

# Constitution and Bylaws

## First Christian Church of Pleasanton, Kansas

### **I. Preamble**

We, the members of the First Christian Church of Pleasanton, Kansas, recognizing our privilege by God's grace to be members of the body of Christ, do hereby establish this Constitution to be the working plan of our local assembly.

### **II. Name**

The name of this organization shall be called the "First Christian Church of Pleasanton, Kansas," hereby referred to as "Church" in this Constitution.

### **III. Affiliation**

This Church, voluntarily and of its own right, free will, and accord, is an independent, nondenominational Christian church.

### **IV. People**

#### **A. The Lord**

Jesus Christ is the undisputed and supreme Head of the Church. All members of the Church should submit to Him as Lord and Savior of their lives. With that in mind, all Church decisions should be prayerfully made, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the Word of God, to the glory of God the Father and Jesus the Son.

#### **B. The Elders**

Recognizing the authority of God's Word, this Church shall select Elders as overseers to shepherd, guide, protect, and lead the congregation as a whole. They shall do so as servants of Christ and the Church and shall serve as those who will give an account to their Lord (Hebrews 13:17).

1. Number: Not to exceed six (excluding the pastoral staff)
2. Term: One year
3. Qualifications of Elders

With God's Word as our authority on all matters of faith and practice, Elders shall be selected using the Biblical qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, namely that each should be a man who is

(From 1 Timothy 3:1-7)

- Above reproach
- Faithful to his wife
- Temperate, self-controlled, respectable
- Able to teach (i.e., knows the Bible and can explain it to others)
- Not addicted to alcohol
- Not violent, but gentle and peaceable
- Free from the love of money
- A good manager of his own household and children
- Not a new convert to the faith
- Reputable with those outside the church

(From Titus 1:7-9)

- Not overbearing
- Not quick-tempered
- One who loves what is good
- Upright and just
- Holy
- One who holds firm to the Word of God

#### 4. Duties

##### a. Spiritual

In cooperation with the Pastor, the Elders shall serve as shepherds of the flock. They shall provide spiritual leadership and pastoral care, promote Church unity, and protect the Church from false teaching.

##### b. Administrative

As the appointed overseers of the Church, it will be the responsibility of the Elders to be the primary policy and decision-making board within the Church. The Elders shall have monthly meetings to seek the Lord's guidance for the Church and to make administrative decisions. The Elder representative for each committee or the Pastor shall bring before the Elder board any requests or recommendations from the committees of the Church. The Elders shall then make decisions by consensus in a prayerful spirit.

##### c. Supervisory

On the congregation's behalf, the Elders as a group shall serve as an overseeing board for the Pastor in all matters of employment and compensation. They shall delegate to the Pastor the role of daily supervision of all other pastoral staff and Church personnel.

#### 5. Elder Offices

All offices shall be elected by the Elders and consist of the following:

- a. Chairman – The chairman shall schedule monthly meetings and offer basic spiritual leadership to the elders. He shall oversee the monthly business portion of the meeting and offer administrative leadership to the elders.
- b. Secretary – The secretary shall keep minutes of the meeting for Church records.

#### 6. Selection of Elders

At the time of the annual election of officers (refer to section V. below), the Elders shall submit a list of names to serve as Elders for the coming year to be voted upon by the congregation.

### **C. The Trustees**

1. Number: Three
2. Term: One year
3. Qualifications: Shall be an Elder of the Church
4. Duties

Trustees shall act as the legal agents of the Church in all business matters. In cooperation with the Elders they shall hold legal title to all Church property and handle all business transactions related thereto, have supervision over all endowment and trust funds, and perform such duties as are required by the laws of the State of Kansas.

### **D. The Pastor**

Recognizing that God calls some men from within the body of Christ to serve as a vocational shepherd of a local flock, we shall seek to always have one serve as the Senior Pastor of the congregation.

