *household* in 1 Timothy 3:5 in all likelihood refers to an extended household, including servants, lands, possessions, many in-laws and other relatives. This reality would require a great deal of leadership skill, emotional strength, and spiritual maturity from an Elder leading his household in the first century. God therefore requires of every Elder to be a good manager of his household, for if a man can't manage his household well, how can he be in charge of managing God's Church?

These requirements cannot be fulfilled by a new convert, for it takes time to mature and exemplify the qualifications of the office of Elder. Additionally, promoting a new convert to a position of leadership can cause him to become conceited and fall easily into the devil's trap (1 Tim. 3:6).

### **c) Church Ministry Qualifications**

In addition to the minimum qualifications given in Scripture, Elders must be Members in good standing who fully subscribe to the Church's Articles of Faith (Article IX) and have been actively involved in the ministry of the Church for a time deemed by the current Elders to be sufficient to assimilate and stand behind the vision and ministry philosophy of the Church, and to be known within Church Members and leaders. They shall also be actively involved with their families in the corporate prayer life of the Church and participate faithfully and reliably in Church Member and Elder Meetings (see §10.6 and §12.1.4).

These qualifications shall be framed within a heart of pure ministerial devotion that stays away from political maneuvers:

- \* The Elder must be able to defend the decisions of the group and be able to refute disagreements with a godly character. While conducting the business of the church an Elder must have the character to honestly express disagreements as well as represent his opinions truthfully and lovingly in meetings. An Elder must be honest about disagreements and the way he feels, however, an adversarial spirit cannot be tolerated.
- \* An Elder must not operate secretly or in an unauthorized manner outside of Elders' meetings. Political behavior is damaging to the work of ministry. It can be political behavior to poll other Elders or congregation members in order to build a consensus of support for a position, especially if that position has not been represented honestly to the Elder body when the matter was presented and discussed in Elder meetings.
- \* An Elder must not take on a political identity as a representative of the needs for a particular group in the Church who wants to see change in a certain area. An Elder's responsibility is to hear God for the vision, direction, and care of the congregation. At times that involves seeking and listening to the needs and concerns of the Members of the congregation on matters before the Elder body. However, it does not mean that the Elder is primarily responsible to represent the needs and desires of the "people" instead the responsibility is to care for them and lead them on God's behalf.
- \* An Elder is not to take upon himself an attitude of mistrust or to see himself as God's "watchman on the wall" to be a watchdog over the church, the Senior Pastor, finances, or any specific area of ministry. The spirit of an Elder must be loving, faith filled, honest, and committed, leaving no room for mistrust. When an individual Elder can't trust God's work through the combined voice of the other Elders but feels that he must protect and watch with suspicion, it is a sign that his governmental mantle for the Church has lifted. God does not work in division and disunity.

### **12.1.2 Selection and Tenure**

The wisdom of Scripture shows that Church leaders—whether they be called elder, bishop, pastor, missionary, evangelist, or apostolic representative—have the ultimate responsibility of identifying and ordaining other Elders through much prayer and fasting (Titus 1:5, Acts 1:24, 14:13; 1 Timothy 4:14). The Church Elders shall therefore have the sole authority to appoint new Elders, including the Senior Pastor. A man shall be appointed as an Elder by Elder Board Action as defined in §12.1.9, after he has been tested and proven to meet the Qualifications stated in §12.1.1. The Elders may appoint a focused group of Church members to vet Elder candidates and report its findings to the Elder body. The Elders may also receive recommendations for Elder candidates from Church Members and LifeWay's Pastoral Council. The proposed appointment of any Elder shall be communicated to the Church at least twenty-one (21) days in advance and Church Members shall have an opportunity to submit questions, comments and concerns, which will be considered by the Elders on a case-by-case basis. Confirmation and appointment of a new Elder shall be at the sole and final discretion of the existing Elders and effectuated upon Elder Board Action.

However, if a Member in good standing raises any valid Biblical issues with the appointment of a particular Elder candidate, the Elder body shall refrain from appointing that person as an Elder until such Biblical issues are properly examined and addressed.

Once a man is appointed to the Elder body, he is expected to serve in this capacity for a minimum of three years, but no more than seven years per turn, except for the Senior Pastor, who will serve according to guidelines set forth in his contract of employment (see §12.2.1). Elders may be re-appointed after a one-year absence from the Elder body. If the Elder body determines that an Elder needs an extended Sabbath because of a legitimate need (e.g., illness or tragedy), then such Elder may transition to being an active Elder but without carrying voice during Elder Board Actions for a set period of time determined by the Elder body. To resign from the Elder body, an Elder shall follow the guidelines in §12.1.11.

### **12.1.3 Elder Ordination**

New Elders shall be set apart and appointed to the office of Elder through the laying of hands by the Elders, during a special Ordination Ceremony open to all Church Members, LifeWay's Pastoral Council, ministry friends, and loved ones desiring to support the ordained Elder. The laying on of hands shall be a visible means to show solidarity to the ordained Elder, affirm his role as an overseer, and bestow the gifts God may choose to providentially impart over him for the work of the ministry (1 Timothy 4:14).

Recognizing the warning of Scripture not to *"lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others..."* (1 Timothy 5:22), the Elders shall ensure no man is considered for Ordination before he has been:

**a) Tested**

Every Elder candidate shall undergo a period of testing determined by the Elders, where he can prove himself suitable for a ministry of leadership. This period of testing is usually unknown to the candidate, allowing his character to be unaffected by the knowledge of a potential ordination.

**b) Tempered**

The Elder candidate shall be observed functioning in a limited position of delegated oversight, where he can strengthen his confidence as a leader and fortify his calling to the office of Elder.

**c) Trusted**

If after the time of *testing* and *tempering* the Elder candidate has displayed irreproachable Godly character at home and at Church, the ability to lead, loyalty to God's message and adeptness to communicate it, he can be publicly acknowledged as one who is to be trusted in the service of leadership.

