

LIBERTY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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ARTICLE I

ARTICLES OF FAITH

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

1. THE BIBLE

The Bible is the Word of God. It is without error,¹ complete,² eternal,³ and effective.⁴ It is essential for understanding the complete and precise revelation of God.⁵ It is the standard, by which all else must be measured.⁶ The Bible has God as its author⁷ and humanity as the recipient.⁸ Unlike all other books, it is living and powerful.⁹ Consisting of sixty-six books (thirty-nine of the Old Testament and twenty-seven of the New Testament) the Bible is the supreme and final authority on all things that pertain to faith and life.¹⁰

¹ Matthew 5:18

² Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18-19

³ Psalm 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:24-25

⁴ 1 Thessalonians 2:13

⁵ Deuteronomy 29:29

⁶ Isaiah 8:20

⁷ 2 Peter 1:21

⁸ Psalm 119:105

⁹ Hebrews 4:12

¹⁰ 2 Peter 1:3

2. GOD

We believe in the Trinity. Defined as One God¹ revealed in three persons—The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All persons in the Godhead have all the attributes of deity.

He is the creator of the universe.² The Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the same.³ He is eternal⁴ and unchanging.⁵ He is all knowing,⁶ all present,⁷ and all powerful.⁸ He is perfect⁹ in all attributes and personal¹⁰ in being. Beside Him there is no God.¹¹ There never was and there never will be.¹²

¹ Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Samuel 7:22; Psalm 86:10; Mark 12:29-34; Luke 18:19

² Genesis 1:1; Nehemiah 9:6; Isaiah 37:16, 45:18

³ Isaiah 43:11, 45:22

⁴ Psalm 90:2

⁵ Numbers 23:19-20; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 6:17-18; James 1:17

⁶ 1 Kings 8:39; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Psalm 139:1-24; Hebrews 4:13

⁷ 1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chronicles 2:6; Psalm 139:7-10

⁸ Genesis 17:1; Matthew 19:26; Luke 1:37

⁹ Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Sam 22:31; Matthew 5:48; James 1:17

¹⁰ Exodus 3:14; Deuteronomy 6:4; Hosea 13:4; Matthew 23:9

¹¹ Isaiah 44:6, 45:5-6

¹² Isaiah 43:10-11

3. FATHER

The Father providentially cares for all the universe.¹ His reign is sovereign.² He sent Jesus for redemption.³ He is both loving⁴ and just⁵ in all His ways.

¹ Matthew 5:45, 6:26

² Psalm 99:1, 103:19, 145:11-13 Daniel 4:25; John 10:29; Romans 14:11

³ John 6:29, 38-40

⁴ John 3:16; Romans 5:8

⁵ Psalm 7:11, 11:7, 33:5, 98:9; Romans 9:14

4. JESUS

Jesus is God become flesh.¹ He is the Son of God.² He is seen in the Old Testament as preincarnate.³ His coming to the earth was prophesied by the Old Testament prophets.⁴ He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin,⁵ and is totally without sin.⁶ He completed His mission as the offering for the sin of the world through His substitutionary death on the cross.⁷ He rose again from the tomb on the third day with His glorified body⁸ and currently intercedes on our behalf at the right hand of God as the only High Priest of our souls.⁹ He is absolutely the only way of salvation.¹⁰

¹ Genesis 3:15; Zechariah 2:10; John 1:1,14; Romans 8:3; Hebrews 2:14

² Psalm 2:7; Matthew 3:17; Mark 3:11; John 3:16, 15:17

³ Genesis 18:1-3

⁴ Genesis 3:15, 49:10

⁵ Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25

⁶ John 14:30; Hebrews 4:15; James 1:13

⁷ John 20:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 2:2

⁸ Matthew 12:40, 17:23, 20:19, 28:6-7; Romans 1:4;

⁹ Romans 8:34; Hebrews 8:1

¹⁰ John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Corinthians 3:11

5. HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. Although the Holy Spirit is referred to as the third person of the trinity (The Father and The Son being the first and second persons of the trinity) he is no less God.¹ He is the comforter Jesus promised would come upon His departure.² He seals,³ indwells,⁴ fills,⁵ and empowers⁶ the Believer. He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment.⁷ He makes intercession for the Believers.⁸ He also illuminates the minds of Believers to understand the Word of God⁹ of which He moved holy men of God to write.¹⁰

