

Church of the Open Door

Code of Regulations and Bylaws

May 2006

**ARTICLE I  
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

We, the people of the Church of the Open Door, according to the gracious call of God, dedicate ourselves to the essentials of the New Testament Church.

We have a clear mission that comes from the Great Commission of Jesus (Co-Mission: Christ's mission that we accomplish together) in Matthew 28:20: "Go therefore and make disciples..." The mission is to produce spiritually mature followers of Jesus Christ. At Church of the Open Door, we put it like this:

**Leading People in the Adventure of Becoming Like Christ**

**1. Leading...**

People will not drift into Christlikeness: they must be led with clarity and love. We lead through encouragement, challenge, guiding, inviting, assisting, inspiring, envisioning, teaching, modeling and equipping. We are seeker-sensitive so that we can assist anyone (seekers that are pre-Christian and seekers who are Christians) in their desire to follow Jesus and become more like Him. We attempt to model an authentic life of faith and discipleship, believing that authenticity in life development is contagious. We pray that the Holy Spirit will draw and point people to Christ. We want to provide worship, prayer, training, teaching and ministry opportunities to help facilitate anyone in their walk with Christ.

**2. People...**

The church is about people; therefore, we are relationship oriented. People are our product, not programs, not buildings, nor organizations. We want to attract and develop people of all kinds. We intend to use programs to build people not use people to build programs. It was people for whom Jesus died; they matter to God and therefore they matter to us.

**3. In the Adventure...**

We see the process of becoming like Christ as an adventure, as The Great Adventure for which every human being was born. As adventure, it is challenging, exiting, filled with risk and intrigue. The journey to Christlikeness is not easy, boring, predictable, or for the faint of heart. In fact, it is an impossible journey...were it not for the grace of God. Cooperating with God's grace and led by God's Spirit, becoming like Christ is the adventure of a lifetime. It is an exhilarating journey, with an even more awesome payoff: seeing Jesus face to face in heaven! We do a great disservice to the name and mission of Christ by misrepresenting this adventure in any other way. The

closer you stay to Christ, the more the adventure. It is lukewarmness and distancing ourselves from Christ that leads to the insipid, bland life of religion: a life Christ, and we, reject. So we will abandon ourselves to this passionate pursuit of becoming like Christ, and boldly call others to this life of adventure.

#### **4. of Becoming...**

Eph. 4:15 (NLT) says maturity is about “becoming more and more in every way like Christ.” Becoming like Christ is a process. It is not merely a decision we make nor a destination at which we arrive. It is a journey: a journey of discipleship. Because it’s a process, it involves growth and learning, time and experience. It will necessitate the need for much grace: for us and for others. We can be full of grace to others as they grow because God is being gracious to us as we grow, because, after all, this is a process, the process of becoming more...

#### **5. Like Christ.**

Christlikeness is our goal. This is the goal of discipleship. Luke 6:40 says that when a disciple is “fully trained, he is like his teacher.” Real disciples are people who increasingly live like Jesus Christ. As we cooperate with the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives, God will use all of life to help make us like Christ. (Rom. 8:28,29). The fruit of the Spirit will mature in our lives, we will increasingly reflect Christ in our lives and God will be glorified in us. It is Jesus we are following, not a church or a man or a system. He is the model and the measure of Christlike lives. We will study and seek to live all of Christ’s life; his words and his works.

We have summarized the core characteristics of Christlikeness under six distinctives. Together, they form the acronym C.H.R.I.S.T. and help us clarify what it means to live like Christ. Our goal is nothing less than a community of fully devoted and fully developed Christ-followers; people whose lives reflect accurately the life of Jesus Christ. Becoming more like Christ involves these six characteristics:

#### **C onnected to God through the Word and Prayer**

*Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.* –John 15:4 (See also John 15:1-8; Eph. 3:16-20; Col. 1:10;. Col. 2:6-7; 2 Pet.1:3-11; 1 John 1:7.)

Jesus had a remarkable, vibrant connection with the Father that was so vital and alive it literally nourished him. Jesus described this relationship in John 15. This relationship is sustained and cultivated through reading and absorbing the Word of God into your life and interacting with God through the Word and a life of prayer. This relationship develops a foundational dependence on God which yields the fruit of the Spirit in your life (Gal. 5:22f). All of the other characteristics of Christlikeness are formed from this connection. Living in that kind of connection will spiritually form your heart so you develop a...

#### **H eart of Worship.**

*True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.* -John 4:23 (See also Mark 12:30,31; John 4:23,24; Heb. 10:25; Romans 12:1,2; Psalm 95)

Jesus' life was a life of worship to the Father. He worshiped in Spirit and in truth. Worship is the loving response to God for who He is and what He has done. It is loving God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength that Jesus talked about in the Great Commandment (Mark 12:30). Having a heart of worship is cultivating a lifestyle of worship that is all encompassing so that as Paul said, "whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God. (1 Cor. 10:31). It includes gathering weekly with the local church to express this worship and finding ways throughout the week to express your love for God. Just as Jesus tied together loving God and loving people, so the Christlike person also...

### **R elates with other-centered love.**

*Live a life filled with love for others, following the example of Christ, who loved you and gave himself as a sacrifice to take away your sins.* -Ephesians 5:2 (See also Mk. 12:31; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:9-10; 1 Cor. 13; 1 John 3:11; 4:7-21; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:29-32; Matt: 18:15-35.)

Jesus' way of relating to others was revolutionary. No one loved like Jesus loved. The intimate love He experienced in the Trinity spilled out into His sacrificial love for people. It is the model of love in the community of faith. In fact, he said this is how others will know we are his disciples: by our love for each other (John 13:35). This way of loving is epitomized in the cross. Eph. 4:32 says we are to practice loving forgiveness "just as in Christ God forgave us." We are to love all people with other-centered love, extending grace in our relating, practicing forgiveness, seeking peace and pursuing reconciliation in relationships. Loving others outside the Kingdom of God leads to the desire to share with them the good news of the gospel, practicing...

### **I ntentional Evangelism.**

*"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."* Mt. 28:19 (See also Mt. 18:14; Mk.16:15; Luke 4:18-19; 5:30-32; Luke 19:10; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 9:22)

Jesus' love for all people, no matter what their economic standing, racial or religious background, no matter their current lifestyle, motivated him to reach out to them. Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He intentionally and consistently lived a life of reaching out in love to others. This is the second part of the Great Commandment of Jesus in Mark 12:30-31 where we reach out in love to our "neighbors;" those "near us" where we live, work and interact. To be Christlike is to intentionally build redemptive relationships with those outside the Kingdom of God, loving them, serving them and sharing with them the good news of God's love. But it is not merely reaching out and

moving on; it is then helping them grow into disciples. It is investing your life in others to help them know and then become like Christ. Evangelism, like all ministry, is only effective when it is done in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, so members live as a...