The Church shall have men going through this Authentication Process as it looks to discover, develop, and determine potential men for Elder ordination. The starting point in identifying these men is the calling and desire in the heart of the individual to serve in this capacity (1 Timothy 3:1). 1 Peter 5:2 says, *"Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God."* A man with a vague notion that he would like to use his gifts and abilities to help the Church should not be considered as a candidate for ordination. One who is ready to undergo the Authentication Process shall first have a divine burden that causes him to seek God earnestly and be eager to give his life totally to the shepherding of God's flock and the teaching of His Word without any thought of gain at all. He will desire the office because he is compelled by a holy sense of calling. He will pursue being set apart, and devote himself to intimacy with God through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. The Church shall consequently not force or talk any man into being considered as a potential Elder, for this should be his heart's passion. When a man is ready, the desire to serve as an Elder shall be in his heart because God put it there.

Through the entire process of identifying and ordaining an Elder, the Elder body must together seek God's will resolutely through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to confirm that He is part of the decision. This was the norm practiced by the Apostles when they appointed Elders, giving

themselves over to prayer and fasting, as they understood how critical it was to appoint the right men to govern God's Church (Acts 14:23). Acts 20:28 reveals how the Holy Spirit is the ultimate decision maker in the selection of Elders: "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers." God places in a man's heart a passion for the ministry, and then confirms it by the leading of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the leadership through prayer and fasting.

#### **12.1.4 Elder Meetings**

Elder meetings shall have a sound balance of spiritual and ministry emphasis. Church business shall never replace the need for prayer and prayer shall never be an excuse from doing the work of the ministry. The Senior Pastor shall preside over every Elder meeting unless he appoints a fellow Elder to do so.

Notice for a specific meeting shall be given to all current Elders of the Church and by personal delivery of written notice by first class mail, e-mail, or facsimile with confirmation of receipt requested to each of the Elders. The Elders shall be diligent in responding promptly to such notices and show willful cooperation to participate and engage in any Elder meeting.

##### **a) Quarterly Meetings**

The Elders shall agree to meet four times a year for the purpose of mutual edification and spiritual direction through prayer and fasting, worship, and the study of God's word, allowing God's Holy Spirit to align the Elder's hearts to the will of God for the Church. Notice for Quarterly meetings shall be given by the Secretary to the Elder body thirty (30) days before such meeting.

##### **b) Regular Meetings**

The Elder body may determine to meet regularly to provide adequate oversight of the ministry by resolution, stating the time and place of such meetings. The meetings shall be held in a location that the Elders deem from time to time within or without the State of New Hampshire, and may be held by conference call or video call or similar communication equipment, as long as the Elders participating in the meeting can hear one another. All such Elders participating in the meeting shall be deemed to be present in person at such meeting. No notice of Regular Meetings of the Elders is required other than a resolution of the Elder board stating the details of such meeting.

##### **c) Special Meetings**

From time to time, Special Meetings of the Elder body may be called by or at the request of the President (Senior Pastor) or any two Elders, to address special ministry situations that require

Elder attention. The person or persons authorized to call special meetings of the Elder board may fix any place within New Hampshire as the place for holding a Special Meeting. Notice for Special Meetings shall be made within forty-eight (48) hours prior to such meeting.

### **12.1.5 Quorum**

A proper Quorum of the Elder body is defined as the majority of the current Elders being present at an Elder meeting. The Elders present at a duly called or held meeting at which a Quorum is present may continue to transact ministry business even if enough Elders leave the meeting so that less than a Quorum remains. A Quorum is required for any Elder Board Action.

### **12.1.6 Action by Written Consent**

Any Action required or permitted to be taken by the Elders may be taken without a meeting, if all the Elders individually or collectively consent in writing or by e-mail to the action. Such action by written consent shall have the same force and effect as a unanimous Elder Board Action taken during an Elder Meeting. Such written consent or consents shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Elders.

### **12.1.7 General Powers**

Subject to the provisions and limitations of the New Hampshire Nonprofit Corporation Act, any limitations in the Articles of Agreement and these Bylaws, the overall policy, control, direction and management of the ministry, operations and finances of the Church shall be vested in the Elders. They are entrusted by God with the governance of the Church from a centralized vantage point, for the execution of His purposes on earth. As used in this §12.1.7 and throughout these Bylaws, the term "Elders," "Pastors," "Overseers," "Elder body" and "Elder board" are used interchangeably to mean a quorum of Elders acting in accordance with §12.1.5 herein.

### **12.1.8 Specific Powers**

Without prejudice to the general powers set forth above, the Elders shall have power to:

- \* Issue doctrinal positions to accurately reflect Biblical truth.
- \* Select, ordain, and appoint new Elders for the Church.
- \* Prescribe powers and duties to the Officers that are consistent with the law, the Articles of Agreement, and these Bylaws.
- \* Remove any Elder for valid cause (see §12.1.12).
- \* Appoint and remove all Officers for valid cause (see §13.1.2).

- \* Give notices regarding removal of Directors and Officers.
- \* Directly or by delegation to the Officers of the Church, hire and dismiss paid Church Staff serving in Administrative Leadership Team.
- \* Directly or by delegation to the Officers of the Church, transact business, execute contracts and legally bind the Church in its respective ministry and business affairs within the boundaries detailed in §13.1.4 letter b).
- \* Change the principal executive office or the principle business office of the Church in the State of New Hampshire from one location to another, and designate any place within or outside of New Hampshire for the holding of any meeting or meetings of the Directors.
- \* Adopt, make and use a corporate seal and alter the seal as necessary.
- \* Select, ordain, and appoint new Elders for new Church plants or Sister Churches locally and abroad, which will abide by these same Bylaws or an alteration thereof to comply with the respective laws consenting such new Church plants.
- \* Exercise all the powers conferred by the State and Federal laws of New Hampshire and the United States of America.

### **12.1.9 Elder Board Action**

The Elders shall not operate by majority rule or vote. Every decision requiring Elder Board Action shall be made by consensus (100% agreement), in subservience to the admonition of Scripture (Philippians 1:27, 2:2-11; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:3). If all the elders are guided by the same Spirit and all have the mind of Christ, there should be unanimity in the decisions they make. If there is division, all the Elders should eagerly commit to study, pray, and seek the will of God together until consensus is achieved. Unity and harmony in the Church begin with this principle.

In the absence of consensus for a decision requiring Elder Board Action, the Elders shall follow the procedure described below, always aware that the ultimate goal is finding and following the will of God and not the whims of men (Galatians 1:10):

- \* Abandon the decision for a personal and private time of prayer, fasting, and pondering of God's word as deemed appropriate to the situation at hand.