1. The Pastor as Elder

The Bible speaks of elders and pastors interchangeably; therefore the Senior Pastor shall serve on the Elder board as an Elder of the Church. However, in addition to being an Elder, he also shall serve as Pastor, overseeing and leading the daily operations of the Church. He shall be the primary teacher of the Church through weekly preaching and shall be the spiritual leader of the

Church through prayer and pastoral care. While serving as Pastor to the entire congregation (including the other Elders) as individuals, the Pastor shall also be accountable to the other Elders as a group and shall submit a monthly written report to them.

2. **Terms of Employment and Termination**

The Pastor shall serve indefinitely as long as the relationship is satisfactory. Either party (the Pastor or the Elder board) should give not less than sixty days' notice when the relationship is to be dissolved. However, this may be negotiated, if agreeable by both parties. All arrangements between the Pastor and the Church shall be mutually agreed upon and shall be made known to all members. At the time a new Pastor is called, a written statement should be prepared by the Elder board setting forth such details of the call as responsibility for moving expenses, parsonage preparation, and reporting date. In addition, the statement should cover such items as the compensation package, vacation time, conventions, youth camps and conferences, education opportunities, sabbaticals, and time for conducting revivals outside of the local Church. A copy of these statements should be made part of the Church records, and a copy should be delivered to the Pastor.

3. **Qualifications**

With God's Word as our authority on all matters of faith and practice, the Pastor shall be selected using the Biblical qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 (refer to IV.B.3 above).

**E. The Youth Pastor**

The Church may call a man to serve as an associate pastor to minister to the youth of the congregation and their families.

1. **Qualifications**

With God's Word as our authority on all matters of faith and practice, the Youth Pastor shall be selected using the Biblical qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 (refer to IV.B.3 above).

2. **Relationship to the Elders**

While the Youth Pastor must meet the qualifications to be selected as an elder, he will not be considered an Elder of the Church. However, as pastoral staff, he shall attend Elders' meetings to give and receive counsel. He shall report directly to the Senior Pastor as his immediate supervisor (refer to IV.B.4.C above) and to the Elders and shall submit a monthly written report to them.

3. **Terms of Employment and Termination**

The Youth Pastor shall serve indefinitely as long as the relationship is satisfactory. Either party (the Youth Pastor or the Elder board) should give not less than sixty days' notice when the relationship is to be dissolved. However, this may be negotiated, if agreeable by both parties. All arrangements between the Youth Pastor and the Church shall be mutually agreed upon and shall be made known to all members. At the time a Youth Pastor is called, a written statement should be prepared by the Elder board setting forth such applicable details of the call as responsibility for moving expenses, parsonage preparation, and reporting date. In addition, the statement should cover such items as the compensation package, vacation time, conventions, youth camps and conferences, education opportunities, sabbaticals, and time for conducting revivals outside of the local Church. A copy of these statements should be made part of the Church records, and a copy should be delivered to the Youth Pastor.

## **F. The Diaconate (Deacons and Deaconesses)**

1. Number: Not to exceed fifteen
2. Term: One year
3. Qualifications

With God's Word as our authority on all matters of faith and practice, Deacons and Deaconesses shall be selected using the Biblical qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13, namely that they should each be as follows:

### For Deacons:

- Dignified
- Sincere
- Not addicted to alcohol
- Honest in financial matters
- Holding to the faith with a clear conscience
- Above reproach
- Faithful to their wives
- Good managers of their children and household

### For Deaconesses:

- Dignified
- Not malicious gossips
- Temperate
- Faithful in all things

In addition, candidates for the diaconate shall have been active members of the Church for at least one year prior to the commencement of their service.

## 4. Duties

In cooperation with the committees, members of the Diaconate shall promote the growth and welfare of the Church and shall assist in the following activities: greeting and ushering the worshipers, distributing the Lord's Supper and receiving the offering, visitation projects, physical preparation of the candidates for baptism, giving counsel and serving in the business affairs of the Church, serving on at least one regular committee of the Church (refer to VII.B.3 below), ministering to families at time of sickness or bereavement, and performing such other duties as may be assigned by the Elders.