### **S**pirit-empowered Servant.

*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit...-Luke 4:1 (see also v. 14, 18, 19) (See also Rom. 8:1-16; 12:4-8; Gal. 5:16-25; 1 Cor. 12; 1 Cor. 14; Eph. 4:11-13; Matt. 25:14ff; 1 Pet. 4:10.)*

Jesus lived his remarkable life in the power of the Holy Spirit. He was led by the Spirit, and he moved in the dynamic flow of the Holy Spirit. He announced that the Spirit of God had anointed him to serve and love others and then embarked on a life of servanthood in the power of the Spirit. As Christ, he evidenced all the gifts of the Spirit in himself. As his followers, each of us have been given gifts of the Spirit to use to serve others, build up the body of Christ and glorify God. To be Christlike is to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, move in the power of the Spirit, and to utilize the gifts of the Spirit to serve others.

### **T**rustworthy Steward of God Resources for his purposes.

*'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' 'His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness. –Matt. 25:20-21 (See also Prov. 3:9-10; Mal.3:8-12; Luke 6:38; Matt. 23:23; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:1-15; 2 Cor. 9:6-15. Phil. 4:11-19.)*

Jesus understood that all we have on earth has been given and entrusted to us by God the Father. He has placed us as stewards of that which He owns and as such will hold us accountable for how we manage His resources. Jesus lived in trusting dependence on the Father. He did not see his life as belonging to himself or to be lived for himself; he was a steward of that which belonged to God the Father. He taught a life of dependence on God and warned people about the deceitfulness of putting our trust in possessions. Jesus' life was a model of Trusting Stewardship and Surrender. Because he fully trusted the Father, he was free to surrender all to Him. He gave of himself. Likewise, the Christlike person gives of his time, money and energy for God's mission here and around the world. To be Christlike is to live this kind of trusting surrender out in a life of stewardship.

Each of the six characteristics of C.H.R.I.S.T. have an inter-relatedness to each other that reflects 3 summarizing phrases. The first two letters/characteristics, "C" and "H" have primarily to do with Christ's relationship with the Father. These can be summarized by the phrase: **Loving God** and reflect the Great Commandment as the first priority of life.

The second pair of letters/characteristics, "R" and "I" have primarily to do with Christ's relationship with others. These can be summarized by the phrase: **Loving People** and reflect the second half of the Great Commandment.

The third pair of letters/characteristics: “S” and “T”, have primarily to do with *how* we Love God and Love People as good stewards of the resources He has given us. These can be summarized by the phrase: *Living Surrendered*.

All the descriptive language of Christlikeness that is captured and represented in the acronym C.H.R.I.S.T. can be summarized in these three phrases: *Loving God, Loving People* and *Living Surrendered*.

It is essential to remember that our mission is not just “becoming like Christ” but “leading people in the adventure of becoming like Christ”. We are to become like Christ with others, and in fact, we can’t become like Christ without others. So it is out of our own pursuit of Christlikeness, that we reach out to others and invite them into the adventure of becoming like Christ. Out of the love of God growing in our hearts, we reach out to others. This is our strategic plan.

Our mission, vision and strategic plan are all based upon what we call the “Four Great C” passages in the New Testament.

1. The Great Commandment of Mark 12:28-30;
2. The Great Commission of Matt. 28:19-20;
3. The Great Community pictured in Acts 2:42-47; and,
4. The Great Christlikeness pictured by Paul in Eph. 4:11-13.

Our strategic plan is our pathway to fulfill our mission. It is pictured as being centered and driven by a heart of love, and is characterized by 5 ongoing simple steps or stages: Our strategic plan to accomplish that mission is captured by 5 ongoing simple steps or stages:



The “leading” of our mission statement begins when each believer at COD begins to **BUILD** a relationship with a person who is not a Christian, who is lost and needs to experience the love and grace of God in tangible ways. God’s love flows through relationships and it is this building of relationship, this loving investment into another person’s life that opens that person up to the love of God. The COD member then seeks to **BRING** them to a worship service, small group, or some side door event of COD that is an environment where they can more readily experience this love and encounter God. This is the foundation of our outreach and it is relational in orientation and motivated by love. The COD member continues to “**BUILD** and **BRING**” until that person begins to attend regularly. This could take weeks and this could take years; what

is important is that we are intentionally reaching out in love to **BUILD** redemptive relationships with lost people and **BRING** them into an environment where they can experience the life and love of God: the church.

At this point they move into the **BELONG** phase. These are attenders who consider COD their church home and are at different places along a spectrum of “belonging.” This spectrum ranges from those just beginning to belong to the family at COD, but not ready for serious commitment, all the way to those who have attended regularly for years but are still not yet involved beyond Sunday morning attendance. It is a broad range of people from the newly converted to the seasoned attender. This, in fact, is the phase in which most people become Christians. We desire to give people the freedom to check out the Christian faith at their own pace and this phase provides that opportunity.

The next phase is the **BELIEVE** phase. This is where the person decides to get serious about their faith. This is where they wrestle seriously with what they believe and make a commitment to follow Jesus Christ. They may come to faith in Christ while in this phase, but most will *enter* this phase upon making a commitment to Christ. This step of faith, believing, is what launches them into the **BECOME** phase. This commitment is in fact their own clear call to begin the journey of Christlikeness in which every step involves **believing** and **becoming**.

The **BECOME** phase is guided by the C.H.R.I.S.T. acronym, described above. Here the believer grows in the grace and knowledge of God in clear ways as they cooperate with God’s grace and His Holy Spirit in their lives.

One may enter our church wherever they are in their development. If they are not a Christian they would enter at the arrow representing **BELONG** or **BELIEVE**. If they come to COD already a Christian, they would enter at **BELONG** or **BECOME**. The currently committed Christians at COD would enter either at **BECOME** or right into **BUILD** and **BRING**. Each of the phases is driven by an arrow representing the fact that we never reach a place where we stop growing or moving from one phase to the next. The idea is that we are always moving and helping others move from one phase to the next. We are living out our mission of “leading people in the adventure of becoming like Christ.” Each time we reach out and invite people into this adventure, our heart grows larger, the heart of our church for the lost around grows larger and the influence of the Kingdom of God expands.

This process keeps us eternally occupied with what is most important until Jesus comes again. It is the fulfillment of his last command: to go and make disciples. In fact, there is a rhythm to this heart like our own physical hearts. There is a natural heartbeat that God has built into every person’s physical heart where blood goes in and blood comes out. This 2 cycle rhythm of the heart is reflected in our reaching out and our inviting in. The becoming like Christ process is a process of working in and working out our salvation. There is an internal formation and an external expression. We are growing to be more like Christ and we are reaching out to bring more people to Christ. Both have limitless growth potential. Not only are there always more people to reach with the good news,

there is also endless growth potential within each of us, placed there by the Holy Spirit for us to become more like Christ. We will forever be learning and growing in our Loving of God and Loving of People. God keeps exposing new areas in our hearts and lives where we need to surrender. Surrender is not a one or even two or three time event. We are to be “Living Surrendered”. There is endless growth potential in each of the six C.H.R.I.S.T. characteristics. We have a lifetime of growth potential to develop. Instead of leaving people to develop only in a few preferred areas of interest, we want to help people become fully developed in their Christlikeness.