- \* Convene to allow each Elder share God's leading and discuss further by anchoring every prompting and point of view to the Word of God. If consensus is not reached, go back to seeking God, studying Scripture, and further sharing.
- \* Try the entire process all over again as many times as necessary until consensus is obtained.

If division persists among the Elders after repeated efforts of earnest prayer, fasting, Bible meditation, and discussion, the Elders shall focus on identifying and resolving the source of the division for the sake of the Church's health and unity. If it is clear that a personal agenda, character weakness, emotional wound, theological or philosophical difference is hindering the sound judgment of a particular Elder and therefore obstructing the advancement of the Gospel, the remaining Elders shall involve LifeWay's Pastoral Counsel to assist in resolving any tension or lingering division among the Elders. If this process confirms that the particular Elder is unfit to lead and hindering the mission and purposes of the Church, the remaining Elders shall ask their fellow Elder's resignation according to §12.1.11 or potentially pursue his removal according to §12.1.12.

To avoid obstructing the healthy flow and function of Church ministry, the Elders shall carefully determine which decisions require Elder board consensus and which not. The basis of healthy ministry rests in the principle of empowering Church Members to develop and execute the work of the ministry in accordance to Ephesians 4:12. Generally, Elder Board decisions shall therefore stay around spiritual supervision not ministry execution in order to release and not restrain ministry growth and Member development. The Elder board's influence is best maximized when it centers around managing wisely the powers prescribed to the office of Elder (see §12.1.8).

#### **12.1.10 Duties and Responsibilities**

Their oversight includes, but is not limited to, teaching, protecting, leading, disciplining, equipping and caring for the corporate Church body and its individual Members as well as the oversight of all ministry, operations and finances of the Church. The Elders are also responsible for being obedient to the Scriptures in the doctrine of the Church, establishing the overall vision of the Church and appointing new Elders. They may delegate to the Administrative Leadership Team any and all duties and responsibilities the Elders deem reasonable, subject to the rights, if any, of the person under contract of employment.

The Elders shall make the final determination in regards to any ecclesiastical questions and shall be the express and final arbiter of ecclesiastical polity, religious doctrine, and questions of Church property, and shall make the final decision with respect to any other matter that shall

arise concerning the Church, its internal workings, and its governance in every respect, consistent with these Bylaws. In deciding such matters, the Elders shall use the standards of:

- \* The best spiritual, financial, and operating interests of the Church in light of the Bible and the tenets of faith of the Church.
- \* The furtherance of the religious purposes of the Church as discerned by the Elders according to the teachings of the Bible.

The overall Biblical responsibility of the Elders towards the flock includes looking after the spiritual, emotional, and physical health of the Church by

- \* Keeping watch over the souls of the flock (Hebrews 13:17).
- \* Managing God's church well (1 Timothy 3:4-5).
- \* Preaching and teaching the Word of God (1 Timothy 3:2, 5:17).
- \* Exhorting in sound doctrine (Titus 1:9).
- \* Preaching the Gospel (2 Timothy 4:1-2).
- \* Directing the affairs of the Church (1 Timothy 5:17).
- \* Determining Church policy (Acts 15:22)
- \* Shepherding and protecting the flock from wolves (Acts 20:28-29).
- \* Exposing and rebuking false doctrine (Titus 1:9).
- \* Praying for healing over those that are sick (James 5:14).
- \* Ordain others into ministry (1 Timothy 4:14)
- \* Contending earnestly for the faith (Jude 3).
- \* Equipping Church Members for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12).
- \* Setting an example to the believers (1 Peter 5:3) for which they are held to account by God (Hebrews 13:17).

The above duties may be practically expressed from time to time through the vested authority to discharge all ecclesiastical and sacerdotal functions pertaining to LifeWay Church. Included in such functions are:

- \* Conducting Church Services

- \* Conducting Prayer Meetings
- \* Baptizing believers
- \* Officiating marriage ceremonies
- \* Conducting funerals
- \* Administrating the Lord's Supper
- \* Counseling and visitation
- \* Leading team ministry meetings

Their duties shall also include, but not be limited to, creating cohesion around Church strategy, consolidating Church-wide teaching, unifying ministry leadership, leveraging ministry service, and leading the Church to fulfill its purposes. They shall supervise, directly or by delegation to members of the Administrative Leadership Team, all duties and responsibilities they deem reasonable, subject to the rights, if any, of a person under contract of employment.

This great charge requires an unswerving dedication to God and a selfless commitment to God's people that is only possible through the grace of Jesus, the love of God, and the inner workings of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14).

#### **12.1.11 Elder Resignation**

An Elder seeking to resign from the office of Elder shall notify the remaining Elder body in writing, detailing the reasons for his resignation. The remaining Elder body shall prayerfully determine the most wise and edifying way to notify the Church Members during a Monthly Member meeting. If an Elder's intent to resign is known to him ahead of time (i.e. relocation or a new ministry call), he must inform the Elder body in writing at least thirty (30) days before his official resignation, unless the Elder is the Senior Pastor in which case a longer period of time is required as stated in (§12.2.3). A vacancy in the Elder body because of death, resignation, removal or any other cause shall be filled only in the manners prescribed in these Bylaws. Such vacancies may be filled as they occur.

The reason(s) behind an Elder's Resignation shall determine the approach to follow as explained below:

##### **a) Resignation During an Alleged Accusation of Sin**

If the Elder seeking resignation is the recipient or promulgator of an accusation of alleged sin from or towards others, his resignation will not be accepted by the current Elders until proper Biblical resolution is completed as indicated in Article XVI. If the Elder is unwilling to cooperate with this process, removal of such Elder will be pursued by the Elder body according to §12.1.12. If the Elder leaves the Church before properly resolving lingering conflict and rumors, the Elder body shall issue a notification letter to fellow pastors in the area highlighting the unreconciled standing of the departed Elder. This is not a mean spirited move to cast shame over an Elder who abandons his office unworthily, but a loving and desperate appeal to fellow pastors in the area to plead with the departed Elder to seek reconciliation for his own sake and the sake of the Church. It is a heavy burden coming upon any believer who is careless and negligent about protecting and promoting unity within the Church.

*"If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple."*

-1 Corinthians 3:17 [NLT]

These sober words shall be deeply pondered upon by any member of the Pastoral Leadership Team who may be tempted to resign or depart the Church with unresolved conflict.