## **G. The Congregation**

### 1. Candidacy for Membership

- a. Any person may present him/herself as a candidate for membership at any worship service.
- b. Prior to being officially received into membership, the candidate for membership must meet with the Pastor and, at the Pastor's discretion, any number of the Elders, as a means to get to know the candidate and determine, insofar as possible, satisfactory Christian experience. Satisfactory Christian experience means that the candidate is genuinely born again as evidenced by believer's baptism and fruit in keeping with repentance (Matt. 3:8; Luke 3:8; Gal. 5:22-23).
- c. If a candidate has not been baptized subsequent to his/her conversion, he/she shall join the membership of the Church through baptism by immersion.
- d. Candidates who meet approval for membership may be officially introduced and received at any worship service.

### 2. Constitution of Membership

The membership of the First Christian Church of Pleasanton, Kansas, shall be constituted by the following:

- a. Those who are presently members of the congregation.
  - b. Those who unite with the congregation by a public confession of repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, giving expression to their repentance and faith through baptism by immersion.
  - c. Those who unite with the congregation by giving public testimony to the congregation of their conversion through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and of believer's baptism; if their baptism was not by immersion, but it was subsequent to their conversion and they are satisfied with their baptism, they may still join in this manner.
  - d. Those who unite with the congregation by transfer of membership from another Christian church of any denomination of like faith and order, as determined by the Elders, upon receipt of a letter from said Church indicating membership in good standing.
  - e. Those who are called by the Church to serve as pastoral staff shall be members upon their acceptance of the call.
3. Classification of Membership
- a. Active Members – Active members are those members who regularly and consistently attend the regularly scheduled worship services, fellowships, ministries, and other activities of the Church.
  - b. Inactive Members – Inactive members are those members who do not fulfill the requirements of active members for any given six-month period. Members are not considered to be inactive due to extended illness of themselves or an immediate family member, military duty, school, mission trips, vacations, temporary duty assignments by their employer, or other just cause.
  - c. Determination of Membership Classification
    - (1) The final authority and responsibility for determining membership classification rests with the Elders.
    - (2) The Elders shall review and update the church membership roll quarterly, maintaining a current list of active and inactive members.

4. Termination of Membership

A member shall be removed from the church rolls upon the following conditions:

- a. Death of the member
- b. Personal request of the member
- c. Notification of membership in another church
- d. Evidence of membership or active involvement in another church
- e. Permanent move out of the local area
- f. In the case of items d. and e. above, this Church will contact the member in question after six months' absence to determine his/her intentions regarding membership. If no response is received within one month, the member in question shall be removed from the membership roll.
- g. As a final step of church discipline as given by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-18  
The following shall be the church's policy and procedure regarding church discipline:

If a church member is found to be engaged in sinful behavior harmful to the church or his/her family then that member shall be confronted prayerfully and in a Spirit of love on at least two occasions. The ultimate goal of this shall be the repentance and restoration of the member. If after the second visit, the member still refuses to turn from the sin, then the matter shall be brought before the Elders. At this time the Elders will allow for a period of at least six months during which they will pray for and try to help the backslidden member to return to the Lord. At the end of this six-month period, the Elders will prayerfully re-evaluate the

situation, with the option to remove the member from the church rolls and pray for them as an unbeliever according to our Lord's command (Matthew 18:17). All matters of church discipline shall be conducted under the guidance and authority of the Pastor and the Elders.

## **V. Congregational Meetings and Voting**

### **A. Types of Meetings**

1. Announcement of Officers: Second Sunday in November
2. Annual Financial and Business Meeting: First Sunday in December
3. Special Meetings: Business meetings of the Church may be transacted in conjunction with any regular Sunday morning worship service or at a called meeting of the congregation provided
  - a. Notice has been given at least two consecutive Sunday mornings preceding the congregational meeting. This notice should state the time, place, and purpose of the meeting.
  - b. A complete record is made of any action taken.