¹ Genesis 1:1-2; Acts 5:3-5; 2 Corinthians 3:17

² John 14:26, 16:17

³ Ephesians 1:13-14

⁴ John 14:17

⁵ Ephesians 5:18

⁶ Acts 1:8

⁷ John 16:8-11

⁸ Romans 8:26

⁹ John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; 1 John 2:20,27

¹⁰ 2 Peter 1:21

6. SATAN

We believe that Satan who is personal in being is opposed to God¹ and Christians;² and that he is at work in the children of disobedience,³ who are being held captive to do his will.⁴ Although he is the prince and the power of the air⁵ and the god of this world,⁶ he is limited in his being⁷ and subject to the authority of God.⁸ While he currently uses demons and men to carry out his evil, he will at God's appointed time be cast into the Lake of Fire to remain there forever.⁹

¹ Matthew 16:23

² 1 Peter 5:8

³ Ephesians 2:2

⁴ 2 Timothy 2:26

⁵ Ephesians 2:2

⁶ 2 Corinthians 4:4

⁷ Job 1:7

⁸ Job 1:12

⁹ Revelation 20:1-10

7. MAN

We believe that man was originally created in the image and likeness of God,¹ that he sinned through disobedience² and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death,³ which is separation from God;⁴ that all human beings are born with a sinful nature⁵ which affects the total person so that nothing in the person commends him to God;⁶ and that men express their sinful nature through thoughts, words, and deeds⁷ and are subject to the power of Satan.⁸

¹ Genesis 1:26-27

² Genesis 2:17; 3:6

³ Genesis 2:17

⁴ Isaiah 59:2

⁵ Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:23

⁶ Romans 3:9-20

⁷ James 4:1

⁸ Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 John 5:19

8. THE NEW BIRTH

We believe that because of man's universal depravity and death in sin,¹ no one can enter the kingdom of God or His church unless he is born again;² and that justification is by faith alone³ so that no degree of reformation, however great; no moral attainment, however high; no culture, however attractive; no baptism or other ordinance, however administered; can help the sinner to gain eternal salvation.⁴ Salvation is a new life imparted by the Holy Spirit⁵ resulting in faith in Jesus Christ⁶ based on the Word of God.⁷

¹ Romans 3:10-11,23; Ephesians 2:1,5

² John 3:3

³ Romans 1:17

⁴ Ephesians 2:8-9

⁵ Titus 3:5

⁶ Acts 4:10-12; 16:30-31

⁷ 1 Peter 1:22-25

9. THE BELIEVER

The Believer is one who has received Jesus as Savior.¹ Having been born of God he has acknowledged his personal sin and received God's sacrifice for that sin.² As a result of the spiritual birth, the Believer is a new creature.³ He possesses salvation that, in keeping with the Word of God, is of the Lord.⁴ God is the author and finisher of the Believer's faith.⁵ Through His mercy He grants repentance⁶ and with His grace⁷ He gives the Believer eternal life.⁸ As the word eternal implies, the new life is eternal. Believers are kept in the Father's hand and no one can remove them from that position.⁹ The Believer's lifestyle should exemplify that of Jesus.¹⁰ As children of God, we are called to live good lives (lives based on the truths of God's Word) in a lost world. It is through the lifestyle of the Believer that the glory of God is reflected to a lost world. A world in need of the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ.¹¹ This lifestyle of the Believer is not for salvation but of salvation.¹²

¹ John 1:12-13; 3:3,16; Acts 16:31

² John 1:12-13; Romans 6:23; 1 John 5:13

³ 2 Corinthians 5:17

⁴ Jonah 2:9

⁵ Hebrews 12:2

⁶ 2 Timothy 2:25

⁷ Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ 1 John 5:11-13

⁹ John 10:28-29

¹⁰ Ephesians 5:13-17; 1John 1:6-7

¹¹ 2 Corinthians 4:6

¹² Ephesians 2:8-10

10. THE DISCIPLINES OF THE BELIEVER

Through these four disciplines God works to bring balance to the life of the Believer:

1. *The Word of God*

- A. The study of the Bible is an absolute essential for Christian growth and maturity. The Bible is God's Word and as the Believer studies it, God speaks to the heart.¹
- B. Obedience to God's Word is necessary. A true desire for the things of God makes itself known through obedience to the truths studied in the Word of God.²

Through the study of and obedience to the Bible, the Christian nurtures their relationship with Jesus.³

2. *Prayer*

- A. Prayer is the heart of the Believer expressing itself to God with words. Although it takes many forms (petition, praise, song, formal, informal, etc.) prayer is the Believer speaking with God.⁴
- B. Listening is essential. Prayer is not limited to the pouring out of the heart to God. Prayer also involves listening for the Spirit of God to bring the wisdom of God to our minds. The wisdom that the Spirit brings to our minds will always be truth based on the Word of God.⁵

3. *Fellowship (Among Believers)*

- A. Formal fellowship is the assembling of Believers together in a local church to worship God through the study of His Word and prayer.⁶

¹ Titus 1:1

² Psalm 1:1-3; John 14:15; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 John 5:3

³ John 14:21

⁴ Matthew 6:5-15; Luke 18:1; Ephesians 6:18

⁵ John 14:17, 26; 16:13

- B. Socializing with Believers can be considered informal fellowship.⁷ The Bible tells us that God has given us richly all things to enjoy.⁸ What a blessing it is to enjoy the things of God with brothers and sisters in Christ!⁹
- C. Practical fellowship is expressed in formal and informal fellowship. It is the extension of the individual Believer's relationship with God to the body of Believers. It involves exhortation and encouragement, dealing with sin and the bearing of burdens, the sharing of lives and the leading of love.¹⁰

4. *Witnessing*

- A. This involves telling the lost around us the truths of the Word of God.¹¹ They are lost, as each Believer once was,¹² and in need of hearing the truth of the Gospel.¹³
- B. Living the truth is also an essential part of witnessing. As an ambassador, each Believer is a living example of the Kingdom of God.¹⁴

As is obvious, the disciplines of a godly life involve communication. This communication also consists of two aspects: first, communicating with God through Bible study and prayer and second, communicating the results of the first to those around us.

⁶ Acts 2:46a Hebrews 10:25

⁷ Acts 2:46b

⁸ 1 Timothy 6:17

⁹ Psalm 119:63; 122:1

¹⁰ Acts 14:22; 18:27, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Galatians 6:1-2; Ephesians 4:15; Hebrews 10:25; 1Peter 5:12

¹¹ Matthew 28:18-20

¹² Ephesians 2:1-5

¹³ Acts 1:8; 26:18; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

¹⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:19-20

11. THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that each Believer has sovereignly been given at least one spiritual gift by the Holy Spirit;¹ that no Believer is destitute of such a gift;² that these gifts are given to Believers in order that they might minister to the rest of the body; and that the church has been given specific gifted Believers whose purpose it is to equip the saints for their jobs of ministry and of building up the body of Christ.³

¹ 1 Corinthians 12:7-8,18,24,28

² 1 Peter 4:10

³ Ephesians 4:7-12

12. THE CHURCH

There is one true church, founded on the day of Pentecost, the foundation being Jesus Himself.¹ The church is the body of Christ of which He is the Head.² It has been in continuous existence since He founded it.³ The church is made up of all who have received Jesus as their Savior.⁴

God has ordained the local body of baptized Believers to carry out the functions of the body.⁵ Each Believer should be a member of a local body that upholds the standard of God's Word.⁶ Although members of a local body of Believers each Believer is responsible to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, loving one another with a pure heart fervently, based on the uncompromised truths of God's Word.⁷

¹ Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 3:11; Acts 2

² Colossians 1:18

³ Matthew 16:18

⁴ Acts 2:47

⁵ Ephesians 4:7-13

⁶ Hebrews 10:25

⁷ John 13:34-34

13. HEAVEN AND HELL

We believe that those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, at death immediately pass into the Lord's presence,¹ and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His coming,² when the body and soul will be returned and will be associated with Him forever;³ and that all who are not born again Believers shall spend all eternity lost in conscious punishment in hell.⁴