### **b) Resignation Due to Identified Sin**

If the Elder's resignation is the result of identified sin, the Elder's resignation shall take effect immediately and a restoration process shall be set forth right away by the remaining Elder body. If the Elder in sin is unrepentant and shows reluctance to being restored by the Church, he shall be regarded as an unbeliever (Matthew 18:17) and prayed for with deep concern for his deliverance.

*"My dear brothers and sisters, if someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, 20 you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins."*

-James 5:19-20 [NLT]

### **c) Resignation for Non-Disciplinary Reasons**

Aside from disciplinary matters, there may be other circumstances that would require the resignation of an Elder or make his administrative removal necessary. In some cases, however, even these situations could escalate into disciplinary matters.

\* **Subsequent Discovery of Biblical Disqualification(s)**

If an Elder who formerly was (or was thought to be) Biblically qualified is found to be disqualified in any area, he must step down or be removed. For example:

- An elder who had obedient children (or no children) at the time of his ordination, now has children who are known publicly for dissipation (wild or immoral behavior) or rebellion (insubordination, disrespect, or disobedience to parents or others in authority).
- An Elder allows himself to become so involved in outside activities (i.e. sports, business, travel, etc.) that he is unable to faithfully and consistently participate in the meetings of the Church thereby setting a bad example for the flock (1 Peter 5:3).

**\* Inability or Continual Failure to Perform the Biblical Role of an Elder**

If it becomes clear that an elder is unable, unwilling, or persistently failing to perform any of the duties and responsibilities of an Elder (§12.1.10), even after warnings and counsel from the other Elders, he must step down or be removed. For example:

- An Elder becomes unable or unwilling to perform his necessary functions due to mental or physical illness or incapacitation.
- An Elder, because of unavoidable circumstances (i.e. necessary care of an ill or injured family member, unavoidable financial struggles, etc.), no longer has the time and/or energy to perform his necessary functions.
- An Elder becomes so burdened and distracted by life's challenges (i.e. marital pressures, work-related stress, etc.) that he can no longer perform his necessary functions.

**\* Unresolved Doctrinal Disharmony**

If it becomes clear that an Elder holds and insists on teaching doctrinal positions contrary to those in the Church's statement of faith (Article IX.), and if doctrinal harmony is unattainable through study and discussion with the other Elders, the dissenting Elder must step down or be removed.

**\* Unresolved Philosophical Disharmony**

No team of elders will be perfectly like-minded in all things. Far from this being a hindrance to effective team leadership, these minor differences often encourage helpful dialogue, inspire fresh thinking, or prompt necessary change. It is even profitable, at times, to discuss the possibility of radical change. Having said this, it is still true that if a team is to pull strongly, they

must be generally like-minded and moving in the same direction. If a single Elder insists on pulling in a substantially different and incompatible direction regarding the vision and ministry priorities of the Church, and if he remains unyielding despite all attempts to harmonize his vision with that of the ministry blueprint set forth in these Bylaws for LifeWay Church, he must step down or be removed. For example:

- An Elder who was actively in favor of seeking the Lord through prayer and fasting with the Elder body and Church Members argues that such practice is no longer compelling for the advancement of the ministry.
- An Elder who was formerly committed to reaching out to the lost in the community insists on having a church that is inward focused and keeps the doors closed for certain types of people.
- An Elder who was formerly in agreement of making disciples and equipping believers for the work of the ministry becomes convinced it is a waste of time and no longer a priority for the Church.

#### \* A Personal Desire to Step Down

If an Elder by self-examination becomes convinced that he is no longer qualified to serve in that capacity, or if he no longer desires the position, he must be allowed to step down (1 Timothy 3:1). In such cases, before the Elder steps down, diligent attempts should be made to encourage the man, who may simply be frustrated, discouraged, or excessively harsh in his self-examination (assuming the other Elders and members of the Church see him as qualified and effective).

#### \* A Need for Rest

If the Elder team recognizes that an Elder has become overburdened and needs rest from his duties for health reasons or the good of his family, etc., he may decide on his own, or be encouraged by the other Elders, to step down for a time of recovery and rejuvenation.

### **12.1.12 Removal of Elders**

Paul's words in 1 Timothy 5:19 state that we must "*not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.*" This should not be construed to mean that Elders are to be spared from proper disciplinary action when such action becomes necessary. Paul knew well enough that Elders, by virtue of their position of authority, could easily become the objects of false or frivolous accusations. His command in this passage is simply a warning to protect the Elders from such abuses. Elders are Church members and are also subject to Church discipline

according to the same Biblical disciplinary measures as any other Church member. Any Elder at LifeWay may hence be removed from the office of Elder for valid cause only.

Discipline of Elders must be consistent with the standards set forth in Article XVI of these Bylaws. The Elder body will determine the specific procedure for removal of an Elder. This procedure may be altered, amended, repealed or restated by a resolution of the Elders. The Elders shall have the sole authority to remove an Elder. A written notice of the proposed removal of an Elder shall be given to such Elder at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which an action to effectuate such removal is to be taken to ensure that the Elder is given a reasonable opportunity to defend himself. The Elder shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his accusers, but shall not be present during the discussion and action for his removal. Such removal shall take place only upon and after unanimous consensus by the Elders. The Elder under consideration for removal shall not have voting rights while such removal is considered.

Before the action for removal is final, the Elder subject to removal shall have the opportunity to appeal to LifeWay's Pastoral Council for their intervention in the issue leading to the removal. If after hearing the case and prayerfully evaluating all pertinent evidence and testimonies, the Pastoral Council cannot unanimously proceed with the action of removal because of contradicting testimonies, signs malicious action, or groundless accusations against the Elder in question, the Pastoral Council shall arrange for a mediation process in accordance to the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, or a similar faith-based peace making group to assist with the process. Otherwise, the unanimous decision of the Pastoral Council to remove the Elder in question shall be final and binding on both parties.