## **ARTICLE II STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

We, the congregation of the Church of the Open Door in Elyria, Ohio, are committed to the essential calling and tasks of a local church, as set forth in Scripture. Our commitment is firm and sure, unchanged by the passing of time and unthreatened by the swelling tide of human opinion.

*All that we are and do is to be done to the glory of God. Our interactions with one another are to be done to the glory of God. Our ministry endeavors and pursuit of mission is for the glory of God. These buildings have been erected to the glory of God. Everything that occurs within these walls is to be done for His greater glory. We declare this to be our essential goal in an assembly of Christians.*

We commit ourselves to the glory of God.

*The proclamation of our message will continue to rest on the infallible Bible. We openly declare our complete trust in its truths, our confidence in its commands, and our hope in its promises. Without reservation, we embrace the Scriptures as our inerrant guide in faith and practice.*

We commit ourselves to the inspired Word of God.

*As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall meet regularly in these facilities for exaltation, edification, encouragement and evangelism. Our desire is to sustain these objectives through the energizing work of the Holy Spirit, so that the lost are confronted with the good news of Christ, as well as our Christian witness, and the saved are equipped to live authentic, pure lives, both within and outside these walls. We also commit ourselves to the vision of the whole world and to God's program of raising up workers for world missions.*

We commit ourselves to evangelizing of the lost and equipping of the saved.

*This place will continue to be dedicated to helping the hurting, encouraging the discouraged, assisting the anguished, and ministering to the sick, the aged, the dying, the*

*forgotten, the abused, and the grieving. We shall neither lose our compassion nor conduct ourselves in pride as we unselfishly open our doors to those who turn to us for strength and counsel. We understand we are to be more willing to give than receive, to accept rather than to reject, to love and nurture the needy rather than judge and to show preferential treatment of a select few.*

We commit ourselves to an unselfish ministry, realizing that we, too, need others to assist us when we hurt.

*Because we are serving Christ in a day of eroding values, we publicly declare our commitment to this nation we love, to the preservation of human life, to the support of marriage and marital fidelity and the family unit, and to the proper roles of husband and wives, fathers and mothers, and children. With equal vigor, we commit ourselves to ministering to single persons, to single parents, to collegians, to the youth, and to the children as well. It is our strong conviction that this local body be a place that holds high the dignity of each individual as we hold forth the unchanging principles of biblical truth.*

We commit ourselves to these essential ministries in an eroding society.

*As we carry out these commitments, we confess our own humanity. Being imperfect creatures with depraved natures, we realize that our dependence on our God must be total, not partial. We, therefore, commit ourselves to keeping the unity in this congregation, to the discipline of prevailing prayer, and to the filling of the Holy Spirit. We are committed to the financial support of this ministry as God provides, and to a spirit of humility, transparency, and grace as our Lord demonstrated during His earthly life.*

We commit ourselves to a life of dependence on God as we carry out His will in and through us.

THESE COMMITMENTS WE MAKE IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

### **ARTICLE III STATEMENT OF BELIEF**

*We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired of God, and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life.*

*We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

*We believe that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, became incarnate, was begotten on this earth by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary, and He is fully*

God and fully man.

*We believe that* man was created in the image of God by His direct act and not from previously existing forms of life and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race; that man sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and therefore sin in thought, word, and deed.

*We believe that* people are incapable of saving themselves and that salvation is the work and gift of God, available because the grace of God and is received by faith as we surrender our lives to Christ and trust in his death on the cross as the payment for our sins.

*We believe that* the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; and that all who believe in Him are justified on the grounds of His shed blood.

*We believe in* the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His Ascension into heaven, and in His present life there for us, as High Priest and Advocate.

*We believe that* all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become the children of God; that they are thereafter indwelt by the Holy Spirit who makes possible a life of personal holiness and a walk of obedience to the will of God; that all who are truly born again are “kept by the power of God” and, are eternally secure in God’s loving care.

*We believe in* “that blessed hope,” the personal and imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

*We believe in* the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting, conscious punishment of the lost.

*We believe that* the local church is a body of believers organized for worship, work, and fellowship; that the two ordinances of the church are baptism (immersion) and the Lord’s Supper; that the local church is an independent and self-governing body responsible alone to Christ who is its Savior and Lord.

## **ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION ONE- Membership Prerequisites**

#### **I. Definition: What Is Membership?**

People who wish to become members of Church of the Open Door (COD) come from a wide spectrum of backgrounds from no previous involvement in a church

to very active involvement in a previous church. Because there are many differing views and practices regarding membership in a local church, please read carefully the following descriptions and definitions of membership before advancing to Sections II. and III. on the Criteria and Procedure of Membership.

We view membership in COD as the formal recognition and celebration of one's demonstration of commitment to this specific body of believers. It is not the doorway *into* involvement and commitment but the granting of membership rights and privileges such as voting, leadership, etc.) *because* of that demonstration of commitment. In short, we are committed to the mission God has given us and like any effective team, we believe our teammates should be those who are committed as well.

#### **A. What It Is**

Membership in COD is for any person 12 years or older who has personally accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, has been baptized by immersion, is growing as a Christian, and who is so committed to the mission of COD that they desire to join with this local body of believers to work toward the fulfillment of its mission according to the criteria described below.

#### **B. What It Is Not**

1. Membership in COD is not to be understood as a pathway of salvation or means of obtaining a right relationship with God. Entering into a relationship with God is totally a response to His free grace offered to us through Jesus Christ, not as a result or reward of our good works. This response involves turning from self-centered living and surrendering and committing one's life completely to Christ, evidenced by growing in obedience and Christlikeness.
2. Membership in COD is not the same as membership in the body of Christ. When one becomes a Christian they automatically become a member of the body of Christ around the world. Becoming a member in COD is a step of biblical maturity that formalizes one's commitment to the specific vision and mission of this local church. This distinction may be described as the difference between "positional" membership and "participating" membership. Every Christian is "positionally" a member of the body of Christ. Becoming a "participating" member of Christ's body formalizes your commitment to actively participate in the mission of COD.
3. Membership in COD is not the basis of a person's acceptance by the church. There are no stipulations for acceptance in the body of Christ. Every person is valued and accepted by God and therefore should be by

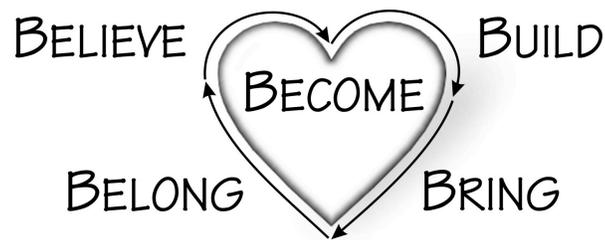
the church without condition. Each person will be valued and accepted as a person regardless of their decision concerning formal membership.