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

² 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

³ 1 Thessalonians 4:17

⁴ Revelation 20:11-15

ARTICLE II

ORDINANCES

We believe that there are two church ordinances, communion (Lord's Supper) and baptism, which are outward visible signs of inward spiritual reality, and were instituted and commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ for the Church. In no way do these two ordinances impart salvation to the participants. We believe that baptism is to be administered and communion practiced as a result of salvation, not for salvation.¹

1. BAPTISM

Baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit shall be administered through this church by immersion to born again Believers as a testimony that an inward work of regeneration has taken place. Baptism is an act of obedience to the command of Jesus Christ² symbolizing identification with Jesus³ as a public testimony of faith in Him.⁴

¹ Ephesians 2:8-10

² Matthew 28:18-19

³ Romans 6:4

⁴ Matthew 10:32-33

2. COMMUNION

In agreement with the Word of God⁵ we will celebrate communion with the use of bread and the cup. Communion is an important aspect of a Believer's life and should be regarded as a priority. As often as the supper is observed through this church, it will be open to all Believers of like faith.

⁵ Matthew 26:20-30; Mark 14:17-27; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:1-34

Article III

MEMBERSHIP

1. REASONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Although we believe that each Christian is a member of the universal body of Christ we practice local church membership. God is not the author of confusion¹ and local church membership exemplifies order. It is no a substitute for but is in accord with the discipline of fellowship as mentioned in I.10.C.1-3.

Therefore:

- A. Church membership signifies what should already be a practical commitment on the part of each member to build up and encourage one another in this particular local assembly of Believers.²
- B. Church membership is used by the elders and deacons to know those for whom they must give an account to the Lord.³
- C. Church membership signifies a voluntary submission on the part of the member to the shepherding of the elders of this church.⁴
- D. Church membership demonstrates a willingness on the part of each Believer to commit to and be involved in the ministries of this church as the Lord leads and qualifications are met.⁵
- E. Those God brings to salvation through the Holy Spirit as He works through the ministry of this church, do not automatically become members of the local church.

¹ 1 Corinthians 14:33

² Hebrews 10:23-25

³ Hebrews 13:17

⁴ Hebrews 13:17

⁵ Hebrews 10:24

2. REGULAR MEMBERSHIP

- A. Qualifications for Membership
 1. Has personally believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
 2. Has a personal testimony which gives evidence of his being born again.¹
 3. Has been baptized or is willing to be baptized at the earliest possible opportunity. While this church does practice baptism by immersion it will accept different modes of baptism so long as the intent of that baptism was Scriptural.
 4. Has read the doctrinal statement (Article I) and is not in disagreement with any of its statements.
 5. Has read and is willing to abide by the church constitution.

¹ John 3:3; Acts 26:20

6. Has satisfactorily completed membership classes or can, by personal interview, assure the elders that material covered in the membership class, or the constitution is understood.

B. Procedure for Becoming a Member

1. Those desiring membership shall be provided with a copy of the church constitution, and philosophy of ministry.
2. It is the responsibility of the elders to interview those desiring membership and instruct them in the tenets and activities of the church and their responsibilities as members. Additionally this interview establishes a mutual understanding of the ministry of this church.
3. Membership is official upon approval of the elders. Approval is based on the meeting of the above listed qualifications.
4. New members shall be publicly received at a regular Sunday Service.

3. DUTIES

- A. All members are expected, through yielding to Christ and appropriating the power of the Holy Spirit, to seek to live according to the light revealed by God and the Holy Spirit, through His Word and to support wholeheartedly the services and activities of this church by faithful attendance and cooperation. Their attitudes toward God and toward one another shall be in accord with Ephesians 4:30-32. It shall be the duty of members to live so that they commend the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to those with whom they come in contact.
- B. The Scriptures teach that no member is to bring a civil suit against the church, elders, deacons, or church staff in connection with the performance of their official duties. In the event of a grievance of one member against another, every effort should be made to avoid a civil suit in a public court of law. The church should attempt to resolve any grievances between Christians.¹
- C. On occasion, members will be responsible to respond to or give input to elder's requests as they seek the mind of Christ. See IV.2.B. and IV.2.B.2.