When it is clear that the Elder in question has sinned in a manner that disqualifies him as an Elder, as in the case of immoral behavior, gossip, divisiveness, dishonesty, arrogance, selfish ambition, fraud, or similar expressions of sin evidencing improper lust for pleasure, position, or possessions, there shall be a public exposure of his sin before all Church Members, regardless of whether the Elder is repentant or not, according to the wise instruction of 1 Timothy 5:19-20. This is a very difficult process for any Church to go through, and therefore must be done with utter humility, mercy, and love. If the Elder who sinned is repentant, he will be restored gently by the Church (Galatians 6:1). Restoration to Eldership after removal through church discipline will never happen quickly, and will most likely not happen at all unless the man is able to serve the church in lesser roles and consistently demonstrate, over a lengthy period of time, that he is above reproach and is called anew to the office of Elder. If the Elder remains unrepentant of his sin, he will be dealt with as an unbeliever in need of God's salvation and grace (Matthew 18:17).

### **12.1.13 Single Elder Removal**

If there is only one Elder within the Elder body and there is an allegation of sin with that Elder by and/or through a Member in good standing, the Member shall follow proper Biblical approach as set forth in Article XVI of these Bylaws. If there is no resolution and the evidence of sin by the Elder still stands yet without visible repentance from the Elder, the Member may reach out to the Pastoral Council to address such allegation of sin, as described in §12.1.12. If there is a unanimous confirmation of sin by the Pastoral Council, the chair of the Pastoral Council shall interact with the Senior Ministry Manager or any other member of the Administrative Leadership Team to call for an Extraordinary Meeting, where the Church Members shall gather to pray and unanimously remove the Elder from office in obedience to God's Word with regards to leadership in sin. The removal shall be ratified by the Membership of the Church by signing an official Action of Removal. Church Members unwilling to sign the Action of Removal shall not be able to impede the removal of such Elder. The Membership may only ratify the Elder's removal or abstain from any ratification. No Member may vote against the Elder's removal based on the Pastoral Council's determination of the Elder's unrepentant sin. If the single Elder shows contrition and repentance before the removal is made official, he shall be given the opportunity to willfully step down and resign from the office of Elder, and start a process of restoration with the support of Church Members and the guidance of the Pastoral Council. Otherwise, the removal shall carry over and the Church Membership shall commit to pray for the Elder's deliverance from sin.

If the Pastoral Council is unable to come to a consensus about the allegation of sin against the single Elder, they shall arrange for a mediation process in accordance to the Rules of Procedure for Christian Conciliation of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, or a similar faith-based peace making group to assist with the process.

If the single Elder removed is the Senior Pastor, the Church Members shall subscribe to the guidelines set forth in §12.2.4 as they search for a new Senior Pastor.

#### **12.1.14 Vacancies**

A vacancy in the Elder body because of death, resignation, removal or any other cause shall be filled only in the manners prescribed in these Bylaws. Such vacancies may be filled as they occur. The office of Elder shall never be filled hastily or as a result of pressure, fear, or outside control, for this may bring defilement to the office of Elder and contaminate the Church.

*"Never be in a hurry about appointing a church leader.  
Do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure."*

-1 Timothy 5:22 [NLT]

#### **12.1.15 Elder Disputes**

In any dispute arising between the members of the Elder Board all parties involved agree to cooperate in good faith to resolve the dispute. If the issue can't be resolved through a prayerful and good faith effort by the parties in the normal process of Elder relationships and discussion, the first appeal outside the Elder board for resolving the dispute would be to the chairman of LifeWay's Pastoral Council, who will then coordinate the Council's involvement and input in the matter.

### **12.1.16 Pastoral Council**

The Pastoral Council is a group of recognized spiritual leaders with a perspective of ministry that extends beyond LifeWay Church. They are selected for the purpose of providing prayer support and outside accountability to both Senior Pastor and Elders when objective insight and fair-minded counsel is needed on matters of Governance, ministry management, and resolution of disputes that can't be resolved by the Elder Board. The Pastoral Council will consist of three to five pastors from other churches. Each member of the Pastoral Council including its chairmen, will be prayerfully nominated by the Senior Pastor and confirmed by prayerful consensus of the Elders. Should the Senior Pastor be disqualified for ministry, the Elders will work with the Pastoral Council to determine the Council's role in the Biblical restoration process of the Senior pastor. The Elder's shall then prayerfully initiate the process for the selection of an interim Pastor and new Senior Pastor heeding the advice of the Pastoral Council. The Pastoral Council will have no other legal or fiscal authority over LifeWay Church.

## **12.2 Senior Pastor**

The Senior Pastor serves as the President of the Church and the chair of the Elder Board or Senior Elder.

### **12.2.1 Selection of Senior Pastor**

The Senior Pastor shall be elected by unanimous consensus of the Elder board following the procedures described in §12.1.2. He shall also minister for the period of time specified in the contract of employment. The contract of employment shall be in writing, and shall be signed by the prospective Senior Pastor and by the Elders. The qualifications of the Senior Pastor shall be set by the Board of Elders, but in no case be less than those required by Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9) and the Membership Covenant.

### **12.2.2 Responsibilities**

The role of Lead Pastor consists of the following duties and responsibilities:

- \* Serve as the primary teacher and preacher during mid-week and weekend services.

- \* Develop, cast, and help implement a vision for the Church that keeps it faithful to its mission and purpose, with counsel and prayerful support from the Elders.
- \* Lead and shepherd the Elders.
- \* Lead and shepherd the Officers, paid Church staff, and Ministry Leaders with support from the Elders.
- \* Hire and dismiss all paid staff under the advisement of the Elders and select members of the Administrative Leadership Team.
- \* Define qualifications and duties of servants and paid staff under the advisement of the Elders and select member of Administrative Leadership Team.
- \* Empower the Administrative Leadership Team to lead and guide the Ministerial Leadership Team with support from the Elders.
- \* Faithfully endeavor to serve Church Members through counseling, baptisms, baby dedications, weddings, funerals, and similar pastoral ministry opportunities, with support from the Elders and select Members from the Administrative and Ministerial Leadership Teams trained to do so effectively.
- \* Sustain close interaction with the flock by serving the needs of the Congregation through prayer, visitation, compassion, communion, and discipleship, with support from the Elders and select Members from the Administrative and Ministerial Leadership Teams equipped to do so effectively.
- \* Provide vision and guidance in the planning and implementation of worship services, Member gatherings, Church trainings, seminars, and outreaches with support from the Elders and the Administrative Leadership Team.
- \* Promote a Kingdom disposition to advance the Gospel in the region and around the world through strategic partnerships and cooperation with other ministries, with counsel and prayerful support from the Elders.