### **B. Voting for the Congregational Election of Officers**

In an effort to promote prayerful consideration of candidates and ensure privacy, the following procedure shall be used for the Congregational Election of Officers:

1. The Nominations Committee shall prepare a ballot and deliver it to the members of the congregation on the first Sunday in November (refer to VIII.A below).
2. The members of the congregation shall cast their votes by completing the ballot during the week following the first Sunday in November.
3. The members of the congregation shall return their ballots to the specified receptacle in the Church on the second Sunday of November.
4. The ballots shall be counted and the elected officers announced at the Announcement of Officers meeting on the second Sunday of November.

### **C. Voting at Other Meetings**

1. Voting privileges shall be accorded to all active members who are 18 years and older.
2. Binding decisions shall be made by majority vote of those members present and voting.

## **VI. Other Church Officers**

### **A. Church Treasurer**

1. Number: One
2. Term: One year with eligibility for re-election, but not to exceed three consecutive terms
3. Qualifications: Shall have been an active member of the Church for at least one year
4. Duties
  - a. Shall receive, safeguard, and pay out church funds
  - b. Shall deposit all Church money in the bank and keep records of all deposits
  - c. Shall give a report to the Elders each month and submit accounts to audit each year
  - d. Shall pay budgeted items when due and money is available; all other items shall be paid on order of the Elders

## **VII. The Regular Committees**

The task of administering the programs of the Church shall be delegated to the following committees: (1) Worship, (2) Christian Education, (3) Church Growth, (4) Missions, (5) Stewardship, (6) Building and Grounds, (7) Youth, and (8) Nursery. In addition, there shall be a unique regular committee called The Servers.

### **A. Responsibility of the Committees**

Each committee shall meet regularly to attend to its business. Monthly meetings are strongly recommended. Monthly written reports of each committee's activities and recommendations shall be submitted to the Elders, and a written yearly report shall be presented at the annual Financial and Business Meeting. Each committee shall be responsible for recommending an annual budget for their committee to the Stewardship Committee for inclusion in the total Church budget.

### **B. Membership of the Committees**

1. All committees should have a minimum of six members, including the chairperson who shall vote only in the case of a tie.
2. The membership of each committee shall be selected in the following manner:
  - a. Prior to January 1, a committee composed of the newly-elected chairman of the Elders, the newly-elected chairman of the Diaconate, and the Pastor shall appoint a chairperson for each committee. Each committee chairperson shall be appointed for one year.
  - b. This same committee will then solicit congregational participation on the regular committees. Active members of the congregation may sign up to serve on the membership of any of these committees.
  - c. There will be at least one Elder and two members of the Diaconate on each committee. The Pastor shall also serve as an advising member of each committee. In addition, youth participation shall be encouraged.
3. To facilitate better coordination between the committees and all other organizations within the Church, these persons shall serve in the following capacities:
  - a. The organist, pianist, and/or choir director shall be a member of the Worship Committee.
  - b. The Church Treasurer shall be a member of the Stewardship Committee.

### **C. Duties of the Committees**

1. Worship Committee
  - a. Develop a music program for the Church and provide special music for the worship services.
  - b. Develop and care for a music library.
  - c. Arrange for adequate and proper ushering services and for acolytes (candle lighters).
2. Christian Education Committee
  - a. Promote a program of leadership education.
  - b. Plan and execute a yearly Vacation Bible School.
  - c. Maintain and promote a Church library.
  - d. In cooperation with the Pastor, make recommendations to fill all Sunday school teaching openings to the Elders, who shall approve or disapprove the recommendations.
3. Church Growth Committee
  - a. Develop a concern for evangelism and promote a year-round program.
  - b. Plan and administer special evangelistic projects and meetings.
  - c. Encourage evangelism in all ministries of the Church.
  - d. Keep an up-to-date prospect list.
  - e. Organize calling on inactive members and those losing interest.
  - f. Prepare a report of new families moving into the community.
  - g. Plan, promote, and organize fellowship dinners and church socials.
4. Missions Committee
  - a. Stimulate interest in missions and benevolence.
  - b. Promote and encourage missionary projects, missionary talks, etc.