## II. Criteria: What Are The Expectations Of Commitment And Accountability?

Anyone joining as a member will be in agreement with the By-Laws of COD and fully committed to the vision, mission, and strategic plan of COD. Membership brings with it a commitment to submit oneself to and be held accountable by the local body of believers, their leadership, and government towards the fulfillment of COD's mission. So the criteria of membership is measured by commitment to and participation in the mission.

The mission of COD is *leading people in the adventure of becoming like Christ.*

Our strategic plan to accomplish that mission is captured by 5 ongoing simple steps or stages:



Members are those who are committed to and actively living out this 5 step process:

**BELIEVE** They have surrendered their life to and put their faith in Jesus Christ as their

Forgiver and Leader. They are living a life of faith, trusting in Jesus Christ.

**BECOME**: They are growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, becoming more like Christ (see C.H.R.I.S.T. next paragraph), characterized by a life of Loving God, Loving People and Living Surrendered.

**BUILD** They are loving, praying for and building relationships with specific pre-Christians.

**BRING** They are seeking to bring their friends to places where they can experience the

love of God and hear the good news.

**BELONG** They are loving their friends and helping them feel a sense of belonging, praying that their friend will surrender their life to Christ, **BELIEVE** in him, and

follow Jesus as their own Forgiver and Leader. This step to **BELIEVE** launches them on their own adventure of growing to **BECOME** more and more like Christ

(C.H.R.I.S.T.).

At the heart of the mission is growing to *Become* more like Christ (see Article I) . Members are those whose lives are increasingly and intentionally reflecting these six distinctives:

### **Connected to God through the Word and Prayer**

Like Jesus, members will practice a life of daily connection with God through absorbing his Word into their lives so that it nurtures them (John 15). They will stay connected to God through a life of prayer, developing a dependence on God which produces the fruit of the Spirit. All of the other characteristics of Christlikeness are formed from this connection. Members practice living in vital union with God in a way that spiritually forms their heart so they develop a...

### **Heart of Worship.**

Like Jesus, members seek to love God with all of their heart, soul, mind and strength. They live their lives as an act of worship to God and weekly gather with the local church to express this worship and celebrate who God is and what he has done. Just as Jesus tied together loving God and loving people, so the Christlike person...

### **Relates with Other-centered Love.**

Like Jesus, members will love all people with other-centered love, extending grace in relating and practicing forgiveness. They will seek peace and reconciliation in relationships. Loving others outside the Kingdom of God leads to the desire to share with them the good news of the gospel, practicing...

### **Intentional Evangelism.**

Like Jesus, members will practice reaching out in love and investing in others as a lifestyle. To be Christlike is to intentionally build redemptive relationships with those outside the Kingdom of God, loving them, serving them and sharing with them the good news of God's love. Evangelism, like all ministry, is best done in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, so members live as a...

### **Spirit-led Servant.**

Like Jesus, members are listening to the promptings of the Spirit, moving in the power of the Spirit, and utilizing the gifts of the Spirit to serve others. Members have discovered their spiritual gifts and are using them to serve others in ministry. Like Jesus, they seek to serve instead of seeking to be served.

### **Trustworthy Steward of God's Resources for His Purposes.**

Like Jesus, members understand that all they have has been given and entrusted to them by God the Father. He has placed us as stewards of that which He owns and as such will hold us accountable for how we manage His resources. Members have surrendered all of their life to God and his purposes. They are supporting the local church with at least

a tithe of their income. The Christlike person gives of his time, money and energy for God's mission here and around the world.

In order to help people in this adventure of a lifetime, we have designed three foundational courses that are pre-requisites for membership: **Loving God 101**, (LG101); **Loving People 101** (LP101) and **Living Surrendered 101** (LS101). LG101 is where people learn how to live out the "C" and "H" characteristics described above in the C.H.R.I.S.T. acronym. LP101 teaches the "R" and the "I" characteristics. LS101 teaches the "S" and "T."

Members will be in agreement with the values and characteristics so described. They will be seeking to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in their lives as he is making them more and more like Christ. Members will work joyfully and faithfully to help accomplish the mission as stated.

### **III. Procedure: How Do I Become A Member?**

#### **A. Participation**

After completion of 4 months of regular attendance and consistent participation in the life of COD, the prospective member continues on the following track, completing any steps yet undone:

#### **B. Education**

##### **1. Open House**

Completion of the Open House which is designed to acquaint new people with the vision, values, mission and strategy of COD.

##### **2. Core Seminars**

Completion of the 3 core classes of Loving God 101, Loving People 101, Living Surrendered 101 coupled with subsequent signing of the covenant of each class.

##### **3. Membership Class**

Following education steps 1 and 2, completion of the membership class involving the following topics. Our History, Our Beliefs, Our Mission, Our Organization and Government, Our Commitments.

#### **C. Interview**

Following completion of the Participation and Education stages of the membership process, persons desiring membership shall meet with their small

group leader, a member of the pastoral Staff or a Church Life Board member as an opportunity to get further acquainted, answer any questions that may have surfaced in the process, and determine if membership is appropriate at this time.

#### **D. Commitment**

As a formal statement of one's commitment to the mission of, government of and people of COD, a signed Statement of Commitment is utilized to record one's membership.

#### **E. Ceremony**

In a public service of the church, the new members will be welcomed, affirmed, and charged by the congregation to carry out their responsibilities as members of COD. Likewise, the congregation will pledge their support and encouragement to the new members to work together as a team to fulfill the mission to which God has called us.

#### **Renewal of Membership**

Each member shall sign a yearly Statement of Commitment as a reminder of their commitment and to reaffirm his or her continued desire for membership. In the event that the membership is discontinued, the process for reinstatement shall be the same as above, unless granted an exception by a unanimous vote of the Church Life Board.

### **SECTION TWO - Pastors' Memberships**

The Pastors of the Church of the Open Door and their wives, when officially called and appointed, shall be extended the courtesy and privileges of active voting membership at the Church of the Open Door.

### **SECTION THREE - Termination and Restoration**

#### **A. Membership in the Church May Terminate in Five Ways:**

1. By death
2. By exclusion

It is right and in harmony with the Scriptures to exclude from the fellowship of this Church (a) any person who holds false and heretical doctrine or who lives inconsistently with a Christian profession (Galatians 1:8, 9), (b) one who violates the law of public morals or lives a disorderly life (II Thessalonians 3:6, 11; I Corinthians 5:11), (c) any person who would disturb the unity and peace of this Church (Rom. 16:17). A member can be excluded by a 75% vote of the Governing Board only after the discipline process has been followed. (Please

see Addendum 1 for a summary of the Discipline Policy.)