### **12.2.3 Termination**

The termination of the Senior Pastor shall follow the procedures described in (§12.1.12). Unless the termination of the Senior Pastor is the result of a Biblical disciplinary process as determined by the Elders or the Pastoral Council, termination shall take effect one hundred and eighty (180) days from a written notice of Resignation given to the Elders, unless the period of time is altered

by mutual agreement of the Senior Pastor and the Board of Elders. During this period of time, the performance of the duties of his position shall be determined by the Board of Elders.

In the absence of other Elders, the Senior Pastor shall give his resignation notice to the Church Membership at an Extraordinary Meeting and shall work with the Pastoral Council for a proper and edifying leadership transition that seeks the spiritual welfare of the Church.

#### **12.2.4 Appointing a New Senior Pastor in the Absence of Elders**

If the Senior Pastor resigns, steps down, or is removed from Office and there are no remaining Elders at the time in the Church, the Administrative Leadership Team shall put together a Pastor Search Working Group and appoint a team leader who will reach out to the Pastoral Council for their assistance in determining interim pulpit supply and exploring options for a new Senior Pastor. The team leader of the Pastor Search Working Group shall gather all Church Members to fervently pray and fast for God's leading in the finding of a new Senior Pastor, who when identified, shall be allowed to execute the role of Senior Pastor for a period of time and under conditions agreed upon by the Church Members, the Pastoral Council, and the Senior Pastor candidate. If after this exploration time it is clear the Senior Pastor candidate is God's chosen vessel to lead the Church, the current Church Membership shall affirm his nomination during an Extraordinary Meeting by a supermajority vote of seventy five percent (75%) of present Members at such meeting, with at least one member of the Pastoral Council presiding. Upon acceptance of the Senior Pastor candidate by the Church Members, he shall then be ordained through the Pastoral Council in the presence and with the support of Church Members and loved ones to the ordained Senior Pastor, in a special Ordination Ceremony.

#### **12.2.5 Senior Pastor and Elder Interaction**

Plurality of Elders does not negate the unique role and need of a special leader. Within the framework of Elders' ministries there will be great diversity as each man exercises his unique gifts. Some will demonstrate special giftedness in the areas of administration or service while others will evidence stronger gifts of teaching, exhortation, or other abilities. Some will be highly visible, others will function in the background. All are within the plan of God for the Church.

The twelve disciples are a good example of how diversity functions in a unified system. Scripture records four lists of the disciples, in Matthew 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:14-16, and Acts 1:13. Apparently, each of the groups had a recognized leader. His position as leader was not necessarily by appointment, but because of the unique influence he had on the rest of the group. Peter, the name at the first of every list, became the spokesman for the entire group, as we see repeatedly throughout Scripture. Almost every time the disciples wanted to ask Jesus

a question, Peter was the mouthpiece. They had an equal office, equal honor, and equal privileges and responsibilities. They were all sent out two by two. They all preached the kingdom. They all healed. They all had access to Jesus. But while none of them was less than the others in terms of office or spiritual qualification (except for Judas), nevertheless, some of them stood out over the others as leaders among leaders.

The same phenomenon can be observed in the book of Acts. James, for example, was apparently regarded as a leader and spokesman for the entire church (Acts 12:17; 15:13). Although he was not in any kind of official position over the other elders, they seemed to look to him for leadership, at least in the church in Jerusalem. Beginning in Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas become the dominant characters. And although Barnabas was probably the leading teacher in the church before Paul came in, Paul totally dominated the duo. The Greeks even named him Mercury because he was the chief spokesman. Barnabas undoubtedly did some teaching and preaching, but his sermons are not recorded. His was a different—less visible, perhaps, but no less important—role in their joint ministry.

A position of leadership within a team does not imply spiritual superiority over the members of the team. It simply allows for a functional team that is able to work together for a common goal. Just like every team needs a coach, every orchestra needs a conductor, and every platoon needs a captain, God wisely threads in Scripture the concept of a leader who is first among equals, who can provide the necessary vision and leadership to accomplish His will.

In order to maintain a healthy and God honoring interaction between Elders and Senior Pastor, the Elder board shall adhere to the following principles:

- \* The Lead Pastor shall present drafts not demands that are in line with the Mission and Purposes of the Church. The Elders shall be a supportive unified team that seeks the wisdom of God in prayer for wise decisions that advance God's work.
- \* The Lead Pastor and Elders shall be open and honest with each other. Counseling matters are usually confidential but even these at times need to be shared, when permission is sought and granted from counselees in order to make wise ministry decisions.
- \* The Lead Pastor does not always know what is best and needs to listen carefully to the Elder's prayerful counsel. The Lead Pastor looks to the Elders to confirm his convictions as to God's leading and direction. The Elder Board respects the Pastor's leadership and displays good will and faith in helping advance the Mission and Purposes of the Church as outlined in these Bylaws.

- \* The Lead Pastor and Elders shall not control decisions or demand their way. This would obviously be in direct opposition to Jesus' example of servant leadership.
- \* The Elders provide care, oversight and accountability to the Lead Pastor.
- \* Senior Pastor and Elder business is conducted based upon unity. Unity is not defined as conformity. Where there is biblical unity there will be open debate and diversity of opinion and perspective. The epicenter of lasting unity is a value for relationship above corporate accomplishment, personal fulfillment or spiritual ideals. In Psalm 133, God keys His blessing from the basis of brotherly love, not spiritual idealism or corporate accomplishment.

### **ARTICLE XIII. Administrative Leadership Team**

The Administrative Leadership Team of the Church is composed of the Officers, paid Staff, and Ministry Leaders, who serve under the direction of the Pastoral Leadership Team. Except for the Senior Pastor, all members of the Administrative Leadership Team shall serve under the expectations set forth in Scripture for the office of a Deacon. Deacons were appointed to serve within the Church as ministerial needs arose, providing help, relief, and administrative support to the people in the Church (Acts 6:2-3). There is no clear prohibition in Scripture against women serving in this way. The Greek work translated *Deacon* or *Servant* is *Diakonos*, which is both a masculine and feminine noun. Romans 16:1-2 implies that a woman named *Phoebe* was a respected deaconess in the church at Rome, who was entrusted by Paul with the enormous responsibility of delivering the Roman Epistle to the Church in Rome and be a personal assistant to him and others in the ministry.