- c. Yearly re-evaluate the organizations the Church supports with missions money to ensure that they are faithful to Scripture and the desires of this Church.
  - d. Yearly recommend missions organizations and their respective percentage allocations for the budget.
5. Stewardship Committee
    - a. Prepare an annual proposed budget for the entire Church, and submit it to the Elders and the congregation for approval.
    - b. Promote a plan for meeting this budget.
    - c. Promote special financial gifts.
    - d. Help develop the spirit of tithing and Christian stewardship.
  6. Building and Grounds Committee
    - a. Take care of the Church building, including an annual inspection of the parsonage with the minister and/or spouse.
    - b. Supervise the purchase and installation of new equipment.
    - c. Check the Church's insurance.
    - d. Handle requests for use of Church equipment.
  7. Youth Committee
    - a. Serve as an informal advisory board to the Youth Pastor.
    - b. Provide whatever assistance or service necessary for the betterment of the youth ministry at the request of the Youth Pastor or Elders.
    - c. Coordinate youth groups and encourage church camps.
  8. Nursery Committee
    - a. Schedule workers to staff the nursery and ensure an adequate number of nursery attendants are present during worship services.
    - b. Review the condition of the nursery and its equipment and make recommendations to the Elders for renovations or repairs.
    - c. Establish and review policies and procedures for the nursery concerning such things as use of nursery equipment, staff qualifications, requirements, and training, check-in and check-out procedures, etc.

#### **D. The Servers**

1. Number: Unlimited
2. Term: One year
3. Qualifications: High school age (9<sup>th</sup> grade and up) and adults who are active members of the First Christian Church of Pleasanton, Kansas
4. Duties: Shall assist in greeting and ushering worshipers, distributing the Lord's Supper and receiving offerings, assist in visitation projects, and assist in other duties as assigned by the Elders

### **VIII. The Special Committees**

In addition to the regular committees, there shall be four special committees as follows:

#### **A. Nominations Committee**

1. This committee shall be composed of one Elder; one member of the Diaconate, appointed by the chairperson of their respective groups; and the Pastor. If the church is without a Pastor, then a second Elder shall be selected by the Elders to serve on the committee. This committee shall

serve throughout the year. In the event of a vacancy that should occur among the elected positions of the church, this committee shall present a nomination to the Elders. The Elders will approve or reject the nomination by a prayerful consensus.

2. At least fourteen days prior to the Announcement of Officers meeting, this committee's chairperson shall invite suggestions from the congregation for ten days for nominations for the elected positions of the church to be elected that year. The committee will then meet, consider suggestions received from the congregation, consider other qualified individuals, and contact potential nominees to secure their agreement to serve if elected.
3. This committee will be responsible for preparing a ballot for the Congregational Election of Officers. They shall also meet following the election on the second Sunday in November to count the votes and prepare a report to the congregation to be given that day at the Announcement of Officers meeting.

#### **B. Pulpit Supply and Pastoral Search Committee**

1. This committee shall be composed of
  - a. The Elders of the Church.
  - b. Two members at large, chosen by the Elders.
2. The Elders shall choose the chairman of the committee.
3. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to see that the church has preaching during the interim between the leaving of one Pastor and the call of a new Pastor.
4. In the event of a Pastor vacancy, this committee shall have the responsibility of serving as a screening body to find, interview, and recommend a prospective Pastor for this congregation. It shall be the policy of this Church to consider only one prospective Pastor at a time.

#### **C. The Abiding Memorial Committee**

1. This ministry shall be composed of three members elected by the congregation for a term of one year.
2. They shall elect their own chairperson, secretary, and treasurer each year.
3. This ministry shall be responsible for the following:
  - a. All memorial gifts to the local congregation will be recorded and acknowledged.
  - b. Give a monthly report to the Elders of receipts, disbursements, and monies as memorial gifts and submit their accounts to audit each year to a committee of the Church.
  - c. Make recommendations to the Elders on projects to be considered for disbursement of memorial funds. All such recommendations will be coordinated with the appropriate committee(s) of the Church.