3. By request

A member's name may be dropped from the roll of this church upon the written request of such member.

4. By dismissal

It will be the policy of this church to issue letters of dismissal or transfer, only upon request of the church from which the member is writing.

5. By inactivity

Members who have moved or been inactive may be contacted to determine their membership status.

**B. Restoration:**

Any person who has been excluded from membership in this church may be restored to membership upon evidence of repentance and reformation, and on the recommendation of the Church Life Board.

## **ARTICLE V CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

### **SECTION ONE – Nature of the Church**

The leadership function of a local Church is broad and multifaceted. This multifaceted leadership reflects the multifaceted *nature* of the Church. The New Testament employs multiple metaphors to describe what the Church is, all of which could be summarized in three descriptive categories:

1. The Church as a Community: Family of God, Bride of Christ, Relational metaphors.
2. The Church as a Cause: Army of God, Mission, Battle metaphors.
3. The Church as a Corporation: Body (Corpos) of Christ, Building, Structure metaphors.

Each metaphor necessitates a different emphasis in leadership. The Church is a *cause*, a *community* and a *corporation*. The Church is in a *battle* as the *bride* of Christ functioning as a *body*. In leadership language, the Church needs visionary leaders to fulfill the cause, relational leaders to care for the community, and administrative and managerial leaders to guide the organization. Leaders need to be able to pay attention to vision, relationships and structures. This is a daunting task that demands great depth and breadth in leadership. It also explains a characteristic of the NT Church that is rarely true of today's church: plurality of leadership.

### **SECTION TWO - Qualifications of Leaders**

The first task of choosing godly leaders is not to look at their skill level but at their character. Because leadership is influence, *how* leaders *live* is just as important as *where* leaders *lead*. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*" Church leaders are to be *Christlike* leaders. In addition to the model of C.H.R.I.S.T. set out

earlier in this document, leaders in Church of the Open Door are to reflect the specific criteria Paul wrote for church leaders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

*"Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgement as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. "* -1 Timothy 3:3-7

*"An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless--not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."* -Titus 1:6-9

1. **Above Reproach:** Lives must be pure; presenting no patterns of living that would warrant accusations of violating Scriptural morals.
2. **Husband of One Wife:** If married, must be a devoted, faithful spouse.
3. **Temperate:** Must be sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
4. **Self-controlled:** Must be balanced in their stewardship and appetites, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses.
5. **Respectable:** Must demonstrate a well-ordered life and good behavior that earns the respect of others.
6. **Hospitable:** Must be unselfish with their personal resources and possessions. Must "love the stranger" and be willing to share freely with them.
7. **Able to Teach:** Must be able to communicate the truth of God and exhort sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way. (2 Tim. 4:2; 2:24)
8. **Not Addicted to Wine:** Must be free from destructive addictions, pursuing freedom from all addictions and willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.

9. **Not Quick-Tempered:** Must be gentle and characterized by forbearance and tenderness; not having a quick, violent temper. Able to exercise control and patience in difficult situations.
10. **Uncontentious:** Must not be given to quarrelling or selfish argumentation.
11. **Free From the Love of Money:** Must not be stingy, greedy or out for dishonest monetary gain. They should not be pre-occupied with amassing material things, but rather should be a model of giving.
12. **Manage Own Family:** Must have a well-ordered household and a healthy family life.
13. **Not a New Convert:** Must not be a new believer. They must have been Christians long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and the depth of their spirituality.
14. **Person of Integrity:** Must be well respected by unbelievers and have a good reputation in workplace, community and neighborhood. Must be free from hypocrisy. There must be a consistency with what he/she says and does.
15. **Not Self-willed:** Must not be stubborn, insensitive or prone to force opinions on others. Must be more interested in service than self-interests.
16. **Loves What is Good:** Must desire the will of God in every decision, regardless of difficulty and perceived consequences.
17. **Just:** Must be fair and impartial. Their judgments must be based on Scriptural principle.
18. **Holy:** Must be walking in obedience, yielding themselves continually to the Holy Spirit. While seeking to separate themselves from sin, they must be quick to confess it and seek to maintain a pure heart.
19. **Disciplined:** Must be characterized by self-discipline and self-restraint, shaping their lives through the practice of the disciplines of the Christian life: prayer, Bible study, fasting, etc.
20. **Hold Firmly to the Word of God:** Must be stable in the faith, obedient to the Word of God, diligent in the application of the Word to his/her life, able to defend sound doctrine and capable to use the Word to encourage others.

### **SECTION THREE – Staff Leadership**

## **A. The Senior Pastor**

### **1. The Role of the Senior Pastor-**

The Senior Pastor shall be the spiritual and administrative leader of the church. He shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and councils of the church. As such, the Senior Pastor shall have responsibility for the development, organization, coordination, administration and review of the total ministry of this church. In order to accomplish this, the Senior Pastor shall be the overseer of all staff personnel and all such personnel shall be amenable to the Senior Pastor.

The Senior Pastor is primarily to be a teacher of the Word of God—the Bible. His goal is to help believers mature through the insightful and accurate presentation and proclamation of the Word, and in so doing, to equip them to be functioning servants in the church. As a teacher, the Senior Pastor must stress both the understanding and application of God’s truth (Ephesians 4:11, 12; Titus 1:7; I Thessalonians 2:4, 5, 10-12; Colossians 1:25). The primary function requires that the Senior Pastor be a diligent student of the Word and that he be afforded the time necessary to accomplish this. Therefore, so that the other essential ministries of the church shall be maintained with excellence, a multiple Pastoral Staff ministry remains essential to this church. The Associate Pastors shall assist the Senior Pastor in his duties as directed by the Senior Pastor. In the absence of the Senior Pastor or the vacancy of the office of Senior Pastor, the Pastoral Staff shall perform the duties of the pastor as directed by the Executive Pastor.

The Senior Pastor creates and fills all Pastoral Staff positions, upon approval by the Governing Board and church members. The Senior Pastor has the prerogative to release any staff person. Notification of such release shall be given to the Governing Board.

### **2. Resignation and/or Termination**

His ministry may be terminated by resignation, after six week’s notice to the church or by death. The Senior Pastor may be recommended for dismissal by an affirmation vote of at least three-quarters of the quorum of members at a meeting called to consider the termination of his pastorate. The membership meeting must be approved by Governing Board unanimously. At least 30 days prior to such meeting, the Senior Pastor shall be notified in writing of the reason (s) for the recommendation. He shall have reasonable opportunity for his defense in such a case.

The meeting of the congregation that considers his dismissal shall be preceded by at least two weeks notice of the time and purpose of such a meeting. This notice shall be announced at two successive Sunday morning worship services.

In the event that his pastorate is terminated, the pastor may, at the desire and option

of the members, either continue in ministry at the church for up to a period of ninety days or be dismissed immediately with salary compensation equal to the number of days in ministry after the vote for dismissal. In no case shall the Senior Pastor have further salary claims after his termination date.