¹ 1 Corinthians 6:1-8

4. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership in this Church may be terminated in one of two ways:

A. By deletion

1. Members of the church have entered a covenant to minister to one another's spiritual needs. Since this relationship is entered by mutual consent with the church leaders and members, it is proper Biblically that the relationship should also end only by mutual consent. Any member may seek to have his name deleted from the church roll by a written request to the body of elders. If, however, the elders determine that the reason for deletion is for reasons which necessitate church discipline, the elders may determine that the disciplinary measures are

necessary to attempt to restore the sinning member¹ and to protect the church from further sin,² even in cases where a member has requested withdrawal of his name from membership.

2. Any member who has absented himself from the Church for a period of six months except for those reasons described in Article III.4.A.4. shall, after inquiry by the body of elders, be placed on an inactive membership list, and be notified of this. After six months on the inactive list, if there has been no favorable response to repeated contacts by elders and various members the member's name will be deleted from the church role based on a consensus among the elders.
3. Inactive members may regain active status by notifying elders of their desire and giving evidence of active status.
4. Any member prevented from attending the Church services for such reasons as: illness, being out of the area due to duty in the Armed Services, Christian work, temporary out-of-area assignment by employer, or schooling, shall not be considered to have absented themselves from the Church services.

B. By dismissal (Church discipline)

To honor God, to protect the purity of His church, and to restore the offender, the Scriptures require the church to exercise discipline.

Upon unanimous action of the Body of Elders, a member may be removed from membership for certain Scriptural reasons:

1. Purpose for discipline

There are three directions in which the purpose for church discipline operates:

a. Toward God

Toward God, church discipline is to vindicate publicly the honor and holiness of God³ and to prevent giving cause for God to set Himself against the local church.⁴

b. Toward the church itself

Toward the church itself, church discipline is to restore the purity of the church,⁵ and to deter others from sin.⁶

c. Toward the offender

Toward the offender, church discipline is to demonstrate true biblical love,⁷ and to restore the offender.⁸

d. Basis for discipline

We are required to deal with any professing Believer who associates with our church and is knowingly and rebelliously living inconsistently with the clear teaching of the Bible.⁹

¹ Galatians 6:1

² 1 Corinthians 5:6-7

³ 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 10:31; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 Peter 1:15-16

⁴ Revelation 2:1,4,12,14,18,20; 3:1,2,14-16

⁵ 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

⁶ 1 Timothy 5:20

⁷ Proverbs 27:6; 1 Corinthians 13:6; 1 Timothy 1:5; James 5:19-20; 2 John 6

⁸ Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5 compared with 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 6:1; 2 Timothy 2:24-26

⁹ Matthew 18:15-20; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Ephesians 5:1-21; Colossians 3:1-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-21; Titus 3:10-11; 2 John 10-11

2. Procedure for discipline and restoration

When it becomes necessary to exercise church discipline the following procedures for dismissal and restoration should be followed:

A. Procedure for Dismissal

The goal is never to dismiss a member, but whenever possible to bring the sinning person to repentance and restoration. Even in cases that reach the stage of actual dismissal, the desired result is eventual repentance and restoration.¹⁰ For the honor of God's holy name and for the protection of the church, no member who has been dismissed shall be reinstated to membership and fellowship without evidence of sincere repentance.¹¹

1. If a church member has first-hand knowledge of unrepentant sin on the part of another member, he must go directly to the person(s) involved and seek to encourage those involved to repent.¹²
2. If the above action does not bring Biblical repentance, the person with first-hand knowledge must go to the sinning member(s) with one or two witnesses, seeking to restore the person.¹³
3. If the above action does not bring Biblical repentance, the matter must be brought to the church.¹⁴ This would mean first going to the elders, who have oversight of the church.¹⁵ If the person(s) refuses to listen to the elders, the matter must be told to the church. The membership of the church as God gives opportunity, should then prayerfully and lovingly appeal to the person to repent.¹⁶ After a reasonable time if the person(s) is still unrepentant, (s)he must then be dismissed from the fellowship and membership of the church.¹⁷ Once a person has been dismissed from the fellowship and membership of the church, those in fellowship with the church must be careful to relate to the person as the Scriptures prescribe. Specifically, we are not to associate with the person in any way that would condone his (her) wrong behavior ("not even to eat with such an one" 1 Corinthians 5:11) so that the person may be put to shame (2 Thessalonians 3:14). And yet we are "not to regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." (2 Thessalonians 3:15).