#### **D. Local Missions Committee**

1. The Pastor (or an Elder if the church is without a Pastor), plus two members appointed by the Elders shall make up the committee.
2. The committee shall make decisions concerning financial assistance to be given from the Church's Local Missions account.

#### **E. Constitution and Bylaws Committee**

1. This committee shall be composed of the Pastor, one elder, and one member of the congregation appointed by the Elders.
2. This committee shall be formed at least every two years to review and recommend any necessary changes to the Constitution and Bylaws to the Elders and the congregation in accordance with section X.B. below.

## **IX. The Pastor's Cabinet**

The Pastor's Cabinet shall convene to coordinate the total work of the Church and promote the adopted programs of the Church throughout all areas of the Church's life. The Pastor's Cabinet is not a legislative body to make any decisions on finance, policy, or actions of the Church life.

### **A. Membership of the Cabinet**

Cabinet members shall be the following:

1. Pastor as Chairman
2. Chairperson of each committee
3. Presidents of Christian Women's Fellowship (CWF) and Christian Men's Fellowship (CMF), provided these organizations are active
4. Chairman of Elders
5. Chairman of the Diaconate

### **B. Duties of the Cabinet**

1. Study the needs of the Church, evaluate the present activities, and discuss proposed programs and refer them to the appropriate committee for study or to the Elders for possible implementation.
2. Initiate the study of long-range programs to be presented for approval by the Elders and/or the congregation.
3. Study and coordinate the activities of the Church, Sunday school, and other organizations within the Church and prepare a yearly activity calendar.
4. Encourage and guide groups or ministries in fulfilling their goals and objectives.
5. Meetings are to be determined by the Pastor and the members of the cabinet, but monthly meetings are suggested. The meetings are open to anyone wishing to participate and assist with the ministry of the Church.

## **X. Miscellaneous Provisions**

### **A. Amendments, Additions, Repeals**

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended, added to, or repealed by the congregation at any business meeting of the congregation, provided the following:

1. It has been presented to the Elders in writing and has been considered by the Elders.
2. It has been announced at least two weeks in advance.
3. A two-thirds majority is in favor.

### **B. Review of Constitution and Bylaws**

This Constitution and Bylaws shall be reviewed at least every two years, and needed changes, if any, recommended to the Elders for their action and later consideration by the congregation at the annual Financial and Business Meeting.

### **C. Nullification**

When adopted by the congregation, this Constitution and Bylaws will repeal and make null and void all other Constitution and/or Bylaws of this congregation, known or unknown.

### **D. Adoption**

Since this Constitution and Bylaws is an agreement among the members of the congregation, it must be approved by the congregation in an assembled business session.

## **XI. Statement of Faith**

### **I. God**

We believe in the one true God of the Bible, who though He is one, exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:1, 26; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 44:6; Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19-20; John 10:30; 2 Cor. 3:17-18; 13:14).