### **3. The Selection of the Senior Pastor**

A search committee, which is to function in case of the death, resignation, or dismissal of the Senior Pastor, is to consist of at least five (5) members to be appointed by the Governing Board. The Search Committee shall, upon the death or resignation of the Senior Pastor, take measures as soon as possible to secure a successor. It shall be confined to the selection and presentation of an eligible candidate to the membership for its approval.

Each candidate shall be considered by the Search Committee immediately after the occasion of his ministry, and before another candidate may be heard.

The Senior Pastor shall be called to the church upon a 75% majority vote of the quorum of those members attending the meeting called to consider his appointment. His pastorate shall be without tenure.

### **B. Senior Management Team**

The day to day central leadership team for the church is the *Senior Management Team* (SMT). They are the senior level paid leaders that give the best hours of their day to providing godly leadership to the church. The SMT is comprised of the Senior Pastor (SP), the Executive Pastor (EP), Director of Ministries (DM), and 3 other appointed Pastors. (See Figure 1-6 for organizational charts and where abbreviations are employed.)

The SMT advises and assists the Senior Pastor in providing missional, directional and pastoral leadership to the church and church staff. While they also are intimately involved with the Community and Corporation (refer back to pgs. 4-6 for discussion of these words) aspects of church leadership, the SMT is charged primarily with the Cause aspect of leadership and seeks to facilitate mission achievement and vision accomplishment for the church. As members of the SMT, the Executive Pastor and Director of Ministries provide functional direction for the church staff who in turn serve primarily as recruiters, developers and equippers for the ministers of the church: those people who make up the congregation of Church of the Open Door. The Executive Pastor and Director of Ministries oversee Ministry Councils and seek to facilitate the effective operation of ministry throughout the church. (See Figure 2)

### **C. Associate Pastors**

Under the guidance of the Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor or Director of Ministries, Associate Pastors lead, equip and oversee the design and execution of single or multiple ministry areas. An Associate Pastor may be part time or full time and may or may not receive monetary compensation and shall be accountable to the Senior Pastor, Executive Pastor or Director of Ministries, and the Governing Board.

Associate pastors shall be hired in a manner similar to that of calling a Senior Pastor; that is, final action will be by the congregation, voting by ballot, with a 75% vote of the participating membership necessary for a call.

All Associate and Assistant Pastors shall be first selected by the Senior Pastor, in consultation with the SMT. Upon approval by the Governing Board, the candidate shall then be presented to the congregation for their vote.

#### **D. Other Staff**

All other staff employees shall be hired by the Senior Pastor or his approved representative. The Senior Pastor shall have the direct supervision of all employees. He may delegate portions of his supervisory power, but shall retain final responsibility for all subordinates.

#### **E. Ministry Councils**

Because we value ministry in teams, each pastor or ministry director on staff is free to select members for her/his ministry council to facilitate the carrying out of that area of ministry. These ministry councils are not policy making bodies but exist to assist in ministry, to help with ideas, to come alongside ministry leadership and give it support and to serve under the direction of the ministry staff. The members of ministry councils should be people who whole-heartedly agree with and support COD's Vision, Mission, and By-Laws. They should be people who have a passion for the specific area of ministry under consideration and who have the character, competency and compatibility to serve well. They serve under the direction of the staff and must be approved by the current ministry council and SMT before being approached to serve on the ministry council. It is the desire of the staff to get as many people as possible in the game and to give everyone a chance to play, to give everyone a place to serve. The ministers and ministry councils are the life-blood of COD and their operation and effectiveness determines the effectiveness of the church as a whole. The staff will serve as coaches to facilitate this ministry and seek to maintain a healthy and productive, God-honoring ministry environment. The primary interface with the SMT will be via the Director of Ministry who serves in an overseer capacity for the ministry directors and their councils. The role of the Director of Ministries is to facilitate, support, oversee and guide ministry development throughout the church.

### **SECTION FOUR - Board Leadership**

## **A. Church Stewardship Board**

Consistent with and in the spirit of our discussion of multi-faceted leadership under Section One, there is a need for assistance in the fulfillment of the multifaceted leadership function of Cause, Community and Corporation. Historically, most churches have recognized the need for a group of people to serve in an advisory and overseeing capacity for legal, financial, policy, property and facilities issues. These are primarily *stewardship* issues: managing resources and assets that belong to another. Therefore this group will be called the *Church Stewardship Board* (CSB). These are individuals who have extensive marketplace experience in the above mentioned areas and sense a call to serve the body of Christ in this stewardship role. They are to be people of Christlike character, who can in humility serve the church and submit to fellow members of the team.

The primary staff person who leads and works with this group will be the Executive Pastor. The relationship of the Executive Pastor with the CSB is to be one of cooperation, practicing mutual submission to each other with the Board serving in both an advisory and active functional capacity to assist the Executive Pastor and help him oversee stewardship areas. (See Figure 3) Both the Executive Pastor and the Senior Pastor will serve on this Board along with at least five other members chosen from the congregation through a selection process outlined below. (See Figure 5) The CSB shall meet monthly or as needed and shall choose a chairperson and secretary for purposes of order and facilitating group effectiveness. The terms of the CSB members shall be one year renewable terms. At the close of each year, members shall reexamine their commitments, their service and qualifications and decide whether they wish to serve another year. Though it is not the intention for this to ever occur, Board members may be asked to withdraw their names or resign by their peers should a member's life, ministry or service detract from the purposes or effectiveness of the Board.

## **B. Church Life Board**

In the writings of the Apostle Paul, he gives continued attention to the life and health of the body of Christ: the Church. This is the relational, communal, "one another" matters of maintaining church unity. The unity of the church is of utmost importance and must be guarded and maintained with all diligence (see Eph. 4:3, Acts 20:28ff). Anything that affects the unity of the church must be attended to and addressed. These are matters of relationships, doctrine, mission drift, discipline, emotional health of those in ministry, pastoral care, nurturing, etc. Since this is guarding and protecting the life and health of the church, this group will be called the *Church Life Board*. (See Figure 4) These are individuals who are scripturally sound, mature, emotionally healthy people who sense a call to serve the church through relational and doctrinal means. They must be people of prayer with Christlike character, proven relational dexterity and shepherding skills. The

CLB is given authority and responsibility to see:

- that the Church remains on a true course biblically;
- that its members are being appropriately shepherded;
- that the body is being fed through insightful and accurate biblical teaching;
- that the body is staying true to the biblical message and mission;
- that the life of the Church is being well managed with the assistance of other competent and godly leaders;
- They are to care about the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of members, regularly praying for the church;
- They are to protect the unity of the church;
- They are to guard the body against harmful influences, confronting those who are contradicting biblical truth or who are continuing in a pattern of sinful behavior. In doing so, they are to keep closing potential entrances for Satan, so that the truth of Christ will remain credible to both the congregation and the community.