B. Steps for Restoration

The door is always open for restoration the moment a dismissed member repents of the sin that resulted in dismissal. The following are the steps for restoration:

1. Being repentant the person who has been dismissed from membership should contact one of the elders and communicate to that elder his own awareness and acknowledgment of the sin(s) for which (s)he was dismissed.
2. At the discretion of the elder, the person may need to communicate to the body of elders his own awareness and acknowledgment of the sin(s) for which (s)he was dismissed, and to perform certain deeds appropriate to repentance (Acts 26:20), such as restitution, seeking the forgiveness of others in the church, etc.

¹⁰ Galatians 6:1

¹¹ Acts 26:20

¹² Matthew 18:15

¹³ Matthew 18:16

¹⁴ Matthew 18:17

¹⁵ Hebrews 13:17

¹⁶ Galatians 6:1

¹⁷ Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15

3. The elders will determine the appropriate method of communicating restoration to the congregation. The method will be carried out in such a way that the members of the body are made aware of the restoration.¹⁸
4. The elders will determine the appropriate steps to enable the restored member to go on to full maturity in Christ.¹⁹

¹⁸ 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

¹⁹ Ephesians 4:11-13

ARTICLE IV

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

1. THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church. He is the foundation and Chief cornerstone of the Church. He is the builder of the Church and the Chief Shepherd. The Church is for His Glory and is to be summed up in Him.

Because Jesus is the only Head of the Church,¹ the foundation and Chief cornerstone of the Church,² the builder of the Church,³ the Alpha and the Omega,⁴ the First and the Last,⁵ the beginning and the end,⁶ and because all things are from Him, and through Him, and to Him,⁷ for His glory,⁸ and because all things will be summed up in Him,⁹ the government of this church is to reflect Him as Lord and Chief Shepherd of our souls¹⁰ to His praise and majesty. Therefore, the government of this church is one of Theocratic rule with Christ as the only Head.

The function of church government is to implement His rule in the local body. Therefore, we believe that an overseeing plurality of elders (pastors) best serves as the New Testament model of church government. This is intended to be different from other forms of traditional church government such as clerical hierarchy and congregational rule.

¹ Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18

² 1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:20

³ Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47

⁴ Revelation 1:8

⁵ Revelation 1:17

⁶ Revelation 22:13

⁷ Romans 11:36

⁸ Hebrews 13:21

⁹ Ephesians 1:10

¹⁰ 2 Corinthians 4:5; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:4

2. ELDERS

A. Qualifications of elders.

All elders shall be men called of God, who desire the office of elder, and whose lives meet the character qualities set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Acts 20:17, 28, and Hebrews 13:7, 17.

B. Responsibilities of elders.

They shall shepherd the church among them recognizing:

- The Lordship of Christ.
- They are themselves sheep.
- The priesthood of every Believer.

1. Oversight:

The elders, as overseers of the church, shall have the oversight of all persons and functions of the church.

2. Persons

Having oversight of the flock involves ministering to the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of the body in accordance to the truths of Scripture. As the congregation grows it may be arranged into smaller groups for the sake of orderly accomplishment of the shepherding responsibility of the elder.

3. Functions

The functions of the church are diverse but exist under the headings of equipping and evangelism. Under these headings there is but not limited to worship, education, business, outreach and missions. The elders will be responsible for the oversight of these functions as they exist within the body, and will add to or delete additional ministry areas as they are lead of the Lord and needs within the body arise.