- A. God the Father is the supreme, sovereign, holy, all-powerful, all-knowing Creator, infinitely glorious in all ways (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 19:1-6; 139:1-18; Isa. 6:1-3; 46:9-10; 64:8; Luke 1:37; Rom. 11:33-36; Eph. 4:6; Rev. 4:8).
- B. God the Son is one with God the Father and divine in nature (John 10:30; Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:6; Col. 2:9; Titus 2:13; Heb. 1:3). He is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father (John 1:1; 8:58; 17:5) and served as the co-Creator of all things (John 1:3; Col. 1:15-17). He was conceived by the Holy Spirit at the incarnation and birthed by the Virgin Mary (Matt. 1:18). Jesus Christ is God, who became a man, yet never sinned (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15). He voluntarily died on the cross in our place as the payment and propitiation for sin (Matt. 20:28; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 2:2) and rose from the dead in bodily form (Luke 24:1-12; 1 Cor. 15:3-5). He is now seated at the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19; Heb. 1:3), and will one day return to Earth physically and visibly to gather His people and to judge His enemies in God's own unknown time (Matt. 24:27, 30-31, 36; Mark 13:26-27, 32; Luke 21:27-28; Acts 1:7, 9-11; 1 Thess. 4:13-17; 2 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 19:11-21).
- C. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, co-eternal, co-equal, and co-Creator with the Father and the Son (Gen. 1:2, 26; Job 34:14-15; Ps. 104:29-30). He divinely inspired the human authors of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). By means of His power sinners are convicted (John 16:7-11) and regenerated (John 3:5-6; Titus 3:5). He lives inside of all true followers of Christ (John 14:16-17; Acts 2:38; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6) and serves to convict them of sin and guide them into righteousness (Ps. 143:10; Rom. 8:12-16; Gal. 5:16-17, 22-25); to assist them in knowledge and proclamation of the word of God (John 14:26; 16:13; Matt. 10:19-20); to comfort them (Acts 9:31; Rom. 8:26-27), and to assure them of salvation (Rom. 8:14-16; Gal. 4:6; 1 John 4:13). He brings unity to the body of Christ and imparts spiritual gifts to each believer for service (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-7; Eph. 4:3; Heb. 2:4).

### **II. Scriptures**

We believe that the Bible is made up of the sixty-six (66) books of the Protestant Old and New Testaments. Furthermore, we believe that the Bible is the holy word of God and is without error in its original manuscripts. Because of the divine nature of the Bible it is sufficient for guidance in all matters of life (Ps. 19:7-8; 119:97-105, 160; 2 Pet. 1:3) and is to be our final authority on all matters of faith and church practice (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Pet. 3:16).

### **III. Salvation**

We believe that salvation can only be achieved by the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as He is revealed to us in the Bible (Eph. 2:8-9).

- A. Sin – We believe that man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), yet fell in sinful disobedience (Gen. 3). Because of this all humanity is now sinful by nature and by choice and completely unable to achieve God's salvation by his own works or merits (Ps. 14:2-3; Ecc. 7:20; Jer. 17:9; Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:23; 5:12-19; 6:16; 7:5, 21; 8:7-8; Eph. 2:1-4).
- B. Conversion – We believe that in order for a person to be saved, God must draw him and convict him of his need of a Savior (John 6:44; 12:32; 16:8-11). Because of that gracious work of God, and in order to be saved, a sinner must repent of sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21).

- a. Repentance – Repentance is a change of heart and mind that leads to a change of action. In repentance, the sinner turns from the sinful life which is his by nature and asks God’s forgiveness (Matt. 4:17; Luke 3:3; 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; 3:19).
- b. Faith – Saving faith is placing one’s trust in and committing one’s entire life to Jesus Christ. It rests in Jesus Christ and in His finished work of salvation through His death and resurrection alone. When turning from sin in repentance, the sinner turns to Jesus Christ, committing his life to Him as Lord and Savior (John 3:16, 18, 36; Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9).
- C. Regeneration – We believe that regeneration is an act of God effected in conjunction with a sinner’s conversion whereby the Holy Spirit changes the nature of the sinner, thus creating a new spiritual creature (2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:5). It is also called the new birth or being “born again” (John 3:3-7).
- D. Components – We believe salvation is both an event and a process; it is present, perpetual, and future. Salvation is comprised of justification, sanctification, and glorification.
  - a. Justification – Justification is God’s instantaneous saving act whereby He declares believers righteous in His sight, granting that they are no longer legally condemned but are at peace with God by faith (Rom. 5:1; 8:1). It is granted on account of the substitutionary, sacrificial death of Christ (Rom. 3:21-26) and imputes to believers the righteousness of Christ (Rom. 4:4-5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:26-27; Phil. 3:9).
  - b. Sanctification – Sanctification is God’s progressive saving act whereby believers cooperate with God as He works to remove sin in their lives, make them holy, and conform them to the image of Christ (Rom. 6:22; 8:29; 12:1; Eph. 5:26; Col. 3:1; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 1 Pet. 1:14; 1 John 3:3). Sanctification is the inevitable consequence and visible evidence of justification.
  - c. Glorification – Glorification is God’s final saving act whereby He completes believers’ sanctification, making them perfectly like Christ in heaven (Rom. 8:30; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:4; Heb. 12:23; 1 John 3:2).
- E. Perseverance – We believe that all true followers will persevere in the faith and continue to follow Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives (Matt. 10:22; John 8:31; Col. 1:22-23). While a Christian is still capable of sin and times of rebellion, they will ultimately follow Christ as Lord for the entirety of their life on Earth. Because of the eternal nature of salvation, it cannot be lost, if it was ever truly received (John 6:38-40; 10:27-28; Rom. 8:29-30, 35-39; Eph. 1:13-14; 1 Pet. 1:5).