The primary staff person who leads and works with this group will be the Senior Pastor (though this may be delegated to the Shepherding Pastor.) The relationship of the Pastor with the CLB is to be one of cooperation, practicing mutual submission to each other with the Board serving in both an advisory and active functional capacity to assist the Senior Pastor and help him oversee pastoral areas. (See Figure 5) Both the Senior Pastor and the Executive Pastor will serve on this Board along with at least five other members chosen from the congregation through a selection process outlined below. The CLB shall meet monthly or as needed and shall choose a chairperson and secretary for purposes of order and facilitating group effectiveness. (See Figure 5) The term of the CLB members shall be one year renewable terms. At the close of each year, members shall reexamine their commitments, their service and qualifications and decide whether they wish to serve another year. Though it is not the intention for this to ever occur, Board members may be asked to withdraw their names or resign by their peers should a member's life, ministry or service detract from the purposes or effectiveness of the Board.

### **C. Governing Board**

The ultimate overseeing, decision-making and legal body shall be called the Governing Board. They ensure accountability and comply with legal and association governmental guidelines. The Governing Board shall be comprised of the members of the SMT, CSB and CLB. They shall convene as needed or at least semi-annually to act on global leadership decisions such as approval of yearly budget, major acquisition or selling of land, By-Law amendments, and Sr. Pastoral selection. To facilitate communication and continuity among the three leadership bodies that make up the Governing Board, the Senior Pastor and Executive Pastor shall be members of all three teams and the minutes of each group will be shared with the others. (See Figure 6)

## **SECTION FIVE - Selection of Board Members**

Selection methods to fill Board positions are notorious for becoming popularity contests with quick votes that produce subsequent winners and losers, often yielding reluctant nominees who feel obligated to “serve their time.” Instead, prayerful, careful processes that allow for ample consideration to be given to character, competence, calling and chemistry should be followed. The church should be given clear teaching and a voice in the process, while allowing more mature members to have a stronger role than newer Christians or those still new to the church. The Book of Acts gives evidence of the first church leaders being appointed by the founders and spiritual leaders of the church. By this example it is implied that the existing spiritual leadership of a church be intimately involved in the process of selecting future leaders, to insure selection based on spiritual rather than superficial qualifications. Beyond this, there are no specific guidelines given regarding the selection process. It would therefore appear that freedom is given to the individual church to develop a process that will best serve its own special needs and situations. (Acts 14:21, Titus 1:2) I am proposing a 10 step selection process as follows.

The initial selection process will follow these 10 steps. Then each year the leaders currently serving on the CLB and CSB shall conduct an annual review, part of which includes the process of determining the number of positions to be filled that year, either because of resignations, removals or the sense that there is a need for a larger group. This process would begin each year with the leaders currently serving determining the number, if any, of positions to be filled that year. If there is no need for new positions to be filled, the process would simply consist of the annual review with a re-confirmation of current Board members. If the Boards determine that additional members are needed, they shall initiate the following process for selection:

1. The congregation shall be provided with teaching regarding the Biblical qualifications for Church Board leaders and their Scriptural role. The teaching will describe the qualifications in terms of the leaders’ character, calling, competency and compatibility with other leaders, all categories outlined in the biblical passages on leadership qualifications. This may be done through sermons, tapes, and/or handouts.
2. With the Biblical qualifications in mind, members of the congregation will be given 2 weeks to prayerfully submit the names of people who are church members for consideration as Board members.
3. Men or women whose names are submitted shall be so informed, and they shall be urged to engage in self-appraisal and personal evaluation in light of the Scriptural qualifications. Any person may withdraw their name at that point, if they

have no desire to serve in the position, if they do not believe they adequately meet the qualifications, or if there are other circumstances that impede their serving.

4. The nominee shall fill out 1) an application; 2) a questionnaire, and; 3) write an essay (or tape a statement) answering the questions “Why do you want to serve in this position;” and “What strengths and weaknesses do you believe you will bring to this Board?”

5. The Governing Board shall appoint a nominating committee consisting of 3-5 members, none of whom currently serves as a member of a Board or currently aspires to be on a Board. One of the nominating committee members shall serve as chairperson for purposes of order and effectiveness. (Since there is no current Governing Board, the following proposal is suggested: The current SMT and a group consisting of members of the Leadership Board who are not interested in serving this year on the Governing Board would serve as the “Governing Board Pro Tem” with their only duty being to help select the Governing Board by appointing the Nominating Committee and confirming the work of the Nominating Committee before it went to the church for the final affirmation. Then the Governing Board Pro Tem would be dissolved.)

6. The nominating committee or their representative will meet with the Boards to review the qualifications for leaders and determine questions that should be posed to the candidates.

The nominating committee shall review the names of the nominees, and shall conduct interviews with each nominee (and their spouses where applicable).

7. After prayerfully considering each nominee, the nominating committee shall make final recommendations to the Boards. Those nominees who have not been recommended to the Boards shall be informed by the nominating committee as to the reason for their not being recommended, with reference to whatever qualifications might not have been fulfilled.

8. The Governing Board shall review the nominees and make a final selection. Nominees not selected at this point shall also be given reason by the Governing Board as to why they were not selected.

9. The names of the prospective Board members shall be brought before the members of the church, who will be given 2 weeks to show cause why any one of the prospective Board members would not be qualified to serve. Consistent with Matt. 18:15 and Matt. 5:24, any member with such "cause" must first express his concern to the nominee and then must also express his concern to the appropriate Board for consideration. Another 2 week period shall be built into the process as a buffer to allow for any mitigating circumstances that may arise in seeking to fulfill this step.

At the end of the 4 week period, the prospective Board members will be presented to the members of the church as a group for affirmation by a 75% majority vote of the members present (a quorum consisting of at least 25% of the existing members shall be required) and for a service of dedication. This affirmation is as a group, not as individuals receiving separate affirmation. Such time of affirmation and dedication shall occur every year, whether to affirm new Board members or reaffirm the service of the existing Board members.

The process of selection shall begin in the month of September of each year, and take three to four months. In the event of a vacancy or special need mid-year, each Board may refer to previous nominees to make a selection, or may re-initiate the entire selection process, as deemed necessary.

Since Scripture indicates no fixed term for church leaders, no specific fixed term of office is recommended. Instead, each Board member upon appointment shall be asked for a one year commitment, subject to review, re-commitment and reaffirmation by the church members each subsequent year.

During the period of annual review, both the individual and the other Board members shall evaluate his or her continued service as a Board member again considering the Biblical qualifications as well as any personal factors that might affect his/her service. An individual's service as a Board member may be discontinued by his/her own decision, or by the unanimous decision of the Board.