Likewise, there is no scriptural precedent that forbids women from also serving as ministry managers, worship leaders, youth ministers, children's directors, and other ministry leadership roles. The only Biblical restriction is that they do not assume a role of spiritual authority over adult men. Since the concern in Scripture appears to be the issue of spiritual authority rather than function, any role that does not confer such spiritual authority over adult men is permissible.

#### **13.1 Officers**

The Officers shall consist of the President (or Senior Pastor), Vice President (or Senior Ministry Manager, Stand-In Vice President (or Assistant Ministry Manager), Treasurer, Secretary, Trustees, and other Assistant Officers as deemed necessary by the Elders.

##### **13.1.1 Election of Officers**

The Senior Pastor is elected as Officer by fact of his position. All other Officers of the Church shall be chosen by the Directors and shall serve terms of at least two (2) years, provided they remain Members in good standing of the Church body. Officers may be re-elected and shall serve at the pleasure of the Directors, subject to the rights if any under the State or Federal law.

### **13.1.2 Removal of Officers**

Any Officer may be removed from office for valid cause. A written notice of proposed removal of any Officer shall be given to such Officer by an appointed Elder at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which an action to effectuate such removal is to be taken, in order to ensure that the Officer is given reasonable opportunity to defend himself. The Officer shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his accusers, but shall not be present during the discussion and action of his removal. Such removal shall take place only upon and after Elder Board Action. The Officer under consideration for removal shall not have voting rights while such removal is considered.

### **13.1.3 Vacancies**

Vacancies in the Officers of the Church by reason of death, resignation or otherwise, shall be filled by election of the Elders as soon as is reasonably possible. Until such time, an Elder may be appointed by the remaining Elders to serve in such a vacancy.

### **13.1.4 Duties**

#### **(a) President**

The Senior Pastor shall serve as the President of the Church, acting as the moderator of the Church and presiding at all Elder and Member Meetings.

#### **(b) Vice President**

The Senior Ministry Manager shall serve as the Vice President of the Church and shall act as the Senior Pastor's right hand with regards to the implementation of all Church ministries. The Vice President shall:

- \* Fill in for the President to preside at Member meetings where the President is absent, unless the meeting requires the spiritual insight and leadership of a member of the Elder board, as determined by the Elders.
- \* Help execute the vision and mission of the church by leading and overseeing the Administrative Leadership Team of the Church.

- \* Supervise and control all of the business and affairs of the Church.
- \* Execute any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments on behalf of the Church, unless approval by the Directors is required, as in the following cases:
  - o The amount of the transaction is above any sum stated in these Bylaws or as dictated by the Elders.
  - o The instrument has the effect of seeking to wind-down or terminate or dissolve the Corporation, place the Corporation into receivership or bankruptcy, to confess a judgment of liability on behalf of the Church, to dispose of assets of the Church that equates to a wind-down or dissolution.
  - o The instrument is related to any acquisition or sale of real estate property.
  - o Is a transaction that involves a conflict of interest related to or involving the Vice-President.
  - o Involves indemnification of any Officer or Director.
  - o Is a transaction otherwise reserved to the Elders under these Bylaws.

#### **(c) Stand In Vice President**

The Vice President shall serve as The Assistant Ministry Manager and shall be a member of the Elder body. When the Vice President is absent, is unable to act, or refuses to act, the Stand In Vice President may perform the duties of the Vice President. When the Stand In Vice President acts in place of the Vice President, the Stand In Vice President shall have all the responsibilities and powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the Vice President. The Stand In Vice President shall be a member of the Director's Elder body.

#### **(d) Secretary**

The Secretary shall:

- \* Keep a register of the current contact information of each member of the Pastoral, Administrative, and Ministerial Leadership Team.
- \* Give notices as directed by the Elders or as required by law.
- \* Record or cause to be recorded in a minute book of the Church minutes, all Member meetings including all actions taken at such meetings.

- \* Maintain custody of the corporate records and of the seal of the Church.
- \* Affix the seal of the Church to all documents as authorized.
- \* Perform such other duties as are incident to the office of Secretary and as may be assigned by the Elders.

**(e) Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall:

- \* Serve as the overseer of the financial operations of the Church, having charge and custody of all funds and securities of the Church.
- \* Paid Church staff members shall be accountable to the Treasurer for the management of their ministry budget and expenses.
- \* Receive and give receipts for moneys due and payable to the Corporation from any source.
- \* Maintain or cause to be maintained in a timely fashion, the financial books and records of the Church.
- \* Deposit all moneys in the name of the Church in banks, trust companies, or other depositories as provided in the Bylaws or as directed by the Elders.
- \* Write checks and disburse funds to discharge obligations of the Church.
- \* Prepare quarterly financial reports.
- \* Perform such other duties incident to the office of Treasurer and as may be assigned from time to time by the Elders.

**(f) Trustees**

Trustees are advisors to the Pastoral Leadership Team that shall from time to time:

- \* Provide financial counsel to the Elders when required. Such counsel shall be provided at the discretion of the Elders.
- \* Determine the compensation of any full or part-time servant within the Pastoral or Administrative Leadership team.
- \* Conduct such other duties and activities the Directors may designate from time to time.

### (g) Assistant Officers

The Elders may appoint from time to time one or more Assistant Secretaries and one or more Assistant Treasurers. Each Assistant Secretary or Assistant Treasurer shall hold office for such period as the Elders may prescribe. Any assistant secretary or assistant treasurer may perform any of the duties or exercise any of the powers of the Secretary or Treasurer respectively at the request or in the absence or disability of the Secretary or Treasurer, or otherwise as occasion may require in the administration of the business and affairs of the Church. Each Assistant Secretary and each Assistant Treasurer shall perform such other duties and/or exercise such other powers, if any, as the Elders shall prescribe.

## 13.2 Staff

All personnel employed by the Church shall act in accordance with the current Elder-approved *Personnel Policies and Procedures* document, as it may be revised, amended or restated from time to time. The Church will reserve employment for men and women who believe and confess essential biblical convictions and act in accordance with such. Additionally, the Church reserves the right to terminate the employment of any existing employee who fails to meet this general standard of faith and practice.