#### **IV. Eternity**

- A. Heaven – We believe that all true followers of Jesus Christ will spend eternity with Him in Heaven (Matt. 25:21, 23; 25:34; John 14:1-3; Rev. 21-22).
- B. Hell – We believe that all who do not turn to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in this life will be condemned to eternal torment in Hell (Matt. 25:30, 41; Mark 9:43-48; John 3:18, 36; Rev. 20:1-15).

#### **V. The Church**

We believe that a New Testament church is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have voluntarily associated together to carry out the commands of Christ. The church is God’s agency in the world, charged with the task of making disciples of all the nations through the preaching of the gospel (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8). The membership of the church is to be comprised only of born again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have been baptized into the fellowship of a local church (Acts 2:37-42; Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2). While Christ Himself is the head of the church (Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18), the Scriptural offices of the church include overseers/elders/pastors and deacons (Acts 6:1-6; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). The office of overseer/elder/pastor is clearly limited to men by Scripture (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). The New Testament indicates governance by plural local eldership (Acts 15:1-6; 20:17-18; 1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1) and a limited congregational rule (Acts 6:3). The ordinances of the church include baptism and the Lord’s Supper or communion (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). A church is responsible for maintaining its own membership through acts of church discipline (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5).

## **VI. Church Ordinances**

- A. Baptism – We believe that baptism should be administered only to those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:37-41; 8:37; 16:31-33). We believe the proper mode of baptism is immersion (Matt. 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:38-39). We believe baptism is a ritualistic act that symbolically and externally portrays a believer's actual, spiritual union with Christ in reference to His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-11; Gal. 3:26-27; Col. 2:12) and is thus a form of public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and Lord. Therefore, while it is necessary for obedience, it is not necessary for salvation (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 8:35-38; 10:44-48; 1 Pet. 3:21).
- B. Lord's Supper or Communion – We believe that the Lord's Supper, which symbolizes the body and the blood of Jesus Christ, should be regularly practiced by the Lord's Church in remembrance and proclamation of His death and Second Coming (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

## **VIII. The Family**

We believe a marriage is between one man and one woman who intend to enter the covenant of marriage for the duration of this present earthly life (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:1-11; Eph. 5:22-33). Such a marriage is the only permissible and appropriate channel for intimate companionship, sexual expression, and the blessing of children for the propagation of the human race (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:23-25; Ps. 127:3-5; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 7:1-5, 10). Any other type of union is displeasing in God's sight. Any form of homosexual, transsexual, or bestial union is not Biblically permissible (Lev. 18:22-23; Deut. 22:25; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). For a Christian, entering into a marriage with an unbeliever is forbidden (2 Cor. 6:14-15). Physical death severs the marriage bond and the remaining spouse is free to remarry (Rom. 7:1-3; Matt. 22:23-30; Lk.20:27-36) and the Bible possibly makes limited provision for divorce (Matt. 19:7-11; 1 Cor. 7:10-15) even though it is far short of God's standard (Mal. 2:16). In the home, the husband's role is love, leadership, and nurture (Eph. 5:25-33; 1 Pet. 3:7); the wife's is submissive respect and help (Gen. 2:18; Eph. 5:21-23; 1 Pet. 3:1-6); and the children's role is honor and obedience (Exo. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; Eph. 6:1-3).