### **Leadership Challenge**

The New Testament clearly states there are multiple spiritual gifts given to the members of Christ by the Holy Spirit for mission achievement and the edification of the Church. It also declares all believers in Christ are to serve as priests or advocates for each other within the Church. Each member is commanded to use his or her gifts to build up one another. Therefore, most of the ministry of the Church of the Open Door is done by lay ministers, each using the gifts given to him or her by the Holy Spirit, and facilitated by the pastoral ministry of the staff. Individual members with leadership gifts are given authority and responsibility consistent with their maturity and ability, and the manifested need of the community. Leaders are to serve as leading servants, exercising their leadership in humility and faithfulness. In response to the biblical pattern of leadership, members of the body also have a very clear responsibility as taught in scripture to lovingly support their leaders and submit to their leadership (Hebrews 13:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13). Together, we fulfill Paul's vision of a healthy body of Christ, captured in Ephesians 4:11-16:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be

evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,<sup>12</sup> to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up<sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will hold to the truth in love, becoming more and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.<sup>16</sup> Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. (NIV & NLT)

## **ARTICLE VI FINANCES**

### **SECTION ONE - Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year shall begin January 1 and end on the following December 31.

### **SECTION TWO - Methods of Finance**

Every person attending this church shall be encouraged to prayerfully and joyfully involve themselves in regular grace giving. (2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:6)

### **SECTION THREE - Statement of Policy**

It is the intent of the Church of the Open Door to follow the standards established by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, which include:

1. An active, policy-making committee, a majority of whom are not staff
2. An annual certified audit by an independent firm based on generally accepted standards and accounting principles
3. Audit reports available
4. High standards of integrity and no conflicts of interest
5. A clear evangelical statement of faith
6. Programs consistent with purpose and objectives, and funds applied for the purpose for which they were raised.

## **ARTICLE VII CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

### **SECTION ONE - Annual Business Meeting**

An official business meeting of the congregation shall be held on a day before December 31. The purpose of the meeting shall be:

- A. To affirm the annual selection of Board Members
- B. To present and vote on the proposed annual budget for the upcoming year.

### **SECTION THREE - Special Business Meeting**

Special meetings of the members may be called by the Governing Board or by the Senior Pastor upon notice of one week or more, which notice shall be given members by announcement of the same, stating the purpose of the meeting at Sunday morning worship services. Special meetings shall be held at the place of worship as designated by the Governing Board and Senior Pastor.

### **SECTION FOUR - Quorum**

Regular or special business meetings may be conducted when there are no less than fifty (50) members (in good and regular standing) present.

### **SECTION FIVE - Questions of Order**

All questions of order shall be settled by the customary rules as given in Robert's Rules of Order.

## **ARTICLE VIII AMENDMENTS**

Proposed amendments to the Bylaws may be initiated by two-thirds of the total voting membership of the Governing Board, upon approval by the Senior Pastor. Proposed amendments shall either be posted in the Church of the Open Door bulletin at least three weeks in advance of the meeting, or, if lengthy, made available to members in advance of the meeting.

To make an amendment effective, a majority vote of the voting members present at the Annual Meeting or a special meeting called for that purpose shall be required.

## **ARTICLE IX POWERS AND LIMITATIONS**

### **SECTION ONE**

The church societies and committees shall have the right to adopt such rules and regulations as they deem best and most favorable to success—provided that none shall conflict with the rules of order and the covenant of the church, nor interfere with its regular or special meetings.

### **SECTION TWO**

Those duties assigned to the Senior Pastor in the aforementioned articles are, in the

absence of the Pastor, to be assigned to the Executive Pastor and the Governing Board.

## **ARTICLE X GENERAL**

All articles, rules, resolutions, or regulations heretofore adopted or in force in this church and not consistent with these articles, are hereby repealed.

The Code of Regulations and Bylaws as herein set forth shall become effective on and after June 11, 2006.

Prior Code of Regulations shall thereupon and thereafter become null, void, and of no effect.

## **ARTICLE XI Indemnification of Corporate Trustees, Officers and Representatives**

### **SECTION ONE**

To the fullest extent authorized or permitted by law, this corporation agrees to and hereby does indemnify:

- A. All corporate leaders (past, present, or future), their heirs, executors and administrators; and
- B. As the Governing Board may from time to time designate: such corporate employees, agents, and other person (their heirs, executors, and administrators) acting in any capacity at the request or on behalf of this corporation, from and against all liability, judgments, decrees, fines, penalties, expenses, fees, amounts paid in settlement or any other costs, losses, or expenses (including but not limited to attorney's fees and court costs) arising or resulting from or in connection or association with any threatened or pending action, suit or proceedings (whether civil, criminal, administrative, investigatory or otherwise) and any appeal related thereto, under which said indemnified persons are parties or participants because of actions or omissions of the Corporate Trustees, officers, employees, agents or other persons acting in any capacity or on behalf of this corporation.

### **SECTION TWO**

To the fullest extent authorized or permitted by law, no corporate leaders shall be liable to the corporation and no action shall be maintained against him by this corporation (or for its benefit, by any other person) because of any action or omissions of such trustee or officer.

### SECTION THREE

The provision of this Article shall not exclude or limit any rights or benefits to which any person so indemnified is or may be entitled:

- A. As a matter of law or statute;
- B. By the Articles of Incorporation, Corporate Bylaws, any agreements, the vote of members or trustees, or insurance purchased by this corporation; or
- C. Otherwise.

### SECTION FOUR

Where the context of this Article requires, words used in the masculine shall include the feminine, and words in the singular, the plural.

## ARTICLE XII Growing Together in Size, Maturity and Service

Church of the Open Door is a fellowship of Christian people committed to the spiritual, intellectual and relational growth of its members and all others whom it is able to influence. It sees this as the essential meaning of the Great Commission, which is to “*Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I (Jesus) have commanded you.*” (Matthew 28:19, 20). This vision has the following three dimensions:

1. **Size** - God did not intend the church to be static. It is to be a growing church, and this means that each local church must reach out to non-Christians through a thoughtful program of evangelism and world missions. The primary mission field is local. Hence, Church of the Open Door has a major concern to win people to Jesus Christ from its immediate environment of Northern Ohio. But the church is also conscious of the needs of the United States of America and the whole world and therefore also supports a balanced program of national and world missions.
2. **Maturity** - Growth is not only or even primarily numerical. The most important growth is that of the individual believer through study of the Bible, worship of God, prayer, and fellowship with other Christians. Church of the Open Door is, therefore, committed to furthering personal growth on every level. It is committed to a thorough program of expository Bible preaching, meaningful and mature worship, adult and age-level classes, home Bible studies, and numerous fellowship opportunities.
3. **Service** - The Lord Jesus Christ set the pattern for Christian service when he washed the disciples’ feet on the eve of His crucifixion. In following this

pattern, the Church of the Open Door desires to serve the community in which God has placed it by a variety of service ministries.

The foundation for everything the Church of the Open Door does and desires to be is the Bible which it regards as the authoritative and inerrant revelation of God to His people. It is the source of their spiritual life and the document by which they are to regulate, guide and correct their Christian walk.