## 13.3 Ministry Leaders

The Ministry Leaders shall have comprehensive oversight over the day-to-day activities of the Church. They will primarily spend time leading leaders, focusing on the Church's mission and vision and thinking globally with respect to Church-wide issues that could impact the whole Church. They will also provide organizational clarity and manage logistical decisions of the Church. The Ministry Leaders will work as a team for the protection of the Church, representing the best interests of the entire Church and not simply the interests of a particular part of the Church. The Ministry Leaders will make wise and efficient decisions as leaders trusted by the Elders and Church Members. The Elders shall determine the size and composition of the Ministry Leaders. Ministry Leaders shall have the authority, as granted by the Pastoral Leadership Team to hire and terminate personnel. Ministry Leaders shall also have the authority granted by the Pastoral Leadership Team to transact business, execute contracts, and legally bind the Church in its respective ministry and business affairs.

The Ministry Leaders shall also become available as they feel God's call to invest in the spiritual growth of others in the Church through one-on-one discipleship or facilitating Bible studies in homes from time to time with the support and guidance of the Elders.

## **ARTICLE XIV. Ministerial Leadership Team**

Every Church Member has a place and a function within the Church, helping it grow and disclose the beauty of Christ to others. All volunteers and helpers who serve under the Administrative Leadership Team are part of the Ministerial Leadership Team. This is where Church Members develop their gifts and have the opportunity to grow into higher levels of responsibility, influence, and calling within the Kingdom of God.

## **ARTICLE XV. Commitment to Unity**

Since offenses and things that cause others to stumble are bound to come within the life of Church relationships (Luke 17:1), all Members of the Pastoral, Administrative, and Ministerial Leadership Teams shall commit to a life-style of unity, grace, and forgiveness. This is God's calling to His followers, essential for Church unity (Luke 17:1-4, Eph. 4:31-32, Col. 3:12-13, Matt. 18:21).

With such aspiration, every Member of the Church shall seek to practice the steps below in order to clear away offenses that may arise from mistakes, misunderstandings, oversights, or genuine issues of sin:

### **\* Refuse to hold anything against anyone in the Church**

Members shall go immediately to anyone in their team or the Church with whom they have an issue or concern. They shall commit to work out the issue until offense is resolved, mutual forgiveness is given, prayer for each other takes place, and unity is restored.

*"Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many"*

–Hebrews 12:14-15 [NIV]

### **\* Abstain from uttering words of criticism about others in the Church**

Every Member shall hold back from saying negative remarks about an Elder, a ministry leader, a fellow Member, or the ministry itself to someone else. Protecting our brother and sister begins by guarding our tongues from being used to pierce their backs with hurtful words.

*"If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with*

*whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God.”*  
 –Psalm 55:12–14 [NIV]

**\* Reject any discrediting statements about others**

When receiving disparaging remarks about others, Members shall:

- Immediately instruct the person sharing a word of criticism about an Elder, ministry leader, fellow member, or the ministry itself, to personally address the issue with the person whom he or she has ill feelings with.
- Tell anyone who desires to tell them a criticism about a fellow brother or sister that they are bound by the promise to report all such criticism to their brother and sister.
- Decline to be sworn to secrecy by anyone sharing unfavorable information about others in the Church.

*“Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are members of one another.”*  
 –Ephesians 4:25 [BSB]

**\* Observe strict confidentiality about private conversations in leadership meetings**

When leaders share concerns about others in the ministry during leadership meetings or in small groups, they shall keep comments anonymous and endeavor to share what is strictly necessary for the edification and strengthening of the Church. Comments of praise and commendation can be publicly shared.

When dealing with a potentially dangerous situation that may put others within the Church in jeopardy, ministry leaders have the freedom to openly discuss the situation at hand to advance Biblical resolution.

*“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.”*  
 –Ephesians 4:1-3 [NIV]

**\* Pray for each other regularly**

Members shall make every effort to keep their immediate leadership team members in prayer, lifting their needs and families by name to God on a regular basis. It is hard to harbor bad feelings against someone we are continually paying for.

*"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus".*

-Philippians 1:3-6 [NIV]

**\* Seek to be actively involved in each other's lives**

All ministry leaders and Members of the Church shall not allow ministry work to keep them from fellowship. Pursuing each other intentionally as friends with sincere hearts shall be a necessary source of personal encouragement and bonding.

*"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."*

-Hebrews 10:24-25 [NIV]

## **ARTICLE XVI. Church Discipline & Disruptions**

### **16.1 Church Discipline**

Church discipline is a necessary mark of a healthy church and shall be applied in cases of sexual misconduct, gossip, divisiveness, dishonesty, malversation of funds, and various other expressions of sin. In accordance with the Biblical pattern generally outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, a person who evidences such sin will be confronted in an initial one-on-one meeting, followed by a merciful escalating engagement by ministerial and pastoral staff and Elders. Where the steps of discipline are exhausted in cases of unrepentant and/or habitual sin, the Elders will consider removing a person from membership with the hope of eventual reconciliation and restoration. This removal may or may not include a prohibition to attend Church services and events, depending on the circumstances. In addition, it might include public disclosure of removal from membership and the circumstances leading to this decision to the corporate Membership of the Church at an Extraordinary Meeting. Those so disciplined will in turn be restored to fellowship where the Elders have determined that appropriate repentance has occurred.

## **16.2 Church Disruption**

Any person deemed by a Member of the Pastoral Leadership Team or Administrative Leadership Team to pose a physical or psychological threat to any person or to the Church, or to be causing, about to cause, or capable of causing disruption to the religious services and activities of the Church, shall be considered a trespasser on Church property and may be removed promptly. No Church Elder or paid Staff shall incur any liability for acting in good faith in the interests of the Church pursuant to this section.

## **ARTICLE XVII. Dissolution and Mergers**

"Dissolution" means the complete closing down or disbanding of the Church so that it no longer functions as a congregation or corporate entity. Upon the dissolution of the Church, its property shall be applied and distributed as follows:

- \* All liabilities and obligations of the Church shall be paid and discharged, or adequate provision shall be made therefore.
- \* Assets held by the Church upon condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance in the event of dissolution, shall be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with such requirements.
- \* Assets received and not held upon a condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance by reason of the dissolution, shall be distributed to one or more domestic or foreign corporations, societies, or organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), and are engaged in substantially similar ministry activities to those of the Church. This distribution shall be done pursuant to a plan adopted by the Elders.

In the event of a merger of the Church with another church, the net assets of the Church shall be contributed to the surviving entity.