2. Operation

In operating with the plurality of the elders authority will not be vested in one man. Matters of decision shall be of unanimity following thorough Bible study, prayer, and investigation on the subject. The objective in any decision is to find the mind of Christ. Unanimity based on Scriptural truth best demonstrates having found the mind of Christ concerning the matter. Christ's mind is not divided and the decisions of the elders should reflect that to the church body. When unanimity cannot be reached, the elders shall wait upon God to reveal His will. Elders may on occasion in seeking the mind of Christ request Biblical response or input from the congregation. Elders will serve in the office of elder so long as they desire and the qualifications of the elder as mentioned in IV.2.A. are maintained in their individual lives.

Elders will designate three men to serve as trustees. The preference is that these men will be elders, however, by mutual consent elders may select men who are not elders.

It is incumbent on the body of elders to inform the church body of all items and decisions which will affect the local body.

1. Appointment

Based on the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 those currently serving as elders will be responsible for appointing additional elders. In accordance with 1 Timothy 5:22 each person desiring the office of elder will be thoroughly examined by the current elders. This examination will be prayerfully conducted in order to determine if the

scriptural qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are met. No person will be appointed to the office who does not meet the scriptural qualifications.

Names of those desiring the office of elder may be submitted for consideration in writing to the ruling elders. Names may be submitted either by the person desiring the office, or by a member of the body. However, no examination will begin until it is determined by the ruling elders that those whose names are submitted do indeed desire the office of elder. Having established a person's desire the ruling elders will begin the process of examination. It will consist of but not be limited to interviews with the potential elder, his family, friends, and associates. Past church experiences may also be considered. A portion of the examination will also involve soliciting input from the congregation. All input is to remain confidential. Any input which would disqualify a man from the office will be shared with the candidate. At which time he may confirm or deny the information. If denied, further examination with the source will be necessary.

Following the examination, all men who meet the scriptural qualifications will be appointed to the office of elder by a unanimous vote of the ruling elders (See Article IV. 2. B.2.). The names of the new elders will be shared before the congregation following a regular Sunday worship. They may also be shared in the form of a written announcement.

3. Discipline of an elder

If any church member has knowledge of a charge against an elder, the principles for dealing with sin in another church member as covered in Article III.4.B.3.a. should be followed.

4. Removal of an elder from office

In the event that an elder fails to meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, resulting in his character falling under reproach, the standards of 1 Timothy 5:19-25 are to be followed.

The procedure:

The procedure for the discipline of an elder, as mentioned above is to be carried out prior to the removal from office. If after discipline, it is determined that the character of the elder in question is under reproach, in regards to the qualities mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, he is to then be considered for removal from office. The accusation must be received by the existing elder body on the basis of two or three witnesses. The elder in question is exempt from voting. Without emotional bias ("spirit of partiality" 1 Timothy 5:21) a vote for removal is to be taken on the basis of unanimity. If an elder, due to emotional bias, is unwilling to exercise discipline toward the elder or any church member for that matter, where such action is clearly called for, that elder may also be subject to church discipline in which case he would not be a part of the required unanimity for the elders.

Once unanimity is reached, the matter is to be brought before the church body. A special meeting is to be scheduled and announced in all regular meetings of the Church for two weeks prior to the set meeting. During this time, if the elder in question is the preaching elder, he is to refrain from the pulpit. The facts and conclusion of the elders are to be presented to the body.

3. DEACONS

A. Appointment and qualifications

Deacons shall be men called of God, who meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13. They shall be recommended by the congregation and appointed by the elders. They shall continue in office so long as they desire and the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13 are maintained in their individual lives.

B. Responsibilities

Deacons shall, in accordance with Acts 6:1-6 serve as ministers of mercy to the body, following the leadership of the elders, thus allowing the elders to fulfill their responsibilities involving the Word and prayer. Elders shall support the deacons as they seek to fulfill their leadership role as a minister of mercy to the body. Responsibilities will be assigned to the deacons by the elders as the need arises.

Because the work of elders and deacons overlaps and circumstances will at times involve joint decisions, it is essential that elders and deacons maintain consistent communication, and seek to help one another.

4. ADDITIONAL OFFICE SUPPORT

As deemed necessary by the elders as described in IV.2.B.1.b. the following support office/s, but not limited to these, may be established by the elders.

A. Financial

1. Treasurer

The church treasurer shall be a member in good standing. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to receive, preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money, and things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements. The treasurer shall also provide the church with an itemized report at the designated times.